AKRATIC WIZARDRY

By Akrasia

Here is a summary of my house rules for Swords & Wizardry (with appropriate links). They are intended, when used together, to simulate more closely the 'swords and sorcery' genre, as exemplified in the fiction of Robert E. Howard and Fritz Leiber. Nonetheless, most of these house rules can be used on their own in a 'standard' or 'classic' 'Old School' D&D game (including Original D&D, Basic D&D, RC D&D, Labyrinth Lord, 1e AD&D, OSRIC, etc.).

1. Miscellaneous House Rules. Some minor rules for ability scores and combat (critical hits, fumbles, etc.)

2. Hit Points and Constitution. A system for treating hit points as 'superficial' damage (i.e., exhaustion, minor bruises, etc.), and constitution as 'serious' damage. The former is easy to heal, whereas the latter is not.

3. Wisdom as Sanity. A system for treating a character's 'wisdom' score as a measurement of his/her sanity.

4. Background Professions. A list of 'background professions' (e.g., alchemist, minstrel, sailor) for characters, designed to give them some more flavour, and a few minor special abilities.

5. General Task Resolution Mechanic. A system for using the generic 'saving throws' in S&W as a 'general task resolution mechanic,' i.e., a system for determining whether characters succeed at various things.

6. Class-Based Weapon Damage. This system uses a character's class in order to determine how much damage that character can do with a particular weapon.

7. The Thief. My version of the 'thief' class, inspired primarily by the 'Gray Mouser' character.

8. Everyone can Backstab. Pretty self-explanatory, I think.

9. Fighting Styles for Fighters. A list of six different 'fighting styles' (e.g., berserker, shield-master, etc.) available to fighter characters.

10. Magicians and the Colours of Magic. The magician is a new class meant to replace the cleric and magic-user classes. I designed it to have a stronger 'pulp sorcerer' flavour than the standard spell-casting classes. The 'colours of magic' refers to my categorization of all spells as either 'white magic,' 'grey magic,' or 'black magic.' All spells cause 'exhaustion' for magicians, and black magic spells might cause 'corruption' (i.e., loss of wisdom/sanity).

11. Experience Points. Quite simply, an alternative system for assigning experience points to characters.

Enjoy, gentle readers!

Miscellaneous S&W/OD&D House Rules

Over the past few weeks I've posted most of the house rules that I use in my current *Swords & Wizardry* (OD&D-based) game. I now offer for your consideration, gentle readers, the remaining few.

Rolling for Ability Scores

Players roll 3d6 seven times, rerolling any rolls of '1' (so the lowest score that a starting character can have in any ability score is '6'). Players drop the lowest score, and assign the other six to their characters' abilities (strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, and charisma) as they choose. If a player's character does not have at least two ability scores that are 13 or greater, he or she may reroll the entire set.

Additional Ability Score Modifiers

A score of 18 confers a bonus of +2 to any roll affected by that ability score. A score of 3 confers a penalty of -2 to any roll affected by that ability score.

Critical Hits

If a character rolls a natural '20' he rolls *again* to see if he scores a critical hit. If the second roll is also a hit, the character does maximum damage *plus* an additional damage roll. (For instance, say a fighter wielding a broadsword scores a critical hit. He does 8 points of damage + 1d8 + any applicable modifiers.)

Firing Missile Weapons into Melee

If a character is using a ranged weapon (bow, sling, etc.) and fires into a melee combat involving an ally, he suffers a -2 to his roll to hit his target (this penalty is due to the character being careful not to hit his ally).

Fumbles

If a character rolls a natural 1 in an attack roll he must make a saving throw (modified by his dexterity bonus/penalty). If he fails, he drops his weapon and must make *another* saving throw (again modified by his dexterity bonus/penalty). If he fails *again*, he has fallen down and is prone for one round (-2 to AC).

Final Notes:

Well, fellow gamers, that's it for my house rules for S&W/OD&D (at least for now). They have been play tested (albeit modestly), and seem to work well. At some point I will provide summary of them all in a single post, along with appropriate links. Unfortunately, I will not have time to do that in the immediate future. Cheers!

Pulp Heroes and Damage

The protagonists of classic 'swords and sorcery' tales are a remarkable lot. They are a 'cut above' the common stock of humanity, physically and mentally superior to most people, although perhaps sometimes less prudent. Even this occasional lack of prudence, however, is compensated with superior luck and drive. Characters such as Conan, Kull, Fafhrd, and the Gray Mouser are capable of overcoming foes and surviving challenges that would easily defeat most common men. Classic 'swords and sorcery' tales focus on highly exceptional and powerful individuals, not the 'little guys' of the world. Even as neophytes, most 'swords and sorcery' characters are exceptionally tough and capable.

To reflect this aspect of the 'swords and sorcery' genre, it is recommended that first-level player characters start with the maximum number of hit points possible for their class, plus five additional hit points (modified by their constitution scores, as appropriate). Hit points should be rolled normally after first level.

Only player characters and *important* non-player characters (namely, noteworthy allies and antagonists) should use this system for determining hit points. The Game Master should roll normally for the hit points of 'regular' non-player characters, as well as most 'monsters.'

Player characters' hit points represent only 'superficial' damage (i.e., exhaustion, light bruises, minor scrapes, and so forth.). Because of this, *all* lost hit points may be recovered by sleeping without interruption for eight full hours. Resting (not sleeping), or sleeping for less than eight hours, will enable a player character to recover one hit point per full hour of rest or sleep.

Cure Wounds spells and potions of Healing do *not* heal hit points, but only lost points of Constitution (as explained below). However, a draught of 'strong drink' (ale, wine, liquor) can 'invigorate' a character, enabling him/her to recover immediately 1d4 hit points. Game Masters may also want to allow alchemists to sell 'Elixirs of Invigoration' for 200 to 300 gold pieces. Drinking such an elixir might enable a player character to recover instantly 1d6 + 2 hit points. Only *one* such draught, whether of strong drink or an elixir, will have this effect per day.

Once a player character's hit points have been depleted, any further damage is done to the character's *constitution* score. Damage to a character's constitution score represents 'serious' damage. Every time a character takes damage to his/her constitution, he/she must make a saving throw (versus 'death' if using a system other than S&W) or fall unconscious. In addition, a character that has taken damage to his/her constitution suffers a -2 penalty to all actions (including attack rolls and saving throws). If a character's constitution score is reduced to 0 or lower that character is dead.

