

# TALKING MINIATURES

OR HOW THE LINCOLN MODEL RAILWAY AND  
WARGAMES SOCIETY CHANGED THE WORLD

VOLUME 1

**SHAGGY DOG™**



**PUBLISHING**

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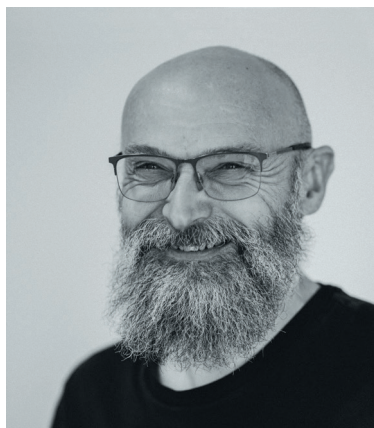
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DEDICATED TO

*Mike Brunton  
John Ellard  
Paul Elsey  
Wayne England  
Richard Halliwell  
Duncan MacFarlane  
Andy 'Pank' Szczepankiewicz  
Tim 'Silverfox' Wilson*

*And all the others who were part  
of this story, but whose voices now  
only echo in our memories*

## FOREWORD



*Rick Priestley 2022*

The past is a foreign country, as Hartley writes in *The Go-Between*, and as I was to be reminded time and time again whilst reading the many and varied interviews in this book. I suppose I must have been there too – a photograph cannot lie after all – but memory is a tricky thing: a palimpsest

overwritten by decades of reflection. Well, here we have personal commentaries from some of the key people behind the story of Citadel Miniatures: folks who were there at the inception of a small model manufacturer under the roof of the Newark Folk Museum, including some who would go on to spur Citadel's growth beneath the umbrella of Games Workshop, and others who would oversee the company's transformation into today's multinational hobby business known and celebrated the world over.

John Stallard has long wanted to make some kind of record of the early days of Citadel Miniatures, and many is the time he and I have sat down with a pint of ale and talked about how such a thing might be achieved. John very quickly came to realise that no one person could hope to tell that story in its entirety. The perspective from the Citadel Studio forms a lengthy yarn in itself, but it would be incomplete without an account of manufacturing developments, the contribution of the sales teams, and the hands-on steerage of managers themselves, barely older than their often wayward charges.

It is worth remembering too, Citadel of the '70s and '80s was a youthful company – there was no cadre of experienced management to guide us, no tradition of practice to draw upon, no 'rulebook' of how to do things. It is perhaps not therefore surprising that our interviewees often describe Citadel's progress in terms of constant trial and error – of madcap adventures into realms as diverse as music publishing and live action roleplay – only entrenching in the 1990s as the company behind 'Warhammer'.

Whilst not among our list of interviewees, John's voice is ever-present as interviewer alongside that of Robin Dews, who also compiled and edited the transcripts of the many hours of recordings that make up the conversations in this book. It was Robin who also trawled through hundreds of old copies of *White Dwarf*, begged or borrowed early Citadel Journals, mail order sheets and other hard-to-find publications and documents in order to perfectly illustrate those conversations. John's own observations form an integral part of the overall account none-the-less, and offer a unique window onto the operations of the sales and marketing arm so vital to the growth and success of Citadel Miniatures and Games Workshop.

Together, we tell what we can of a collective journey, only too aware of the lacunae that still remain as well as the missing voices of those no longer with us. This account must serve as a tribute to all, past and present, and to a time that really was a 'foreign country'.

*Rick Priestley  
March 2023*



# HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT

This book started life in a humble way, with a casual conversation between co-authors, Robin Dews and John Stallard, over a cup of tea in John's back garden in the late summer of 2016. We were chatting about the creative and commercial success that Games Workshop had become as it roared into its fourth decade. We also remarked, with no little sense of disbelief, how, like so many other people who'd joined the fledgling company in the late 1970s and early 1980s, we were now on the verge of drawing our pensions! Two old curmudgeons, ruminating on the passing of time.

If memory holds true, I believe it was John who first suggested that "someone ought to write all this down before we all become too old and decrepit". It seemed like a good



*Robin and John visit the old Citadel factory and offices in Victoria Street Newark - August 2021  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*

idea at the time, and given that between the two of us we had worked for over sixty years, first at Citadel (in John's case) and then for Games Workshop (in both cases) and were personal friends with many of the early staff members such as Tony Ackland, Rick Priestley, Jervis Johnson, Alan and Michael Perry, Bob Naismith, Trish Carden

and so on. We decided that there was probably no one better placed than the pair of us to get this done. So there and then, under early autumn leaves and fuelled by tea and digestives, the idea of Talking Miniatures was born.

At around the same time, or shortly afterwards, we became aware that Games Workshop's original founders, Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson, were already working on a book of their own - Dice Men: The Origin Story of Games Workshop.



*Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone in the mid-1970s  
© Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson*



*Citadel Miniatures' first home at 48 Millgate, Newark in 2021*  
Photo: ERD Visual Media

That is indeed Steve and Ian's story, and we wish to take nothing from them. They have both rightfully earned their place in British gaming history. Anyone who has ever rolled a handful of weirdly faceted dice, battled their way into the depths of a dungeon, or gazed in awe at the shimmering jewel-like quality of a beautifully painted miniature, owes an enormous and enduring debt

of gratitude to those two young, maverick entrepreneurs. Thank you both for changing our lives as well!

But what John and I had in mind was a slightly different story. The Games Workshop that exists today, to the delight of its hobby fans, still shares its name with Steve and Ian's original 1975 London founding, but back in the late-1970s several new East Midlands genes began to intermingle with its DNA.

In Lincoln, two bright schoolboys called Rick Priestley and Richard 'Hal' Halliwell decided that they could write a better set of wargames rules than the rather worthy 'Wargames Research Group - Fantasy Magic Supplement' that they'd been using to moderate their own fantasy battles.

Around the same time, not far away in Nottingham, another toy soldier enthusiast,

designer, sculptor and entrepreneur called Bryan Ansell, was looking for the opportunity to set up a business and make some money out of the rapidly growing interest in fantasy games and miniatures. Bryan co-founded a company called Asgard Miniatures, with two friends, and began to assemble an eclectic cast of designers, sculptors, artists and non-conformists that included Jes Goodwin, Nick Bibby, John Blanche and Tony Ackland.



*Citadel Miniatures' second home at Victoria Street, Newark in 2021*  
Photo: ERD Visual Media

Then a couple of years later, in 1979, Bryan left Asgard to set up Citadel Miniatures as the figure design and casting division of Games Workshop.

Citadel retained Asgard's East Midlands base, establishing its miniatures casting foundry, sales and mail order operations in Newark-on-Trent. This enabled Bryan to retain and expand his circus troupe of characters, to include other such notables as Bob Naismith, Dave Andrews, Trish and Aly Morrison and a young John Stallard.



*Citadel Miniatures' third home at Chewton Street, Eastwood, Nottingham in 2021  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*

Four years later, in 1983, Citadel published Warhammer - The Mass Combat Fantasy Role-playing Game. Written by Bryan, Hal and Rick, and illustrated by Tony Ackland with box art by John Blanche, it marked the genesis of the modern Games Workshop. Four years later, in 1987, the company presented Rick's Warhammer 40,000 - Rogue Trader to an astonished gaming public, and the transformation was complete.

Over the subsequent thirty-five years, every game or miniature that the company has

produced and sold has been either an iteration of Warhammer or Warhammer 40,000, or an extension of those game-worlds into new realms. From this perspective, there should have been little surprise when Games Workshop embarked on a re-branding of its retail chain a few years ago. Its more than four hundred global stores are no longer called Games Workshop. Visiting customers and hobbyists are now met with a single word above the door - 'Warhammer'.



*Games Workshop and Citadel Miniatures global HQ and home since 1997 in Willow Road, Nottingham  
Photo: Robin Dews 2023*

## WHY TALKING MINIATURES?

Having decided to tell this story, of how a small group of wargame and toy soldier enthusiasts came to evangelise the world, we were then faced with the problem of how to tell it?