Characters who have suffered damage to their constitution and have fallen unconscious regain consciousness after eight hours of rest. If that character's constitution is still reduced, he/she continues to have 0 hit points and suffers the -2 penalty to all actions until he/she can rest and recover. Characters subsequently can recover one constitution point for every two days of complete rest (i.e., no travelling or adventuring). The care of a doctor or other non-magical healer can improve the rate of healing to one constitution point per day of rest. A character cannot recover any hit points until *all* constitution points have been recovered.

Game Masters should assume that *most* non-player characters and monsters are dead or unconscious when they reach 0 hit points or lower. Only player characters and *special* non-player characters – important figures in the world, whether allies or antagonists of the player characters – should use the complete rules outlined above.

(**Note**: This house rule will appear as part of a longer article on 'swords & sorcery' adventures in *Knockspell* #3.)

Sanity

Witnessing unspeakable supernatural horrors – always a professional risk for any protagonist in a 'swords and sorcery' adventure – can drive a mortal man or woman mad. Deliberately delving into ancient eldritch secrets for the purposes of unleashing unnatural forces or contacting demonic intelligences radically increases this risk. Insane sorcerers and men whose minds have been broken by ancient evils are standard staples in 'swords and sorcery' tales.

In order to simulate this aspect of the 'swords and sorcery' genre, these rules treat a character's Wisdom score as a measurement of his/her sanity. A character with a Wisdom score of 18 has a firm grasp of the nature of reality, considerable self-discipline, and remarkable strength of will. In contrast, a character with a Wisdom score of 3 is barely lucid, easily confuses reality with fantasy, and is on the border of lapsing into madness. Characters with Wisdom scores of 2 or lower are utterly insane, and must be treated as non-player characters. (If this Wisdom loss is temporary, as explained below, the character is under the control of the Game Master until he/she regains his/her sanity.)

If a character witnesses an unspeakable horror, the Game Master may require the player to make a saving throw (versus 'spells,' if using a system other than S&W). The saving throw should be modified by the severity of the horror in question. If the character fails his or her saving throw, he or she loses points of temporary Wisdom. The exact amount should be determined by rolling 1d6. If a '6' is rolled, the character also *permanently* loses one point of Wisdom (i.e., one permanent point of Wisdom and five temporary points of Wisdom). Temporarily lost points of Wisdom may be regained at a rate of one point per day of complete rest. The spell 'Restoration' (which I treat as a 6th level spell of 'white magic' in my game) will restore instantly temporarily lost Wisdom points, but will *not* restore any permanently lost Wisdom points.

Characters may also lose Wisdom by casting spells that are characterized as 'black magic' in nature. This will be explained in a future post.

(Note: This house rule will appear in a longer article in *Knockspell* # 3.)

Background Professions

Player characters weren't always adventurers. Before they decided to head off into dark mysterious dungeons or ogre-infested wild lands, they most likely started down one or more 'respectable' career

paths. In most 'old school' fantasy role-playing games like *Swords & Wizardry* and *Labyrinth Lord*, however, this aspect of a character's early life has no effect on that character's abilities. This optional rule aims to rectify this situation.

In addition, by providing all characters with at least one 'background profession,' this optional rule should provide greater depth and personality to the players' characters. Consider, for instance, the following party. Cormac the fighter was once a hunter who was raised near the Highland Forest, hence his skill in tracking prey and moving stealthily in hill and wood. In contrast, his ally Elowyn, also a fighter, was once a scholar in the city of Bookbridge, hence her wide-ranging knowledge of different esoteric subjects. Elowyn's sage-like lore intimidates her companion, the magic-user Alaric, whose own background as a petty noble in the court of the Duke of Briz means that he knows much of current politics and fashion, but little of ancient eldritch secrets, despite his arcane training. Finally, their holy ally – the rotund Fredigar, priest of Muirgen, Mistress of the Sea – spent years as a merchant and sailor before being called to service by his goddess.

With this optional rule all characters start with at least one 'background profession.' More precisely, players may either choose *one* career from chart I or *two* careers from chart II below (the background professions on chart I are slightly more useful for adventuring characters).

It is assumed that characters abandoned their professions in order to become adventurers before progressing beyond the 'apprentice' stage (or equivalent). Thus a character who has the background profession of 'alchemist,' for example, would not be as skilled at alchemy as most 'professional' (non player character) alchemists.

A character's background profession(s) can enable that character to do or know certain things that other characters cannot do or know. For example, a frontiersman may know whether a kind of wild berry is poisonous or not, or a doctor may know how to treat a particular infection. A character's background profession(s) can also give that character a bonus (typically equivalent to +4 on a d20) when attempting certain kinds of tasks. For example, a hunter may receive a +4 bonus when trying to track a monster outdoors. If a character has two professions, any bonuses from those professions are *not* cumulative (so a character with both the 'farmer' and 'sailor' background professions, for instance, would *not* gain a +8 bonus to his/her attempts to predict the weather, but only a +4 bonus). Similarly, if a character's class and background profession provide a bonus for a particular kind of task, these bonuses are *not* cumulative – instead, the character simply uses the *higher* of the two bonuses. (For example, my version of the 'thief' class provides a character with a +3 bonus to picking locks. If such a character also has the 'locksmith' background profession, that character would have a +4 [*not* a +7 bonus] to attempts at picking locks.)

Ultimately, of course, it is the *Game Master's decision* whether or not a character's background profession confers any special advantage in any particular situation. Similarly, it is up to the GM to determine whether a particular background profession is available to a character. The GM may decide to prohibit certain races from having certain background professions (for instance, the GM may decide that dwarf characters cannot have the 'sailor' background profession).

Background Profession Charts

Players may select (or roll for) either *one* profession on chart I or *two* professions on chart II.

Chart I

1 Alchemist [Requires Intelligence of 12+]

2 Aristocrat

3 Doctor [Requires Intelligence and Wisdom of 10+]

4 Frontiersman [Requires Constitution of 9+]

5 Hunter [Requires Dexterity of 9+]

6 Scholar [Requires Intelligence of 12+]

Chart II

1 Blacksmith [Requires Strength of 10+]

2 Farmer

3 Fisher

4 Fletcher/Bowyer

5 Gambler [Requires Intelligence of 9+]

6 Leatherworker/Tanner

7 Locksmith

8 Mason

9 Merchant [Requires Wisdom of 9+]

10 Minstrel [Requires Charisma of 12+]

11 Sailor

12 Sentinel

List of Background Professions

Alchemist [Requires an Intelligence of 12+]

Alchemists are skilled at identifying elixirs, poisons, potions, and so forth. (Normally there is no bonus to the roll, except for +1 if Intelligence is 13 or greater, but only alchemists can try this. If an alchemy lab is available – typically only found in towns with populations of 2500 or more – the alchemist gains a +4 bonus, but must pay 30 +2d10 gold pieces per day to rent necessary supplies.) Characters with the alchemist background profession start with 1+1d3 potions (to be determined randomly or by the GM).