For reasons far too mysterious to fathom, for the past one hundred years or so, the UK has always been home to at least one major toy soldier company that has delighted generation after generation of young and not so young enthusiasts. From the beginning of the 20th century, through to the late 1950s, this position was held by a company called Britains. Later on, as plastic injection moulding changed the face of the industry, Airfix became the dominant player, entrancing children of the 1960s and '70s with their HO scale model kits and matching boxes of plastic soldiers. And from the late 1970s, as the explosion of interest in science fiction and fantasy gaming took hold in the popular imagination, this UK toy soldier baton was picked up by Citadel, and surged forward under the name Games Workshop.

John and I are storytellers rather than historians, and so neither of us had an appetite for a straightforward narrative timeline. Indeed, what makes the origins of Citadel so interesting is the tale of how a small group of enthusiasts, entrepreneurs and creative designers turned their passion for collecting and gaming with model soldiers into a business that would not only keep them fed and clothed, but also allow them to avoid getting proper jobs!



*Robin cracks up, as John attempts to keep a straight face!*  
© ERD Media 2021

In the end, the answer to how best to tell this story simply presented itself. Indeed, it was there staring us in the face the whole time. As soon as we started to chat to our friends and former colleagues about their memories of the early Citadel, their stories and recollections started to flow...

Our first 'interviewee' was the irascible Rick Priestley, way back in early spring 2017, and we immediately knew we'd struck gold. This was not so much an interview as three old mates, sitting around, chewing the fat about the good old days. A comment from one of us would trigger an avalanche of memories from the other two, often leaving us helpless with laughter. This was the only point at which I harboured any doubts about our chosen method. I simply thought that no one would believe any of this, it was just too hilariously improbable! Our heartfelt thanks go to all of the people who sat down and gave freely and generously of their time. These are your stories and so this is your book as much as ours.

In the end, and as with all good tales, truth often mingles with fiction and the realities of the early years of Citadel are almost, but not quite, lost to memory. The simple truth is that when folk are getting on with making a living - designing games and miniatures, figuring out how to manufacture and distribute them, opening stores and trying to increase sales in order to pay the bills - there are far too many other urgent tasks to get on with to consider that in ten or twenty or even fifty years' time, people will be fascinated to know and understand how this all came about.

So that is how Talking Miniatures was born. Pour yourself a nice cup of tea, put another log on the fire, and draw your cloak around you. My friends, we have a tale to tell...

*Robin Dews & John Stallard*  
July 2023

Robin Dews

John Stallard

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<http://www.solegends.com>

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**Plastic Soldiers Review** for their passion for Airfix. <http://www.plasticsoldierreview.com/>

**Realm of Chaos Blogspot:**  
<http://realmofchaos80s.blogspot.com/>

**David Soper**  
 Golden Demon Slayer Sword winner

MINIATURES FROM  
 THE STUFF OF LEGENDS  
 COLLECTION PAINTED BY:

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**Martin Legg**  
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**Steve Mussared**  
*'Eavy Metal team*

**Roy Scorer**  
**Richard Scott**  
*Otherworld Miniatures*  
**Adam Skinner**  
**Andrew Taylor**  
**Dee Taylor**  
**Steve Yates**

ALAN & MICHAEL  
PERRY

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*Robin and John take tea and jaffa cakes with the fabulous Perry Twins.*

Alan and Michael are twin brothers, sometimes referred to either as the Perry brothers or the Perry twins. They have played wargames since they were young boys and are avid collectors of antique armour, weapons and other militaria. They studied art at A-level, and started sculpting freelance for Games Workshop in 1978, while still at school. They joined the company in 1980 and became the longest-serving members of the Games Workshop Design Studio.



Alan and Michael Perry – The Perry twins in 2022  
Photo: ERD Visual Media

The pair have a passion for military history and love to recreate it. They were members of Sir Marmaduke Rawdon's Regiment of Foote, which is a Royalist foot regiment of the King's Army, part of the British historical re-enactment group, the English Civil War Society. They have also belonged to other re-enactment groups. With the help of John Stallard, they published a full-colour facsimile of a unique officer's handbook - *The Art of Martial Discipline* - which had been in their collection for some years.

Aside from facial hair they look virtually identical, except that Michael lost part of his right arm in 1996, following an accident loading a reproduction cannon during a re-enactment of the Battle of Crécy in France. This was a very serious injury for a right-handed model sculptor and illustrator, but he subsequently re-taught himself to sculpt and paint with his left hand.

Their own company - Perry Miniatures - currently produces twelve ranges on different historical themes and they have also sculpted a range of 54mm World War I ANZACs for film director Peter Jackson's private collection.

Both brothers live in Nottingham, England.



Left to right: Michael (obscured), Alan, Robin and John chat in Alan's garden in 2022  
Photo: ERD Visual Media

**RD:** Hi, Alan and Michael, thanks for sitting down with us, and providing tea and biscuits to boot! Just to get the conversation started, I want you to go way back, way before there was a Games Workshop or even a Citadel Miniatures. When did you guys first start to make toy soldiers? Tell us that story.

**AP:** It goes back to when we were maybe five or six years old, and we started to make pipe cleaner men. These were basically bent pipe cleaners, with the wire wrapped around for the head and pipe cleaner arms and legs...

**RD:** Literally using pipe cleaners?

**AP:** Yes. And we used to make hundreds of them with little felt tip faces. Hundreds and hundreds of them, but they would never properly stand up or anything. I don't know how we managed to get them to stand up...

**MP:** It was just by bending the legs...

**AP:** That's right, yeah. And they used to have little posable arms.

**JS:** Were they military models? Would you form them in units?

**Both Perrys:** No, not really!

**AP:** In our heads, they probably were, but no, not really.

**JS:** It was more of a skirmish kind of thing...

**AP:** Well, yes, kind of loose...

**MP:** It was the loose skirmish effect that we were going for...

**JS:** And were they warriors or creatures?

**Both Perrys:** Definitely warriors!

**AP:** Well, they didn't have any headgear, and they didn't have any kind of uniform. They were just naked, obviously.

**RD:** Did they have weapons?

**Both Perrys:** No, they were just pipe cleaner men...

**MP:** But I think at the time, I think we were just getting into Airfix as well.

**RD:** So, when was this? Mid to late 1960s?

**AP:** Well, we were born in 1961, and so it would have been the late '60s.

**MP:** Yeah, late '60s. So then Airfix took over for a number of years really...

**AP:** We just collected them. A box every week.

**RD:** Like all kids at the time...

**AP:** Yeah, like all kids did.

**MP:** I think we still occasionally went back and made plasticine figures and so on. But again, they weren't necessarily military.

**RD:** And was this collecting Airfix figures? I mean, was it just the boxes of soldiers, or was it the kits as well, the whole Airfix hobby?



*Pipe cleaners are made of felted cotton with a flexible wire core. They were used for, well... cleaning pipes!  
Photo: Robin Dews*



*Airfix Infantry Combat Group  
John Stallard Collection  
© Airfix 1960*

**AP:** Yeah, it was the kits as well, the whole thing...

**MP:** Yes, and of course, Airfix only released something like three or four boxes of model soldiers a year, and so it was always quite a big event when something new was released. You saw them in the catalogue, but you never knew when they were going to arrive. The Waterloo French Infantry, for example...

**RD:** I remember that was so exciting. I was twelve or thirteen when they did the first Napoleonics. I almost wet myself!

**MP:** Yes, but then there was a big gap between that first French Infantry release and the Highland Infantry, and so they had nothing to fight against... I think it was a couple of years.