Aristocrat

Aristocrats have knowledge of court etiquette, heraldry, recent history, and politics. They are skilled at difficult riding manoeuvres (+4 bonus) and mounted combat (+1 bonus to hit when on a trained warhorse). Characters of an aristocratic background start the game with an inherited high-quality weapon, shield, or suit of armour (player's choice). Because of its superior quality, this item will have a +1 non-magical bonus (i.e., the weapon will have a +1 bonus to hit but *not* damage, or the shield or armour will grant a +1 bonus to AC). Aristocratic characters also start with a bonus of 2d20 gold pieces.

Blacksmith [Requires a Strength of 10+]

Blacksmiths can repair metal weapons and armour with proper equipment (costs 10% of 'market' weapon/armour price for supplies and to rent forge; normally takes one day per item). Blacksmiths can also determine the correct value of non-magical weapons and armour within 10%.

Doctor [Requires an Intelligence and Wisdom of 10+]

Doctors can bandage wounded characters with proper equipment. A doctor can heal 1-2 hit points after one turn of applying a bandage or a salve. Alternatively, a doctor can treat an unconscious character, returning that character to consciousness after applying a bandage or salve and using smelling salts for one turn. Doctors can heal a character in this way only once per combat. (A 'medical kit' with 10 bandages, 5 salves, and smelling salts, costs 15 gold pieces; characters with the doctor background profession start with one free kit.) Doctors can also try to draw out poisons (+4 bonus) and treat many natural diseases (+4 bonus).

Farmer

Characters who were once farmers are skilled at predicting weather (+4 bonus) and at bartering (+4 bonus).

Fisher

If near a body of water and properly supplied (with a net, etc.), former fishers can capture enough fish to feed a 3+1d4 people for a day. Fishers are also skilled at swimming (+4 bonus).

Fletcher/Bowyer

Characters who were once fletchers/bowyers can make 1d4+1 scores (i.e., 40-100) of arrows or bolts per day with proper equipment (costs 10% of normal price). Such characters also are skilled at repairing damaged arrows and bows (+4 bonus). Fletchers/bowyers can determine the correct value of non-magical bows within 10%.

Frontiersman [Requires a Constitution of 9+]

Characters who grew up on the edges of civilization are skilled at finding their way in the wilds (i.e., they cannot become 'lost'). Frontiersmen also have knowledge of natural herbs and poisons (+4 bonus if roll is required), knowledge of regional wildlife (+4 bonus if roll is required), and are good at predicting weather (+4 bonus).

Gambler [Requires an Intelligence of 9+]

Characters who once made their living by gambling obviously are skilled at such games (+4 bonus). They may earn (or lose!) 1d100 – 20 silver pieces (-19 to 80 silver pieces) per week by playing such games in any decent-sized town (normally a population of 2000 or greater), but may not adventure during that period. (Note that there is a possibility that a gambler may *lose* silver pieces during a period of gambling thanks to an unlucky streak.)

Hunter [Requires Dexterity of 9+]

Characters who were once hunters have good knowledge of regional wildlife (+4 bonus if roll is required). They are skilled at tracking creatures (any land-based animal, humanoid, or monster) in the wilds (+4 bonus), and are good at hiding and moving silently in the outdoors (+4 bonus).

Leatherworker/Tanner

Characters who were once leatherworkers can repair any leather good, including leather armour, with proper supplies (costs 10% of normal price; normally takes half a day per good). Leatherworkers can also determine the correct value of non-magical leather goods and hides within 10%.

Locksmith

Locksmiths are skilled at repairing and disabling most mechanical devices, such as locks, mechanical traps, etc. (+4 bonus).

Mason

Masons receive a bonus (+4) to notice unusual stonework (including secret doors, stone traps, sloping passageways, etc.).

Merchant [Requires Wisdom 9+]

Merchants are knowledgeable of the regional economy and current politics, and are good at bartering (+4 bonus if roll required). Characters with the merchant background profession start the game with extra 'supplies' (player's choice of kind of goods) worth (2+1d4) x 20 (i.e., 60-120) gold pieces.

Minstrel [Requires a Charisma of 12+]

Characters who were once minstrels are knowledgeable of regional culture, court etiquette, and current politics. They know how to play one instrument (player's choice), and own that instrument (decent quality – worth 20+2d20 gold pieces). Minstrels can earn 2d12 silver pieces per week from performing (the character cannot adventure during this time) in any decent-sized town (population 1000+). Minstrels can only earn 1d12 silver pieces per week in smaller locales.

Sailor

Former sailors are skilled at predicting weather (+4 bonus) and swimming (+4 bonus).

Scholar [Requires Intelligence 12+]

Characters who devoted their pre-adventuring years to study are knowledgeable of a wide range of topics, including culture, geography, history, religion, etc. (+4 bonus if roll is required). Scholars also

are knowledgeable of certain legends, including those concerning powerful monsters, ancient heroes and villains, powerful relics and magic items, etc. (+4 bonus). Scholars can try to identify a magic item (no bonus to roll, except for +1 if Intelligence is 13 or greater, but only scholars can try this) if appropriate libraries and/or colleges are available (typically requires a town with a population of 5000 or greater, takes one week of research per item, and costs 50+1d20 gold pieces).

Sentinel

Characters who were once sentinels or guards are trained to be observant (+4 bonus to rolls to notice unusual things).

Note on Rolls

As noted in the various descriptions of the background professions above, characters may receive a bonus (typically +4 on a d20) when attempting certain tasks associated with their background profession. This system uses characters' saving throws as a general task resolution mechanic (a house rule that I presented earlier). Below is a summary of that system.

Roughly, under this system, when attempting a particular task, the player rolls 1d20, applies any relevant attribute modifiers (a bonus of +1 or a penalty of -1, depending on the attribute score), and any general modifiers that the GM judges appropriate (typically ranging from -10 to +10). If the modified roll equals or exceeds the character's saving throw number, the task is successful. Using this system, any bonus derived from a character's background profession (typically +4) is applied to the character's saving throw roll.