*Airfix Waterloo French Artillery  
John Stallard Collection  
© Airfix 1972*



*Airfix Waterloo Highland Infantry  
John Stallard Collection  
© Airfix 1969*

**AP:** It's the same with most manufacturers even now. Their ambition exceeds their ability!

**JS:** But isn't it odd that you guys, as Perry Miniatures, now bring out more plastic toy soldier sets than Airfix did at their height?

**AP:** No, it's about the same...

**MP:** We bring out about four new sets a year.

**JS:** Well, it always seems like more to me!

**MP:** Well, I think it's about three at the moment, but four when we really get going.

**RD:** So, let's go back to where we were... You mentioned plasticine?

**AP:** Yes, after the pipe cleaners! But then, some time... It would have been the early '70s...

**MP:** ...going over to Milliput...

**AP:** Well, we were first introduced to...

**MP:** ...wood putty. The first thing we used when we started sculpting with something a bit more permanent than plasticine was wood putty - the yellow stuff you get out of a tube. And at the time, we must have put it on a mannequin. I can't remember exactly what we used: it might have been wire. But it was a long time before we realised, when we got to using Milliput, that you had to have a wire armature, a skeleton, underneath.

**AP:** Well, a long time... It was about two or three models, I think.

**MP:** We just thought, "We don't like the way they keep flopping over, they need something in them." I think, before then, it was probably cocktail sticks that we modelled our stuff on... Cocktail sticks and wood putty. That was probably around 1973.

**AP:** Yeah, something like that. But also, around that time we were just getting interested in proper metal toy soldiers. We used to go to a shop called Mike's Models in North Finchley to buy our miniatures. And one day, we were in the shop, when we saw this chap called Steve Atwood sculpting figures behind the counter. And he was using this plumber's putty called Milliput, which was really intriguing.

At the time, we used to paint up large-scale Poste Militaire figures, and occasionally sell them in the shop. But we never thought about actually making them ourselves out of this Milliput.

**JS:** So, were you two London boys then?

**Both Perrys:** Yeah, yes. North London...

**AP:** Palmers Green originally.

**MP:** So, Finchley was just a bus ride away, and we used to go into the shop every Saturday.

**JS:** The owner of Mike's Models must have rubbed his hands with glee when you two turned up every Saturday morning...

**MP:** Yeah, we used to go in there to buy Minifigs models, because it was the only shop that stocked them that was within a bus ride of our home. Before then, we'd bought Hinchcliffe figures, but only sparingly, because we didn't really like the way the anatomy worked on them. We always felt sorry for the Hinchcliffe horses, because their legs bent in so many places - so many joints. So, we progressed to Minifigs, because you always knew what you were going to get. Left foot forward, right foot back, and always the same size. Which, for some reason, we really appreciated. Anyhow, we bought lots of Minifigs from Mike's Models...

**AP:** And we've still got them in the garage...

**MP:** Yeah, still got them.

**JS:** It's interesting... In the late '70s or maybe early '80s, there was a bit of a geographical divide. Minifigs was a southern company based down in Southampton, wasn't it?

**Both Perrys:** That's right.

**JS:** In fact, they were originally located in Nottinghamshire... Newark, I think, which is a weird twist of history. But then they moved to Southampton. On the other hand, Hinchcliffe was up in Yorkshire.

**MP:** Yeah, yeah.

**JS:** And there was definitely a North-South divide. If I'm a northerner, then I'm collecting Hinchcliffe.

**AP:** I don't think we were aware of that.

**JS:** Well, we Midlands boys were! It was certainly a northern thing - Hinchcliffe.

**AP:** Well, you could tell, couldn't you...



*You Dirty Rat! - Hand-sculpted  
Milliput model - Alan Perry  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*

**JS:** I couldn't possibly say...

**AP:** Swiftly moving on... So, when we began to properly make models, we started out using Milliput.

**JS:** Just for our readers... What is Milliput?

**AP:** Milliput is a two-part epoxy putty. It's quite harsh, but it does work, and for twenty years, maybe longer, it was the main sculpting material we used.

**RD:** It was originally developed for use in plumbing, wasn't it? For sealing pipes and gaps in water tanks and pipework.

**AP:** Yeah, that's right. But when you are making miniatures, it's best to leave it a little while to cure, after you mix the two parts together. When you first mix it, Milliput is a bit sticky, but after a while, it becomes more leathery, and is easier to work

**MP:** It's still useful for some things but I wouldn't really want to make miniatures with it these days.

**AP:** We used it when we used to make these...

*[At this point, Alan got up and wandered away from the table and came back a few minutes later with a large, beautifully hand-sculpted cavalry model.]*

**AP:** That's one I made...

**MP:** We used to make these 90mm military models...

**RD:** So that's not a casting, it's just pure Milliput?

**MP:** Yes, that's all Milliput, and bits of broken plastic...

**JS:** Crikey!

*[Alan then produces a second exquisite figure.]*

**AP:** We made these in the mid '70s...

**MP:** Yeah, out of Milliput.

**JS:** There are a couple of cavalry models we're looking at here, and they're really very splendid. Very dynamic, incredibly dynamic and...

**RD:** The horses are just fabulous...

**JS:** Yes, the horses are very spirited, aren't they?

*Ye Old Hand-Gun - Hand-sculpted  
Milliput model - Alan Perry  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*





*The Router - Hand-sculpted  
Milliput model - Alan Perry  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*

**RD:** Yeah, the poses...

**MP:** We used to enter competitions for the British Model Soldier Society, and these are just a couple of examples. We have lots of them in the garage.

**AP:** Yes, loads of them, but they are a bit dusty...

**MP:** ...and a bit dated now.

**RD:** Wow! They are amazing. OK, so you'd discovered Milliput and were starting to use wire armatures?

**AP:** Yeah, I think it was Steve Atwood who said, "You need to put an armature in, it needs to be a bit stronger."

**MP:** I don't remember that. I thought we just figured it out through trial and error...

**AP:** Was it? Anyway, one of the first figures I made using a wire armature to support the Milliput was a little demon, a fantasy figure, which ended up looking a bit like... What's his name, the 1930s' dancer?

**MP:** Fred Astaire...

**AP:** Yeah, Fred Astaire. It looked just like Fred Astaire. I don't know why, I hadn't got him in my head or anything...

**JS:** A Fred Astaire demon?

**AP:** Yeah, a little green demon...

**RD:** So, you were making all these as one-off models? The idea of casting them hadn't come yet?

**Both Perrys:** Oh, no. Not at that stage.

**RD:** So, all of these were actually unique one-off sculpts.

**AP:** Yes, and of course, they were nearly always bigger than the miniatures we make now...

**RD:** So larger than 28mm?

**MP:** Yes 90mm, 54mm or 75mm. All the standard sizes for the competitions at the time.

**RD:** So, these were all created as entries into military modelling competitions?

**AP:** Yeah, we used to enter maybe two or three a year, or something like that.

**JS:** Did you ever win?

**Both Perrys:** Yes, quite often.

**JS:** I am not surprised!

**AP:** Yeah, actually one model I particularly remember was your Zulu War diorama...

**MP:** Oh yes. I did a Zulu warrior leaping over a downed Boer, with his horse flailing about beneath him. And I was quite pleased with it, as I like making horses. And I was pulled up by one of the judges...

**AP:** ...it was quite dramatic.

**MP:** Yes it was. The judges all went off together, and there was a hushed conversation, and then they cleared the room. One of the judges then called me in and said: "This is supposed to be a scratch-built category, Michael, but it appears that you've used the head of a Poste Militaire horse. It looks like you've chopped it off and added it to your model?" And so, of course I replied, "Well, that's a great compliment but no, it was all sculpted by hand."



*Poste Militaire Catalogue - Alan and Michael Perry Collection  
© Ray Lamb - Poste Militaire*



*Ju I Ju I Ju I -  
Hand-sculpted Milliput  
model - Michael Perry  
Photo: Robin Dews*

1st Madras Fusilier –  
Hand-sculpted Milliput  
model – Alan Perry.  
Photo: ERD Visual Media



**AP:** Because Poste Militaire and their sculptor Ray Lamb were absolutely top-notch at the time.

**MP:** And I just thought to myself, "God, that's amazing!" But what I said was, "If you scrape some paint off the horse's head, you'll see that it's all Milliput." And he just replied, "Oh, it's all right, I don't need to do that." And so, he believed me. And yes, as I remember, I won first prize in that particular category. But what was really nice, was to have my work compared to Ray Lamb's at Poste Militaire. It was very flattering.

**RD:** And how old were you, Michael?

**MP:** Oh, I think that was in the mid '70s, and I would have been fifteen or sixteen. Something like that...

**RD:** How brilliant was that?

**JS:** And what did your mum and dad think about all this?

**Both Perrys:** Of course, they both loved it.

**JS:** And where did it all come from? Your mum and dad, are they talented?

**AP:** Mum is a very good... Well, she wouldn't have said she was a good artist, but she was a very good artist.

**MP:** Yeah. And dad was an electrician by trade... Originally, he wanted to be a carpenter, but ended up being an electrician. When he left the RAF, he wanted to do carpentry, but they said, "Oh no, people won't want that in the future. You need to be in something else."

**RD:** This is post-war England with lots of construction work?

**MP:** Yeah. So, he said, "OK, I'll be an electrician then."

**RD:** And your mum, you said she was an artist, was that a painter?

**AP:** She only just dabbled in it. But yeah, I think she was a lot better than she always claimed.

**RD:** Right, so she was an amateur painter.

**AP:** Yeah, so there might have been a bit of a spillover. Dad couldn't paint. The best thing he could draw was an aircraft in a cloud!

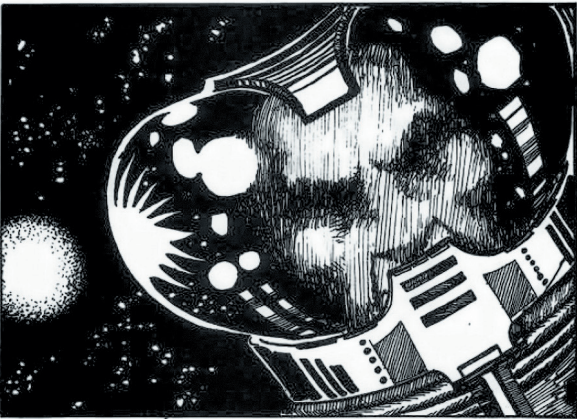
**RD:** So, your mum and dad were delighted that you were making these models, entering and indeed winning competitions...

**AP:** Yeah. I don't think our dad was particularly happy about taking us to the competitions. Sometimes they were in deepest darkest Norfolk, so he had to drive us there. But they were incredibly happy when we won!

**MP:** We also did quite a lot of painting at the time, as kids, as teenagers. We did oil paintings. And although we didn't really sell any, we gave loads away as presents to relatives. Mum was always happy that we painted as well.

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**JS:** And so, there's quite a few Perry originals knocking about, somewhere in the world.

**AP:** Oh yes, there are...

**RD:** OK, that's how you started making toy soldiers. So how did this turn from a hobby that the two of you had, into something professional? How did you then make contact with... I guess it must have been Bryan Ansell?

**MP:** Well, that all happened at Mike's Models in Finchley. There was another shop next door, a games shop. I can't remember the name of it now.

**AP:** It was Tally Ho Games...

**MP:** Yes, that's right... Tally Ho Games had just opened their shop, selling purely fantasy games and miniatures. And Steve, the sculptor we'd met at Mike's Models, had been chatting to them about this and that, and they told him that they were looking for sculptors who could make fantasy figures for them. So, he told us about this conversation, and at the time, we didn't care whether we made fantasy or historical. So, we said, "Yeah, OK, we'll do that. What do we need to do?" And Steve just said, "Well, they have to be smaller. About an inch and a half tall, the same size as Minifigs."

And so, we just made a bunch of various kinds of random fantasy models, you know - goblins, warriors, wizards - that sort of thing...

**AP:** ...all loosely based on the Minifigs ranges.

**MP:** So, we got the address where we needed to take them, and we phoned up and they said, "Oh yeah, come down to Hammersmith - Dalling Road in Hammersmith - and we'll take a look at what you've got." So, I think we sculpted... I can't remember now, probably half a dozen figures each or something like that...

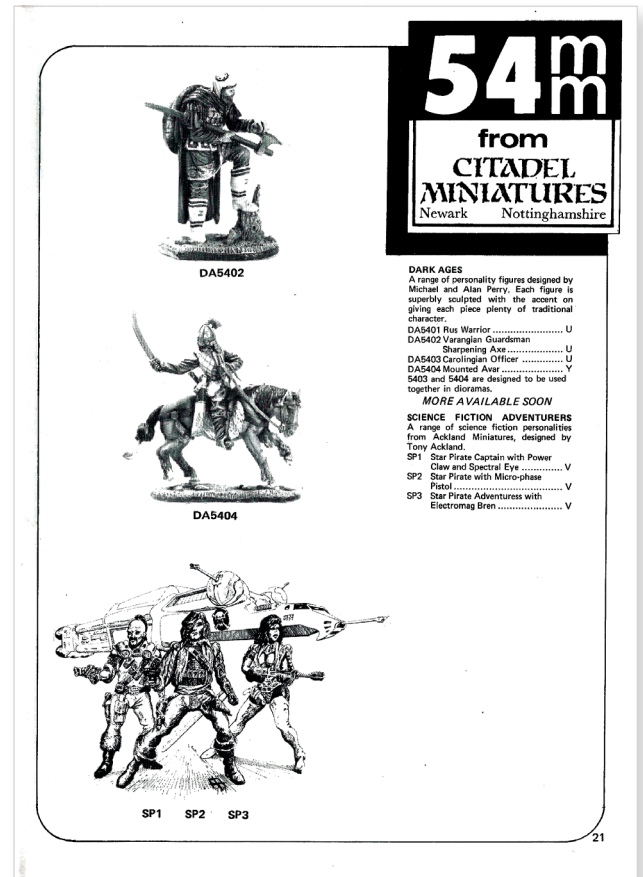
**RD:** And you took them over to Games Workshop in Dalling Road?

**MP:** Yes. We went over with these miniatures and were taken up to the offices above the shop. We'd already been gobsmacked by the set-up in the store downstairs because it wasn't at all like Mike's Models. They had all of these wonderfully painted miniatures in cabinets, loads of games on the walls and everything, it was just amazing.

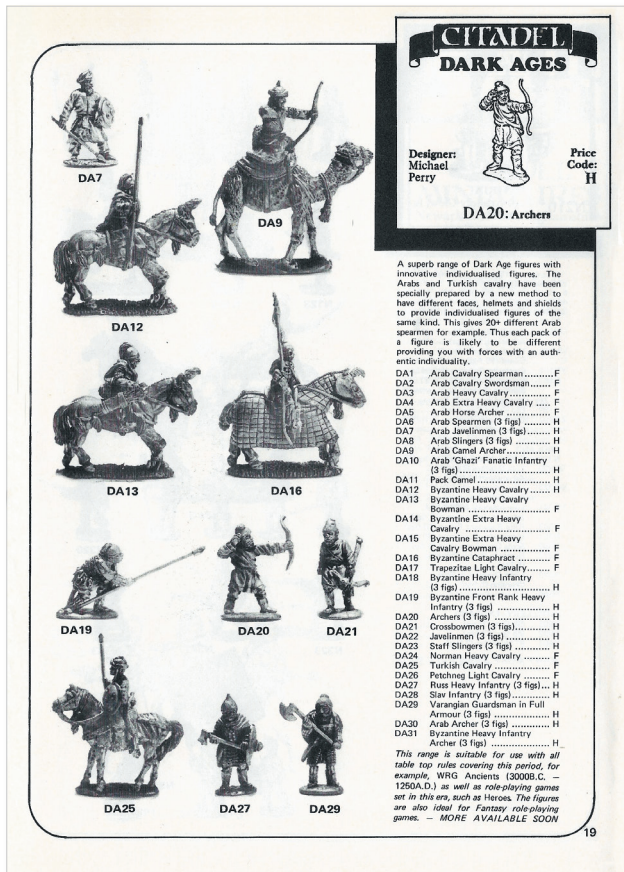
**AP:** And John Olsen was working downstairs.