For example, a character with an Intelligence score of 14 and the 'scholar' background profession attempting to remember the history of a nearby ruined temple would roll 1d20, add her intelligence bonus (+1), and add +4 because of her background profession. (For this example we will assume that there are no difficulty modifiers.) If her roll +5 equals or exceeds her saving throw number she successfully remembers the history of the ruined temple.

Final Notes:

A slightly different version of this house rule appeared as an article in *Fight On!* #5.

One difference between this version and the *Fight On!* article is that in the published version alternative ways of using the background professions are outlined (i.e., systems that do not use the Swords & Wizardry saving throw system as a 'general task resolution mechanic,' e.g., a d6 system).

Another difference between this version and the article that appeared in *Fight On!* is that the latter included the background professions 'brigand' and 'burglar.' Since I have added a version of the thief class to my own game, however, I decided that these background professions were no longer necessary. Nonetheless, if you would like to use this system, do not own *Fight On!* #5 (shame on you!), and do not use a 'thief' class in your game, below are the missing background professions:

Brigand [Requires a Strength of 9+ and a Dexterity of 9+]

Characters who once spent time as brigands are skilled at hiding, moving silently, and ambushing opponents (+4 bonus).

Burglar [Requires a Dexterity of 12+]

Characters who once spent time as burglars are skilled at hiding and moving silently (+4 bonus), and at opening locks, finding traps, and disarming traps (+4 bonus). Characters with the burglar background profession start the game with a set of good lockpicks (+1 on d20, or +5%, non-magical bonus).

Saving Throws as a General Task Resolution System

All classes in S&W have a single saving throw that may be used as a general 'task resolution' mechanism. Under this system, when attempting a particular task, the player rolls 1d20, applies any relevant attribute modifiers (a bonus of +1, a penalty of -1, or no modifier, depending on the attribute score), and any additional modifiers that the GM judges appropriate. Very easy, but not automatically successful, tasks might receive a bonus of +10, while extremely difficult, but not impossible, tasks might receive a penalty of -10. Less extreme modifiers should apply to rolls involving tasks of intermediate ease or difficulty. The difficulty modifier is applied to the character's saving throw *roll*. (It is up to the GM to determine whether the player has knowledge of this modifier.) If the modified roll equals or exceeds the character's saving throw number, the task is successful. An unmodified roll of a 20 always indicates success, and an unmodified roll of a 1 always indicates failure (otherwise, there is no point in making the roll in the first place, and the GM should simply decide that the character automatically succeeds or fails).

For example, Nibold the Purple, a bold roguish warrior, is attempting to swim across a dangerous rushing river. Because Nibold is a fifth level fighter, his base saving throw number is 12. The GM judges that superior strength would assist anyone attempting such a feat, and thus allows the player to apply Nibold's strength bonus, in this case +1, to the roll. Because the river is flowing swiftly, and contains dangerous rocks and currents, the GM assigns a -2 penalty to the player's roll. Finally, the GM notes that Nibold's background is that of a sailor, and therefore grants the character a +4 bonus to the roll. This leaves the player with a net +3 bonus to his roll for Nibold. The player rolls a 10 and adds 3 for a total of 13. Since that exceeds Nibold's saving throw number of 12, Nibold successfully swims across the river. If the player had failed his roll, the GM may have decided that Nibold suffered 1d6 points of damage from being bashed about the rocks by the stream's strong currents. A roll of a natural 1 may have resulted in Nibold being knocked unconscious, and likely drowning to death, unless rescued by his compatriots (assuming that he has some nearby!).

Finally, GMs should always exercise *discretion* when using this system. It should *not* replace common sense or player creativity. If the task in question is one that any normal human being would typically succeed at accomplishing, then a roll should be unnecessary. Avoid having players roll to determine if their characters can climb a ladder, jump across a three foot crevice, or swim across a calm pond. Moreover, if a player comes up with an ingenious plan to overcome some difficulty or challenge, the GM may want to reward that player by allowing the plan to succeed without a roll, or, if the GM thinks that the plan is risky enough to require a roll, with a positive modifier. Interesting and daring plans make the game more exciting for everyone, and thus generally should be rewarded by GMs. (Foolish plans, on the other hand, are rightfully mocked!)

EDIT: In the third printing of S&W, fighters and magic-users *both* start with a saving throw of '15,' and improve by 1 per level until level 11. Clerics retain their original saving throws.

Class-Based Weapon Damage

It always has seemed strange to me that in most 'old school' fantasy role-playing games (including, of course, Swords & Wizardry and Labyrinth Lord) magic-users cannot wield a sword, even to defend themselves. Stranger still, in my opinion, is the prohibition on edged weapons for clerics. This restriction, while perhaps appropriate for priests whose religion resembles that of Medieval Christianity, makes absolutely no sense for the followers of deities such as Athena, Crom, Odin, or Ra.

With this optional system, characters of any class can use any weapon. However, because of different levels of training, the amount of damage a character can do with a given weapon varies depending on his/her class. Moreover, magic-users suffer a -1 penalty to hit when using large weapons.

Weapon Damage Chart*

Small Weapons/ Medium Weapons/ Large Weapons
Fighters 1d6 / 1d8 / 1d10
Clerics 1d4 / 1d6 / 1d8
Magic-users 1d4 / 1d4**/ 1d6***

Small Weapons: clubs, daggers, darts, light maces, short swords, slings
Medium Weapons: bows, broadswords, crossbows, flails, hand axes, javelins, heavy maces, spears, war hammers, quarterstaffs (two-handed), long swords
Large Weapons: battleaxes (two-handed), great swords (two-handed), halberds (two-handed), lances (mounted only)

* This weapon damage chart is meant to replace the weapon damage chart included in the Swords & Wizardry Core Rules.
** Magic-users do 1d6 when wielding quarterstaffs with two hands (so the quarterstaff remains the best melee weapon for pointy-headed spell-slingers).
*** Magic-users have a -1 penalty to hit when using large weapons.

Note on Magical Weapons

One implication of this optional system is that non-fighters will now be able to wield magical weapons (swords, bows, and so forth) previously restricted to fighters. This optional system therefore takes away one of the main advantages of fighters vis-à-vis non-fighters. There are at least three ways for Game Masters do deal with this potential problem. First, Game Masters may simply restrict certain magical weapons to fighters (such a restriction would presumably be part of the enchantment). Second, the Game Master may weaken the benefits conferred by magical weapons on non-fighters. For instance, the Game Master may decree that non-fighters wielding certain weapons (namely, those previously restricted to fighters) receive only half the normal attack and damage bonuses (rounded up) from such weapons. So, for example, a cleric or magic-user wielding a +3 broadsword would receive a bonus of only +2. Finally, if the Game Master is also using the optional system of 'fighting styles' for fighters included in this issue of Knockspell, then he or she may decide

that fighters have an adequate number of new advantages – namely, the advantages gained by the fighting styles as well as the greater damage inflicted by fighter characters with all weapons, magical or not – that the ability of non-fighters to use any magical weapon is not a serious concern.