**MP:** Tim or John. It might have been John...

**AP:** The two American brothers...



*Citadel 54mm range - Michael and Alan Perry  
Citadel Miniatures catalogue 1980  
Lindsey Priestley Collection  
© Games Workshop 1980*



Citadel Dark Ages range - Michael Perry  
Citadel Miniatures catalogue 1980  
Lindsey Priestley Collection  
© Games Workshop 1980

**MP:** Yes. the Olsen brothers. Tim Olsen and John Olsen. They were both very friendly and jolly...

**JS:** Yeah, genuinely nice guys...

**MP:** Yes, so we went upstairs and met with a guy called Albie Fiore. And Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson were also there, together with around three or four others.

**RD:** This was in the Games Workshop office above the shop?

**Both Perrys:** Yeah...

**AP:** It was pretty cramped up there really.

**MP:** Yeah, it was. So, we sat down and showed them the figures and they seemed quite excited by them. I think that up to that point, Bryan Ansell had made a few figures for them, and they'd also worked with a sculptor with the splendid name of Humphrey Leadbitter. I think he was their first proper paid designer.

And so, yeah, they said that they loved the models and they wanted us to make more. And we then agreed a price. We told them that we were spending about five hours to make each figure, and so they said, "OK, so how does £3 an hour sound?"

**AP:** And we thought, "Ooh, that's big money..."

**MP:** Well, it was. We were both sixteen, so £15 a figure was a massive amount. I mean, before then, we'd both been doing a paper round, for which we were paid £1.20 per week! We soon stopped that!

So, pretty much there and then, they said, "Great, we'll take you on as freelancers." I mean, it was amazing, we were both still at school at the time.

**RD:** Apart from the money, this was also a big transition. Up until then, the figures you'd been making had all been one-offs. The models you now started designing were going to be moulded and cast.

**Both Perrys:** Yeah, that's right.

**RD:** How did you adapt to that?

**AP:** Trial and error, mostly error!

**MP:** Yeah, we didn't really know or understand what the restrictions were really...

**AP:** Nobody told us.

**MP:** That's right, nobody told us, we weren't instructed and so we just learned by error. So obviously, with Milliput, when you get it back, after it's been crushed in a mould press, there's really nothing left, it's in pieces... With green stuff, you do get back the original, near enough intact. But there was one occasion, I remember, when I got a call from Bryan Ansell, who was by then at Citadel, in charge of all the actual mould making...

**AP:** We'd previously met Bryan, maybe the second or third time we went to Dalling Road.

**MP:** Yes, that's right. So, Bryan was in charge of Citadel Miniatures at the time, running the factory up in Newark. And I got this angry phone call from him where he said, "What the hell did you put in that tusker?" I'd given them a goblin tusker - a boar rider - which was one of the first things I'd made. And although it was sculpted in Milliput, I'd modelled it over a plasticine centre...

**AP:** It was a little bomb!

**MP:** And I hadn't told Bryan, because I didn't know it would be a problem. So, when he put the mould into the vulcanising press, the tusker exploded!

**RD:** The plasticine boiled out...

**MP:** Yeah, I'd sculpted the tusker with a thick crust of Milliput, then there was this gap in the centre filled with plasticine. So, when Bryan put the mould in the press, under what is it? One hundred and fifty degrees, and a few tons per square inch? Well, all of a sudden, bang! It blew up. So Bryan is yelling down the phone, "Don't ever do that again!"

**MP:** So, we didn't. We learned by bitter trial and error.

**RD:** So, at this point, you're working freelance, you're making these fantasy models, you're handing in the masters at Dalling Road, and you are getting paid! Tell me how you began to develop your relationship with Bryan, who's up in Newark, running Citadel Miniatures at this time.

**AP:** Yeah, well... We were introduced to Bryan for the first time at Dalling Road. And then one day, Ian Livingstone said to us, "Do you want to go up to Newark, and take your next batch of models straight to the factory?" And of course, we both went, "Yeah!" so all three of us crammed into his tiny sports car...

**MP:** I don't know what it was, it was a fantastic-looking car, some kind of Corvette or something.

And so, we climb in there, and Alan and I are crammed in the back, and we thought, "It looks great from the outside, but there's not much room in here..."



*Alan and Michael tell tall stories to Robin and John, 2022  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*



*Citadel Miniatures Catalogue 1983  
Lindsey Priestley Collection  
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**AP:** And I think it was possibly the first time Ian had been up there as well, because he was quite fascinated by the factory, which was at Millgate at the time, above the Newark Folk Museum. This was a really old Victorian building, and so there were great gaps in the floorboards. All of the casting machines were located on the upper floor, and so whenever there was a spillage, molten lead would drip through onto the heads of the unsuspecting Museum visitors below!

**MP:** Actually, I think that by the time it hit the floor, it would have cooled... It would be solid by then...

**RD:** Just like a shot tower.

**AP:** Yeah, exactly. And I remember, when we were driving back, we were all quite buzzing about what we'd seen, and Bryan had let us pour some metal, he'd let us do some casting as well. And then Ian saw one of those raspberry picking sites by the side of the road. So, he stopped and said, "Come on, let's get some raspberries." So we all jumped out of the car and started picking raspberries.

**MP:** Which was a relief, as the car was very cramped and it was good to get out, stretch our legs, and get some fresh air.

**AP:** I know we're both quite small, but Hammersmith to Newark and back is a three-hundred-mile round trip, and we are not THAT small!

**RD:** Excellent. So, you'd gone up and met with Bryan. And I guess that you'd learned a little bit more about the moulding and casting process.

**Both Perrys:** Yes!

**RD:** And what was the effect of that? How did that knowledge flow back into your designs? Did you change the way you were working?

**MP:** Yeah, they all became flat, all the figures! Yeah, we lost all the animation...

**JS:** I'm told in the industry that it's a fight to the death between designers who want to make interesting, animated, figures, and the damned mould makers, who insist you make everything dull, or flat if possible. No detail, everything smoothed off...

**AP:** Yeah, exactly. For them, an egg would be the ideal figure.

**JS:** Yes, and it's even worse because the casters love to get their hands on big models, because they're easy to cast, and they also get a big bonus for doing it. And so, they're working all the time against finely detailed miniatures. So, it's quite a game, isn't it, to get your designs through into production?

**MP:** Yes. Of course, we have always tried hard to push the boundaries as far as we can. And then obviously in time they'll rip the moulds... I don't think the casters particularly appreciated the Imperial dragon I made in the 1980s.

**JS:** The enormous dragon...

**MP:** Yeah, the really big one, the chicken dragon...

**JS:** It did look like a chicken...

**AP:** Yes, well It was the size of a chicken!

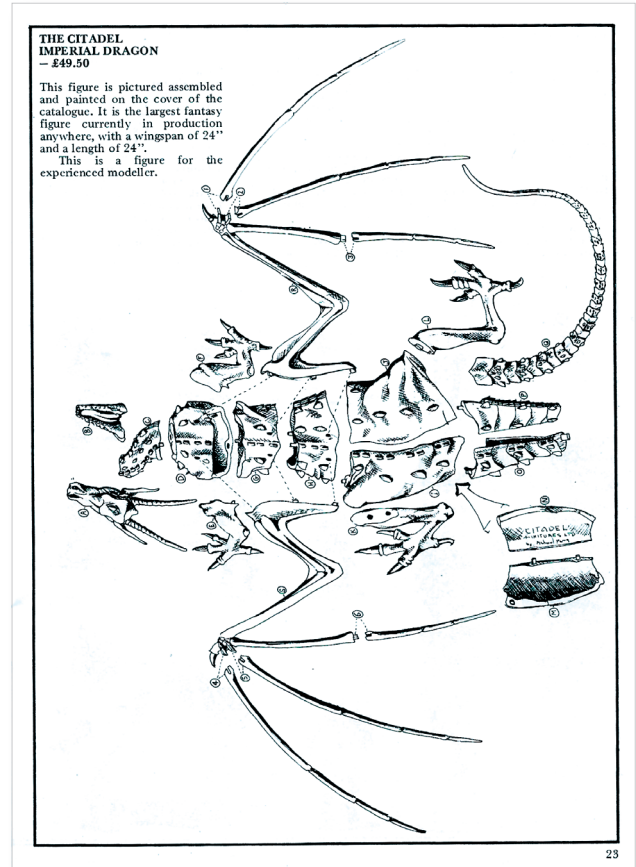
**JS:** It was huge...

**Both Perrys:** Yeah.

**JS:** And expensive, almost fifty pounds, but very wonderful. It had to have paper wings, didn't it?

**MP:** Tin foil. I used tin foil anyway, but I suppose you could use paper. It was way too heavy to have metal wings, it would have just collapsed.

**JS:** It was a bonkers kit, it really was. But sometimes a company has to do something outrageous. That dragon made a big statement about Citadel and its ambitions.



*Citadel Miniatures Catalogue 1983  
Lindsey Priestley Collection  
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*Citadel Imperial Dragon  
Painted by Lindsey Priestley  
Lindsey Priestley Collection  
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**MP:** Even as I made it, I kept thinking to myself, "I just don't know how we are going to be able to cast this." The master was first of all chopped up into slices, like a Swiss roll, but even then, the sections were too wide for the mould. I seem to recall that it was Hal who cut the mould in the end, and who got it all to work.

**JS:** The same Hal that wrote the first edition of Warhammer - Richard Halliwell?

**AP:** Yeah, he was mould making and casting at the time and solved the problem. Even so, I still think that it was a pain to cast, and he hated doing them.

**MP:** I think Alan Merrett had a go at casting it as well, and he swore at lot!

**JS:** Alan swearing, surely not...

**MP:** And then Bryan said, "Can you write out some instructions on how to put this thing together?" So I drew up a set of assembly diagrams and made a list of the tools you'd need. And in amongst the Araldite, saw, files, pin-vice and so on, I also included 'a large hammer'. But when Bryan saw it, he went mad, and shouted, "You can't put that in!" So it was sadly edited out.

**AP:** And you did indeed need a hammer!



*Citadel Giant. Sculpted by Alan Perry - Painted by Dee Taylor  
Photo Courtesy of The Stuff of Legends  
© Games Workshop 1983*



*Citadel Giant. Sculpted by Alan Perry  
- Painted by Adam Skinner  
Photo Courtesy of The Stuff of Legends  
© Games Workshop 1983*

**JS:** I used to sell it in mail order, as I had just joined Citadel when that came out. It was in a big box with a printed loose-leaf cover on top...

**JS:** And the Citadel giant was another one that possibly you two made?

**Both Perrys:** Yeah.

**JS:** It was a charming piece, and I imagine you can still get them on eBay...

**Both Perrys:** No, not really, they only come up very rarely.

**AP:** You've got one, haven't you, Mike?

**MP:** Yeah, I've got one. Yeah.

**JS:** Good for you.

**MP:** Yeah, I'm sure I've got another one in bits somewhere as well, probably still in its original box.

**RD:** And how would a commission like that come around? I mean, would somebody just say we need a really big dragon or a giant! How would that happen?

**MP:** I can't remember really, they just seemed like a good idea at the time...

**RD:** Because everything we've just talked about is pre-Warhammer, isn't it? Hal and Rick have yet to start work on the first edition, so it's still the glory days of D&D and other roleplaying games.

**Both Perrys:** That's right...

**AP:** The thing is, because we'd started out making very large-scale military models, like the Poste Militaire stuff, making giants and big monsters was quite fun for us to do.

**RD:** Because everything else you were sculpting for Citadel was 25-28mm?

**AP:** Yeah, so for us, it was just fun to do. I don't think anyone actually told us to do it. I can't remember...

**MP:** I mean a lot of the time, we would just make up figures... A good example was the fanatics. You remember, the goblin fanatics swinging their ball and chain? We originally made those while on holiday, we weren't even working. It was just something we did for fun. Then, when we got back to the Studio, we showed them to Rick, who immediately said, "Oh, yeah, that would be fun. I can see how that might work." And that's how they made it into the game.

**RD:** That's a cool and crazy idea... We'll do that!

**JS:** And they were hugely popular. Whimsy and wit is what you were putting into the models, and you two were well known for it. You're not too serious, you like a laugh... You can do the extremely serious, historically accurate button-counting stuff, or you can just go barmy and make things like goblin fanatics, which are hilarious.

**AP:** Later on, Kev Adams remade the fanatics as part of the night goblin range and he did a really good job with them.

**RD:** We've just gone on a long, meandering, but hugely entertaining diversion but I want to pull the conversation back onto some sort of timeline. You were talking about how you first met Steve and Ian in the late 1970s and then started working as freelance sculptors for Citadel, while both still at school. Can you tell us what happened next? How did you make the transition from freelancing schoolboys to working full-time for Citadel Miniatures? How did that come about?



White Dwarf 153 - Night Goblins advert  
Robin Dews Collection  
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Alan and Michael in the mid '80s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection

**AP:** Well, we left school. It was literally that simple. We left school and they said, "Do you want a job, a full-time job?" So, we said, "Yes please."

**MP:** I can't think of anything better to do and we were both very happy to say, "Yes."

**JS:** How wise you were...

**RD:** And where were you working? Were you still working from home as freelancers or were you in an office?

**MP:** No, we were still living at home at mum and dad's. They had moved by then, to Goff's Oak in Hertfordshire, the other side of the M25, so we sort of took over the conservatory at the back of the house as our sculpting den.

**AP:** Yeah, we did that for about five years.

**RD:** Actually, when we sat down for our chat with Alan Merrett, he told us a great story about coming down to visit you at your mum and dad's.

**Both Perrys:** Oh, yes?

**RD:** He recounted driving down to this lovely, rural Hertfordshire home, and then being shown through to the conservatory by your mum. And there were

the two of you, sitting either side of a table, piled high with bits of modelling putty, parts of figures, heads, limbs, weapons, all manner of stuff. And then your mum brought in the tea and biscuits, as if this was all perfectly normal.

**AP:** Well, it was for us. That's how we worked, including the mounds of bits...

**RD:** So, you were living at home. You were working from home. And you were getting paid a wage by Citadel?

**AP:** Yeah, it was great, it was perfect. We didn't want to do anything else!

**MP:** Yeah. Of course, we still kept going into Dalling Road, where the Games Workshop head office was at the time. You know, to take in our sculpts and so on. I can't exactly remember when it all shifted, and the HQ moved up to Nottingham.

**AP:** Well at that time, Citadel was still in Newark and we were going up there for many years.



Left to right: Bob Naismith (out of shot), Nick Lund, Michael and Alan at an early Games Day  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection



*White Dwarf 221 - John Stallard, Michael Perry, Alan Perry and Jim Butler roll dice!  
Robin Dews Collection  
© Games Workshop 1998*

**MP:** Yes, that's right, that's true.

**RD:** Citadel must have moved from Millgate to Victoria Street by that time?

**AP:** Yeah, I think they were only at Millgate for two or three years. And then, after that move, when we went up to the new place in Victoria Street, they would give us a bit of space in the office...

**MP:** Well, a spare desk...

**AP:** So we could also design and make figures up there.

**MP:** They kept asking us to move up to work. Bryan would say, "Can you move up? Everything would be easier if you came to work up here in Newark."