(First published in *Knockspell* #1)

Additional Notes

a. Obviously, in addition to S&W, this system could also be used with any pre-3e version of D&D (OD&D, Basic D&D, 1e AD&D, 2e AD&D, and RC D&D), and their respective retro-clones (Labyrinth Lord, BFRP, OSRIC).

b. If using the 'standard' thief (i.e., the version of the class found in OD&D, Basic D&D, 1e AD&D, etc.), thieves should use the 'cleric' chart.

c. If using the version of the thief that I presented in *Knockspell* #2 (which treats the thief as a 'sub-class' of the fighter), thief characters should use the 'fighter' chart, except that they only do 1d8 damage with 'large' weapons.

The Akratic Thief

My version of the thief class relies on using the saving throw system in *Swords & Wizardry* as a kind of 'general task resolution system,' that is, as a system for determining whether a character succeeds at a particular task when his/her success or failure is not certain.

My interpretation of the thief class is inspired primarily by the fictional characters of "Fafhrd" and the "Gray Mouser," as found in the stories by Fritz Leiber, as well as other roguish characters from classic 'pulp' swords and sorcery fiction. Consequently, I understand the thief typically to be a good fighter, a roguish scrapper capable of standing his own ground in most cases. Therefore, the thief is understood to be a 'sub-class' of the fighter (fighting-man) class. Except for the special restrictions and abilities noted below, the thief follows the rules (including experience point requirements and attack rolls) for fighters.

Prime Attribute: Dexterity, 13+ (5% experience)

Hit Dice: 1d6+1/level (Gains 2 hp/level after 9th)

Armour/Shield Permitted: Thieves may use their special abilities only when wearing leather armour or no armour, and not using a shield. When wearing armour heavier than leather and/or using a shield, they may fight as normal (as a fighter), but may not use their unique abilities and advantages (including their combat advantages, as described below).

Weapons Permitted: When using two-handed weapons, thieves may not use their special abilities and advantages. They may use any one-handed weapon without penalty, including a weapon in each hand (more information on this below, in the description of thieves' special abilities). The one exception to this rule is short bows, which thieves may use without penalty. (If using the 'Class-

Based Damage' system that I presented in the first issue of *Knockspell*, thieves use the 'fighter' chart – except for large weapons. When using large weapons thieves only do 1d8 damage.)

Saving Throw: As Clerics (i.e., starts at 14 at first level, and improves by one every level thereafter, until level 11, when the thief's saving throw is 4, and no longer improves).

Establish Thieves Guild (9th level): Instead of establishing a traditional stronghold like regular fighters, thieves may, upon reaching ninth level, establish a guild in any urban area of appropriate size (population 3,000 or greater). Upon establishing such a guild, the thief typically will attract 4+1d6 thieves as followers (levels 1-4; roll separately for each thief). (The GM may decide that additional thieves will join the guild in very large cities, e.g., cities with populations of 20,000 or greater, and that fewer thieves will join the guild in smaller settlements, e.g., towns with populations less than 8,000.) Additional thieves may join the guild later, if it proves to be successful (GM's discretion). However, if the town or city in which a thief establishes a guild already has a well-organized thieves guild in it, the GM may want to role-play the subsequent conflict between the two guilds (or negotiations over 'territory,' etc.).

Races: Thieves may be of any race (Elf, Dwarf, Halfling, or Human), unless the GM judges otherwise. Non-human thieves may progress to any level, but have a Hit Dice of only 1d6 (and gain only 1 hp/level after 9th).

Thief Special Abilities

Thieving 'Tasks' – Climbing, Legerdemain, Opening Locks, Perception, Stealth, and Traps

The thief enjoys a +3 bonus to any roll involving the following categories of tasks (using the saving throw system described earlier).

Climbing

This category covers attempts by characters to scale sheer surfaces, including walls and cliffs. If a rope and grappling hook are available, though, the character normally need not make a roll in order to climb (although if the situation is very stressful, e.g., the character is being pursued by trolls, then the GM may judge that a roll is necessary).

Legerdemain

This category covers tasks involving the skilful use of one's hands when performing tricks (e.g., hiding a dagger from a guard), as well as attempts to pick the pockets of others without attracting notice. Halflings (if understood in the 'standard' fantasy way) receive a +1 bonus to any legerdemain task.

Opening Locks

This category covers attempts to pick locks. Halflings (if understood in the 'standard' fantasy way) receive a +1 bonus to attempts to pick locks. If the thief lacks a proper set of lock picks, he/she suffers a penalty of -2 or greater (as the GM judges) to his/her attempt. Especially well crafted lock picks may give the thief a bonus to his/her attempts. Legends speak of magical lock picks that enable thieves to overcome even the most difficult of locks.

<u>Perception</u>

This category covers attempts by characters to notice hidden or concealed objects (e.g., secret doors or traps) or creatures (e.g., brigands waiting in ambush). Elves (if understood in the 'standard' fantasy way) receive a bonus of +2 to all attempts at perception. Dwarves (if understood in the 'standard' fantasy way) receive a bonus of +4 to all attempts involving perception vis-à-vis stone surfaces or objects (e.g., stone traps or secret doors).

<u>Stealth</u>

This category covers attempts by characters to remain unnoticed, including hiding and/or moving silently. Dark shadows or dense foliage may give characters a bonus to their saving throws, while bright lights or clear ground may give them a penalty (or even make an attempt at stealth impossible). Halflings (if understood in the 'standard' fantasy way) receive a bonus of +4 to all attempts at stealth. Wearing armour heavier than leather normally prohibits a character from moving silently. Carrying a torch or other light source prohibits a character from hiding.

<u>Traps</u>

This category covers attempts by characters to disable or set traps. The GM may sometimes judge a roll unnecessary, if the player describes his/her character's actions in such a way that the GM thinks guarantees success or failure. Dwarves (if understood in the 'standard' fantasy way) receive a bonus of +2 involving attempts to disable mechanical traps.

Exactly which tasks fall under the above categories is, of course, to be determined by the GM (although in most cases this should be obvious). Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that *any* character of *any* class may attempt *any* of the above kinds of tasks – *if* the GM judges that it is possible for that character (e.g., the GM may decide that a character who has no understanding of locks simply cannot attempt to pick a lock). These abilities are *not* the unique province of thieves. Non-thief characters, however, simply do not receive the same bonus (+3) that the thief does. Thus it is possible for a fighter with a good dexterity, and not wearing armour (or only leather armour), to be quite good at the 'thief-like' tasks summarized above, despite not enjoying the special bonus that thieves do. (The character of 'Conan,' as described by R. E. Howard, can be interpreted as an example of such a fighter.)

Languages

The thief learns a new language at level 5, another new language at level 10, and a final new language at level 15. At no point, however, may a thief exceed the maximum number of languages that he/she may know, as determined by his/her intelligence. These bonus languages are in addition to any new languages that the thief may have learned 'normally' (based on the GM's discretion or house-rules).

Reading Scrolls

At level 6, thieves with an intelligence of 12 or greater may read and use magic-user scrolls as though they were magic-users five levels lower than their thief level (thus a 10th level thief may use magic-user scrolls as though he/she were a 5th level magic-user). There is always a chance that a thief's attempt to use a scroll will fail. The chance of failure = 5% + (2 x spell level) – intelligence bonus. (Example: a thief with 14 intelligence attempts to use a magic-user 'fireball' scroll. Her chance of failure is 10% [5 + 6 - 1].) If a thief's attempt to use a magic-user scroll fails, he/she must make a saving throw. If the thief fails that saving throw, the scroll 'backfires' in a manner to be

determined by the GM. (For instance, if the thief in the previous example failed in her attempt to use the fireball scroll, and then failed her saving throw, the GM may decide that the fireball explodes right in her hands!)

Two Weapon Fighting

So long as the thief is wearing 'light' armour (no heavier than leather), and is not using a shield, he/she gains a +2 to hit (instead of the standard +1) when using two weapons.

Artful Dodging

So long as the thief is wearing leather armour or no armour, is not using a shield, and is not wielding a 'large' (i.e., two-handed) weapon, he/she receives a -2 [+2] bonus to his/her armour class.

(Perceptive readers who own *Knockspell* #1 may notice that thieves automatically enjoy the benefits of the 'swashbuckling' fighting style described in my article, "Fighter With Flair!" This is the *only* fighting style that they can use. Unlike regular fighters, thieves do not have access to any additional fighting styles. The thief class described above may be used with or without the 'fighting styles' system described in "Fighters With Flair!")

(This version of the thief class was published previously in *Knockspell* #2.)

Everyone can Backstab ...

... because *everyone* is a rogue!

In a classic 'swords and sorcery' setting -- such as R. E. Howard's "Hyboria" or F. Leiber's "Nehwon" -- pretty much every protagonist is a 'rogue' in the broad sense of the word. That is, either you're a charming rogue, capable of overcoming foes and surmounting dangers that would defeat a lesser mortal, or you're a soon-to-be-dead-or-forgotten pleb.

Adventurers like Conan and the Gray Mouser don't fight nice. They use every advantage at their disposal to overcome their foes.

In order to simulate this aspect of the 'swords and sorcery' genre, I've decided to let *any* character of any permitted class -- fighter, thief, or magician -- to 'backstab' an opponent, should the opportunity arise. If the character can attack from behind, or without being noticed, that character enjoys a bonus to hit (+2 to +4, depending on the circumstances, as the Game Master decides), and rolls two damage dice upon a successful hit (e.g., if a fighter were to backstab a brutish oaf with a longsword, and that fighter successfully hit the brutish oaf, the player would roll 2d8 for damage).

Good guys finish last in the world of 'swords and sorcery'!

(Thanks to Age of Fable for this suggestion!)

Fighters with Flair!

One of the great virtues of *Swords & Wizardry*, *Labyrinth Lord*, and similar 'old school' games, is that elaborate rules are not relied upon in order to distinguish different fighters from one another. Whether a player's fighter character is like Aragorn, Conan, Robin Hood, or Sinbad the Sailor is determined primarily through role-playing. Nonetheless, some groups may wish for some way to distinguish their fighter characters in game terms. This optional system of 'fighting styles' for fighters is intended to satisfy this desire, while remaining easy and fast. Using this system, not only will a Conan-like character differ from a Robin Hood-like character by means of role-playing, but also, as a tactical matter, through those characters' somewhat different combat abilities.

If you use these rules, a first level a fighter can choose two different fighting styles. The 'berserker,' 'shield master,' and 'swashbuckler,' styles can be chosen only once each. The 'unarmed combat' style can be chosen only twice. The 'weapon mastery' and 'weapon grandmastery' options can be chosen multiple times, but only once per weapon type (so a fighter could *not* choose weapon mastery in spears twice in order to gain a +2 bonus to hit with spears).

An additional fighting style can be chosen by a fighter character once he/she reaches level 4, level 8, and level 12 (so a 12th level fighter will have five fighting styles in total).

Seven fighting styles are available (although, of course, the Game Master is free to design others for players to select):

1. **Berserker**. The fighter gains a +2 bonus to hit and damage for the duration of one combat (melee weapon only), but suffers a +2 [-2] penalty to his/her AC while berserk. Afterwards, the character is exhausted, taking a -2 penalty to all actions. One hour of complete rest (no walking) eliminates the exhaustion.

2. **Shield Master**. The fighter gains an extra -1 [+1] bonus to his/her AC when using a shield.

3. **Swashbuckler**. So long as the fighter is wearing 'light' armour (no heavier than leather), is not using a shield, and is not using a large weapon, he/she gains a -2 [+2] bonus to his/her AC. Also, when using two weapons the fighter gains a +2 to hit (instead of +1).

4. **Unarmed Combat**. The fighter can do 1d6 of normal damage with only his/her fists and feet. If he/she takes this fighting style a second time, this damage increases to 1d8.

5. **Weapon Master**. The fighter gains a +1 to hit with any one type of weapon (axes, bows, broad & long swords, clubs, crossbows, daggers, darts, flails, great swords, halberds, hammers, javelins & spears, maces, quarterstaffs, short swords, slings, etc.). Each type of weapon may be chosen only once by a character.