**AP:** And so we kept having to say no...

**MP:** We were simply happy where we were. We were very comfortable at home, all of our mates were down there. Obviously, we did have some other mates in Newark but...

**AP:** Well, I'd say, that after about ten years, we actually knew more people in the Nottingham area than we did down there, and so...

**MP:** Yeah, it was only later, in 1987, when my girlfriend got a place at Nottingham University, that we decided to move up here permanently.

**RD:** And it was in this time period, the early 1980s, that the first edition of Warhammer was published. That must have had a huge impact on everyone working at Citadel?

**Both Perrys:** Oh yes, yes of course.

**MP:** Yeah, we never really got involved in the operations of the business. We lived in our own miniature world, so to speak. But of course, we realised that the whole thing was getting bigger, and that there were more and more new people coming into the company. You'd just see someone you didn't recognise, and say, "Who's that? What do they do? When did they start?" And the answer would always be... "Oh, a few weeks ago!"

**AP:** But when Warhammer was being developed, we always tried to get involved. If we were up in Newark and they'd be doing some playtesting, we would always try to join in...

**RD:** And this would be with Hal and Rick?

**MP:** Yeah, and sometimes we'd meet up and playtest games at John's house, or the house he shared with Ep and Rick, to try out new ideas with Warhammer.



Landsknecht Knights  
Library Image

**JS:** Yeah, that's right...

**MP:** And occasionally have dinner...

**RD:** It sounds like the perfect evening - dinner and toy soldiers, just like HG Wells...

**AP:** Yeah, and afterwards, there would usually be a party somewhere...

**JS:** Oh, there was always a party! We were all so young... So, tell me, what would be a working day for the Perry twins? How would your day be set, once you'd moved up to Nottingham and joined the Design Studio? Would you know what you would be making that day?

**AP:** Well. We moved up in 1987 and so by then, yes, it was very much more organised...

**MP:** ...far more established really, yeah.

**MP:** Obviously, with a lot more publications coming out, we had to make everything to tie in with the release schedule. Before then, we still had to work to a product plan, but we also had a bit more leeway... You know, if we thought of an idea, and then it got the OK, we could just go ahead and make it - make a sample figure.

**JS:** And so, would your idea be OK'd by Bryan, or Alan, or a combination of the two?

**MP:** I seem to remember the first one would go to Alan, and then he would normally take it to Bryan. But sometimes, Bryan would just walk into our office for a chat, and an idea would come out of that conversation.

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Designed by Alan and Michael Perry

Miniatures supplied unpainted. WARNING: This product contains lead which may be harmful if swallowed. Citadel Miniatures are not recommended for children under 14 years of age. © Copyright Games Workshop Ltd. All rights reserved.

White Dwarf 149 - Empire advert. Miniatures by Alan and Michael Perry  
Robin Dews Collection  
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**AP:** A good example is the Warhammer Empire range. You know, we just started working on some fancy Landsknechts.

**MP:** Well, they weren't that fancy... They were mostly historical.

**JS:** So, could it be said that you were just sneaking some historical miniatures into Warhammer through the back door?

**AP:** Mmm, yes, you could say that, yeah.

**MP:** Yes, but Bryan always realised that we preferred making historical stuff to pure fantasy and so he didn't mind.

**JS:** Well, they sold very well.

**AP:** Yes, they did, they were quite a popular army.

**MP:** And then there were the Warhammer Bretonnians. That was another one, which although I don't think they sold quite as well as the Empire, were almost entirely historical.

**RD:** And then amongst your most loved figures, have got to be the Catachan jungle fighters for 40K.

**MP:** Oh yeah. That was all a bit later and it was all a bit weird! I don't mean weird in a bad way. It's just that none of the Imperial Guard models were selling particularly well at the time. The designs were all a bit over the place, weren't they?

**RD:** Yeah, there was no strong central image, it was all a bit generic sci-fi, you know, 'Starship Troopers' and the like.

**MP:** So, I think it was maybe Alan Merrett, or Rick or somebody who basically said, "We need Imperial Guard regiments that are recruited from different planets, and different campaigns." I'm not sure where Catachan came from or if it was it was in the background beforehand...

**RD:** Well, it was... Rick had included a couple of references to Catachan in the 'Age of the Imperium' section at the back of 40K - Rogue Trader. One of these was for a creature called a 'Catachan face eater' which was another of Rick's gags.

**AP:** Yeah, that sounds like Rick...

**MP:** And then I remember Alan Merrett saying, "I'm looking for something like a Rambo kind of figure." And so, I thought, "Mmm OK, so wearing a bandana, and dressed in a vest... very muscly." And I remember doing a few sketches, and then I was walking around the Studio, and I saw one of the miniature painters, one of the 'Eavy Metal team, I can't remember his name. One of the painters was wearing these really heavy boots, kind of almost military boots



*Codex Imperial Guard – Cover Art Dave Gallagher  
Jervis Johnson Collection  
© Games Workshop 1995*

but with metal plates on, the sort that Goths and Metal Heads wore back then. And so I said, "Oh, can I just draw those?" And that's how the Catachans got their boots...

And we just could not believe it when they were released. You'll remember, at the time, that all the miniature designers were still receiving royalty payments. In addition to our salaries, we were also paid a percentage of the sales of the miniatures we'd designed as a bonus. Well, when those models went out, we received some very nice cheques indeed! And it was not long afterwards that the senior management decided to eliminate those extra royalty payments!

**JS:** They caught the mood, didn't they, particularly in America, as they probably looked like Vietnam veterans...

**MP:** Yes, exactly...

**JS:** And they certainly gave a huge shot to the Imperial Guard, and made it a genuinely exciting Warhammer 40,000 army, with all the other regiments that followed.

**MP:** I also made a 54mm female Catachan jungle fighter.

**RD:** I remember that...

**MP:** Yeah, I just made it for myself, as a one-off. It was coming up to Games Day in 1996, and GW employees were not allowed to enter the normal Golden Demon competition, with a chance of winning the slayer sword. Instead, we'd created the Open Category, into which anyone could enter, including staff, and which was a showcase for brilliant models and dioramas.

Anyway, I finished the sculpt and I was going to paint it myself, when Mike McVey saw it, and said to me, "Do you mind if I paint that?" And so, I said, "Oh, but you're going to be one of the judges. If you paint it, then I can't put it in the competition." But he was so insistent that in the end, I just gave in and said, "OK... go on then." And so, he painted it, and then of course, I couldn't enter it into the Open.

**AP:** Well, no, you couldn't, no...

**MP:** Sadly no... But I've still got it at home.

**RD:** I remember that model, we must have published a photo of it in White Dwarf.

**AP:** Yes, that's right, you did. It appeared one of Mike McVey's 'Eavy Metal Masterclass features in White Dwarf.



White Dwarf 194 - 'Eavy Metal Masterclass female Catachan fighter  
Robin Dews Collection  
© Games Workshop 1996

**RD:** So, just to jump back a bit... The first edition of Warhammer had come out in 1983, and it had been, for the time, a big success, it sold out. And then interestingly, Bryan didn't say, "Oh quick, let's reprint it." Instead, he decided, "Right, that seems to have worked. Now let's do another edition, we'll publish a second edition." So, we had the 'Harry the Hammer' edition, with the John Blanche cover. And that was then followed with a second edition, the red box version, a year later in 1984, that contained not only the rules and magic books, but also some cardboard cut-out figures.

**MP:** Oh yes, the original slann drawings.

**RD:** Yeah, that first early stab at Lustria, with Rick's jokes about Skeggi and all the rest of it. And then at some point around there, 40K must have happened. I think that Rogue Trader was released around that time, just after the third edition of Warhammer which, of course, was also a book.

**MP:** I remember playtesting it, at Bryan's house...

**AP:** Yeah, that's right. We went over to playtest 40K at Bryan's, and I remember that he didn't have any sci-fi scenery...