6. **Weapon Grandmaster**. If a fighter is already a weapon master of a particular type of weapon (axes, bows, broad & long swords, clubs, crossbows, daggers, darts, flails, great swords, halberds, hammers, javelins & spears, maces, quarterstaffs, short swords, slings, etc.), he/she may become a 'grandmaster' of that weapon type. A grandmaster gains a +1 bonus to damage in addition to

the +1 to hit he/she already enjoys as a master of the weapon type in question. Each type of weapon may be chosen only once by a character.

(An earlier version of this article appeared in *Knockspell* #1. The 6th fighting style is new.)

Magicians and the Colours of Magic

These rules are meant to modify the *Swords and Wizardry* magic rules [or the rules of 0e D&D, Basic/Expert D&D, Labyrinth Lord, Basic Fantasy RPG, or – with a little work – 1e AD&D or OSRIC] so that they more closely resemble the way that magic works in most classic 'swords and sorcery' tales. Specifically, they introduce the idea of the 'colours of magic' – magic spells are classified as 'white,' 'grey,' or 'black' in nature. A new system of casting spells is also outlined, as well as a new class, the 'magician,' that replaces both the standard cleric and magic-user classes.

The Magician Class

The magic-user and cleric classes are replaced with the magician class. Magicians may be benevolent witches, reclusive shamans, eccentric sages, enigmatic priests, malevolent necromancers, or megalomaniacal sorcerers – their exact nature depends on their background, goals, spells, and sanity.

There is no longer any division between 'cleric' and 'magic-user' spells. Instead, spells are categorized as 'white,' 'grey,' or 'black' (as explained below). Magicians may learn and cast *any* kind of spell. Magicians who focus on white magic tend to be called wizards, savants, or thaumaturges. Magicians who focus on grey magic often are called enchanters, mages, or illusionists. Magicians who focus on black magic tend to be called sorcerers, warlocks, or necromancers. Magicians of any focus who are associated with a cult or religious order might be called priests, seers, or acolytes.

The Prime Attribute of Magicians is Intelligence. Magicians with an Intelligence of 13 or greater receive a bonus of 5% to all experience points earned. Magicians with an Intelligence of 15 or greater can prepare an additional first-level spell.

Magicians use the 'magic-user' experience chart, spell chart (ignoring spells above level 6), and saving throws. Like magic-users, they typically eschew armour, although they may wear leather armour without interfering with their spell casting, and are not trained in the use of shields.

Magicians may use any weapon, although they receive a -1 to all damage rolls (but always do a minimum of '1' point of damage), unless they are using daggers, darts, quarterstaffs, or slings. (If using the 'Class-Based Damage' system that I presented in *Knockspell #1*, magicians use the 'cleric' damage table, and do *not* suffer any penalty to their damage rolls.) Since magicians normally need at least one hand free in order to cast their spells, they rarely will use two-handed weapons (except for quarterstaffs, which are easily held in one hand when necessary).

Magicians use the 'cleric' attack chart when using one-handed weapons (including slings, throwing daggers, and darts) or quarterstaffs. They use the 'magic-user' attack chart when using any other kind of weapon (including missile weapons other than slings, throwing daggers, and darts).

Magicians use a d6 (no modifier) as their hit die. (Thus, using the damage rules outlined above, first level magicians start with 11 hit points, prior to any constitution modifiers.) They receive one hit point per level after level nine.

First-level magicians start with a spellbook that contains three first-level spells (player's choice) and one second-level spell (player's choice). All other spells must be found, learned from a tutor (usually for a steep fee), or purchased (also usually for a steep fee).

Magicians can prepare a number of spells as determined by their level (see the magic-user spell chart; as noted earlier, magicians with an Intelligence score of 15 or greater may prepare an additional first-level spell). A magician may change the spells that he/she has prepared with eight uninterrupted hours of study (the magician's spellbook must be available).

Magicians may cast any spell that they have prepared any number of times – however, as explained below, they suffer *exhaustion* (loss of hit points) every time that they cast a spell, which limits how many spells they can cast before resting.

Magicians can write their own scrolls, copying the spells from their spellbooks, at the cost of 200 gold pieces per spell

 level for supplies (special ink and parchment). It takes one full day per spell level of careful work to copy a scroll (one has to be very careful when dealing with the mystical powers!). Thus writing a scroll of a fourth-level spell would cost 800 gold pieces and take four full days of work. Spells cast from scrolls, whether prepared by the magician or found, cause exhaustion – and, if the spell is classified as 'black magic,' corruption – just as if the magician had cast the spell normally. Scrolls increase the range of spells available to a magician; they do *not* reduce the physical costs of casting spells. (Exhaustion and corruption are explained below.)

Magician Summary

Prime Attribute: Intelligence, 13+ (5% experience)

Hit Dice: 1d6 (Gains 1 hp/level after 9th level)

Saving Throws: As Magic-User

Experience Chart: As Magic-User

Armour/Shield Permitted: Leather only

Weapons Permitted: Any, but does less damage with certain weapons (see description above)

Attack Charts: Cleric (if using one-handed weapon or quarterstaff) or Magic-User (all other weapons)

Spells Prepared: As Magic-User

Spell Casting: Any number of times per day, but spells cost exhaustion (hit points), and possibly corruption (if a 'black magic' spell is cast)

Spells

There is no division between 'clerical' and 'magic-user' spells – *all* spells can be learned by magicians in the same way that magic-users do (i.e., by recording them in spellbooks, and 'preparing' them to be cast later). If a spell has both a 'cleric' and a 'magic-user' version, use the 'magic-user' version.

No spells above level 6 exist, although powerful but costly 'rituals' may be created by the Game Master in order to simulate the powers of higher-level spells – including especially the summoning of vile demons!

There is no 'read magic' spell. Instead, all magicians know the ancient eldritch language in which all magic is written.

Spells are divided into *White Magic* (spells that promote or maintain life, protect against harm, and generally are 'in tune' with the natural laws and forces of the universe), *Grey Magic* (spells that typically involve the manipulation and/or alteration of objects and/or minds), and *Black Magic* (spells that typically are destructive and/or 'contrary to nature,' say, by being necromantic in character or by drawing on forces beyond this universe).

White Magic

First Level: Cure Light Wounds (applies *only* to lost constitution points, not hit points), Detect Evil, Detect Magic, Light, Protection from Evil, Purify Food and Drink, Read Languages, Shield.

Second Level: Bless, Continual Light, Detect Invisibility, Find Traps, Speak with Animals, Strength. [Excruciating Cauterization] [Force of Forbidment]

Third Level: Cure Disease, Dispel Magic, Prayer, Protection from Evil (10 ft radius), Protection from Normal Missiles, Remove Curse, Water Breathing. [Word of Ioun]

Fourth Level: Create Water, Cure Serious Wounds (applies *only* to lost constitution points, not hit points), Neutralize Poison, Plant Growth, Protection from Evil (10 ft radius), Remove Curse, Speak with Plants.

Fifth Level: Animal Growth, Create Food, Dispel Evil, Insect Plague.

Sixth Level: Anti-Magic Shell, Control Weather, Conjure Animals, Legend Lore, Restoration.

Grey Magic

First Level: Charm Person, Hold Portal, Sleep

Second Level: ESP, Invisibility, Knock, Levitate, Magic Mouth, Miror Image, Phantasmal Force, Pyrotechnics, Silence (15 ft radius), Snake Charm, Web, Wizard Lock.

Third Level: Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Darkvision, Fly, Haste, Hold Person, Invisibility (10 ft radius), Rope Trick, Slow, Suggestion. [Ball of Ice] [Filigree] [Omar's Mistake] [Red Bull] [Rejectment] [Strange Waters]

Fourth Level: Charm Monster, Confusion, Dimension Door, Fear, Hallucinatory Terrain, Massmorph, Polymorph Other, Polymorph Self, Sticks to Snakes, Wall of Fire, Wall of Ice. [Hylogenesis] [Imperfect Suspension] [Infuse] [Seven Gates]

Fifth Level: Feeblemind, Hold Monster, Magic Jar, Passwall, Quest, Telekinesis, Teleport, Transmute Rock to Mud, Wall of Iron, Wall of Stone. [Crystallogenesis] [Magpie]

Sixth Level: Animate Object, Enchant Item, Geas, Lower water, Move Earth, Part Water, Project Image, Repulsion, Speak with Monsters, Stone to Flesh, Word of Recall. [Twilight of Thieves]

Black Magic

First Level: Magic Missile.

Second Level: Darkness (15 ft radius), Stinking Cloud. [Strangulations] [Tarnu's Collaring Coiffure]

Third Level: Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Monster Summoning I, Speak with Dead. [Tarantella]

Fourth Level: Ice Storm, Monster Summoning II, Wizard Eye. [Beast of Chaos] [Deadly Bliss]

Fifth Level: Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Commune, Conjure Elemental, Contact Other Plane, Finger of Death, Monster Summoning III. [Deadly Dissolvative] [Most Horrible Absorption] [Six Mouths of Horror]

Sixth Level: Death Spell, Disintegrate, Invisible Stalker, Monster Summoning IV. [Cohesive Cocoon]

Spell Notes

In addition to all 7th-9th level spells (except for 'Restoration,' which I have made a 6th level spell), I have removed the spells 'raise dead' and 'reincarnation,' as they seem inappropriate for a 'swords and sorcery' flavoured magic system. To ameliorate the consequences of 'permanent death,' the modified rules concerning hit points and damage presented earlier should make character death somewhat less frequent.

The 'Extension' spells (I-III) do not belong to a particular colour (white/grey/black). Rather, they belong to the same colour as the spell they are used to 'extend.' So using Extension I to extend the duration of a 'fly' spell means that the magician in question has cast *two* 'grey magic' spells (and thus would suffer 12 points of exhaustion damage, as explained below).

Remember that the 'cure wounds' spells only heal lost *constitution* points – not hit points!

Spells in square brackets are taken from Matt Finch's 'Eldritch Weirdness: Book One.'

<u>**Spell Casting: Exhaustion, Corruption, and Sanity**</u>

When magicians cast 'white magic' spells they suffer exhaustion damage equal to one hit point plus one hit point per level of the spell cast (so a magician who casts a third level white magic spell would suffer four points of damage).

When magicians cast 'grey magic' spells they suffer exhaustion damage equal to twice the level of the spell cast (so a magician who casts a third level grey magic spell would suffer six points of damage).

When magicians cast 'black magic' spells they suffer exhaustion damage identical to that caused by 'grey magic' spells (twice the spell level). In addition, magicians casting 'black magic' spells must

make a saving throw (versus 'spells' if using a system other than S&W) in order to avoid *corruption*. If this saving roll is failed, the magician is corrupted slightly and suffers a loss of temporary *Wisdom* points equal to the spell level (e.g., 3 points of temporary Wisdom for a third-level spell). Temporarily lost points of Wisdom can be recovered at a rate of one point per complete day of rest and meditation (no other action possible). The spell 'Restoration' will restore instantly all temporarily lost Wisdom points.

Furthermore, if a magician casting a 'black magic' spell fails his/her saving throw by rolling a '1,' then that magician loses one point of Wisdom *permanently* (so if a magician fails his/her saving throw casting a third-level black magic spell by rolling a '1,' he/she would lose one *permanent* point of Wisdom and two temporary points of Wisdom). The spell 'Restoration' will *not* restore any permanently lost Wisdom points.

A magician whose permanent wisdom score is lowered to 2 becomes *insane*, and possibly the thrall of an extra-planar demonic force. He/she henceforth is a non-player character!

Final Notes

1. These house rules are meant to be used with my other house rules, and in particular my rules for sanity and damage (both already posted on this blog).

2. A version of these house rules will appear in a longer article on 'swords and sorcery' campaigns in issue 3 of *Knockspell* magazine.

Are You Experienced?

Because of the relative dearth of valuable treasure in my *Swords & Wizardry* 'Ilmahal' campaign setting, experience points are *not* awarded for treasure found (gold pieces, magic items, etc.). Instead, experience points are awarded for opponents and obstacles overcome, missions completed, and clever playing (as outlined below).

1. Experience points are awarded for foes overcome, whether slain, subdued, fooled, dealt with diplomatically, or whatever. (If characters *unnecessarily* fight non-player characters or monsters, experience point awards are reduced or even eliminated.) The amount awarded = 100 x HD + bonuses for special abilities (d4 HD creatures = 50 exp; d6 HD = 80 exp). 'Challenges' overcome without combat are assigned a 'hit dice equivalent' by the Game Master.

2. Experience points should also be awarded for traps, tricks, and other life-threatening obstacles overcome. In general, 50-1000 experience points should be awarded, depending on the difficulty of the obstacle in question (a rough guide is 100 x average character level).

3. Finally, experience points are awarded for missions completed (typically 200 x Party Average Level).

The above awards are totalled and divided amongst all characters at the end of an adventure. The Game Master may also provide *individual* experience awards for clever thinking, good ideas, etc. Such awards normally should not exceed 100 x character level.