**MP:** So, he went off to the kitchen cupboard and started taking out all these tins of baked beans and other cans. Then he ripped all the labels off and started placing them on the table to use as buildings and cover...

**JS:** Well, he couldn't afford decent terrain, could he?

**MP:** And Diane was just standing there going, "What on earth are you doing? How will we know what's what?"

**AP:** In the end, there were about twenty different cans on the table...

**JS:** Space Marines... Assault the Fray Bentos corned beef!

**MP:** Yeah, and so for the next couple of weeks, I think that they probably had a few very unusual meals.

**RD:** Brilliant! So that was playtesting 40K. Was Rick also around that evening?

**MP:** No, he wasn't there on that occasion, it was just us and Bryan...

**AP:** And somewhere, I'm sure I've got it somewhere... I still have those original 40K rules sheets with Bryan's hand-written amendments on them.

**RD:** Oh, really?

**MP:** Yes, because at the time, Rick was still working on the manuscript, and he'd given a version of it to Bryan so that he could red pen it. That was the rules draft we used that evening. The 'baked bean can' version.



*Alan and Michael adopt ever more subtle disguises!  
Enfield Chambers - late 1980s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection*

**RD:** So that must have been late '86 or early '87, because 40K or Warhammer 40,000 - Rogue Trader, was first released in 1987.

**AP:** Yes, but the strange thing is, we were not aware of a lot of what was going on at the time, because we were still working from home, but not our mum and dad's house. You see, when we first came up to Nottingham, instead of being invited to work at the Studio, which we thought had been the whole reason for coming up, Bryan said, "Oh no, you can work at home!"

**RD:** And the Design Studio had already been established at Enfield Chambers at this point?

**Both Perrys:** Yes.

**RD:** So, the whole business had relocated from Newark to Eastwood, which was where the factory and sales offices were based. But Bryan decided to deliberately keep the Studio separate, and away from the rest of the business, because he wanted the Studio to be kept...

**JS:** ...to be kept pure!

**RD:** ...away from the demon salesmen.

**JS:** Well, somebody has to sell all this rubbish!

**RD:** And so, you were told, "You don't need to come into the Studio." I am confused.

**AP:** Well, so were we. When we finally arrived, they said, "Oh, you don't need to come in here." And we thought, "Oh right, wasn't that the whole reason for us moving up to Nottingham?"

**JS:** Do you remember what you were working on back then?



*The twin-headed Michael and Alan  
Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader  
Rick Priestley Collection  
© Games Workshop 1987*



*Alan and Michael in Alan's wargames room and armoury! 2022  
Photo: ERD Visual Media*

**MP:** When we first moved up, it was just figure ranges, all a bit random...

**AP:** And we are talking about thirty years ago, over thirty years...

**MP:** But I don't think that we'll ever forget that period working at the Design Studio. It really was just an amazing place to work, with an extraordinary combination of people and talent. To start off, there were about six of us, all miniature designers and sculptors, all working in one room together.

**AP:** Yeah, with our desks all in a circle, facing the walls at the edges of the room. There was Aly and Jes and Bob Naismith and Kev Adams. It was great.

**RD:** Inside, the Studio was a complete maze of winding corridors and tiny rooms and offices. Bob Naismith described it to us as a bit like a shop in Diagon Alley from Harry Potter.



*Wayne England and Dave Gallagher - Enfield Chambers, late 1980s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection*

**Both Perrys:** Yes, that's exactly right...

**RD:** There were basically a couple of management offices on the ground floor. Bryan had one, Tom Kirby had the other, and there was also a production office that was shared by Phil Gallagher, Alan Merrett and Steve McGowan - the print buyer.

**AP:** Yes. The miniature painters also had a room on the ground floor next to John Blanche.

**RD:** And then upstairs, there was the editorial office, with the writers and editors: Rick, Jervis, Mike Brunton, Graeme Davis, Sean Masterson, Nigel Stillman and so on.

**MP:** Yeah, right.

**RD:** And Hal had a little office on his own, because he was a bit bonkers... And then right at the front was the camera room for photographing miniatures and artwork and so on. Originally that was Phil Lewis' job, but when he left, Chris Colston took over. And then up the stairs again, on the top floor, was the production area, where all of the finished artists worked, plus Brian George and Bill Sedgwick.

**AP:** Oh yes... I remember them.

**RD:** Yeah, they were the guys responsible for all the page layouts and graphic design. And right at the front was Lindsey with her huge Compugraphic typesetting machine.

And then all the figure designers were also working on that top floor, the production floor, right at the back. And that was Enfield Chambers.

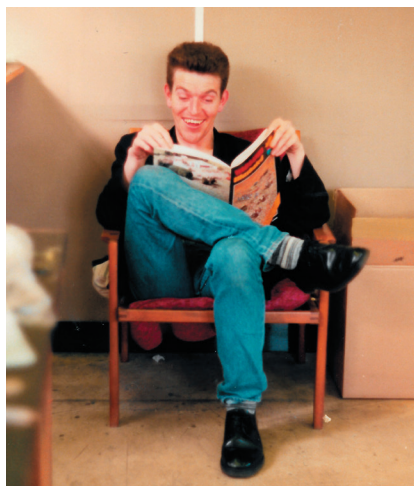
**MP:** But all that of course, was just before the 'fuzzy felt' massacre, in 1989.

**JS:** I think that you are going to have to explain what the 'fuzzy felt' massacre was, for the sake of our readers...

**AP:** Some new technology took over. Just as in the Luddite rebellion, which also took root in Nottingham, the Studio got hold of a couple of early Apple Macintosh computers.



*Editor Mike Brunton catches up on White Dwarf, late 1980s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection*



*Designer Richard Halliwell finds something amusing in Wargames Illustrated - Enfield Chambers, late 1980s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection*

Seeing what they could do, Bryan decided that we didn't need to employ so many production staff. He thought it would be much better if the writers and editors could produce their own finished pages. And, of course, in the long term he was right. Computers could do the work faster and easier than paste-up artists.

**RD:** That's all true, but let me provide a little bit of context here. Fuzzy felt was a popular kids' toy in Britain in the 1960s and it involved sticking bits of re-usable coloured felt down onto a felted board to create pictures. And there were loads of different sets, with different pieces. Every kid had one at the time. Anyway, I don't remember who coined the term 'fuzzy felters', it might have been Tom [Kirby], but it was used in the Studio to rather disparagingly refer to the people who took the layouts from the graphic designers and turned them into finished pages ready for reproduction and printing.

This is all going to sound a bit crazy to anyone under forty or so who doesn't remember when page layout was done by hand and not using a computer. But let me try to explain, as this method was used for almost every box, book and magazine that came out of the Enfield Chambers Design Studio. This includes Warhammer editions 1-3, Rogue Trader, the first Realm of Chaos, Space Hulk, Adeptus Titanicus and many others, including all of the early White Dwarfs.

At the time, all the writers and editors were working on early Amstrad PCW computers. These were the ones that you had to re-load the operating system, off a floppy disc, every time you turned on the machine, because they had no hard drives to store anything.

Once the writers' and editors' words had been signed off, they would be passed to Lindsey [Priestley] who would do a final spelling and punctuation check, and then put the discs into a Compugraphic typesetter. With this machine, Lindsey could create section headers, and change the typeface or font, but only by entering a series of quite complex control codes, a bit like writing in html.

This machine used a photographic process, involving developing chemicals, to output the text on long thin strips of paper, that were each one column of text wide.

This text, together with any artwork, photos, tables and illustrations, would then be passed to one of three graphic designers, who would photocopy all of these elements and use them to create a visual layout of how they wanted the finished page to look.

In the final stage these layouts would be passed to a finished artist, a 'fuzzy felter', who would create the actual page layout. Any lines would be drawn in by hand, using Rotring pens, and Letraset tone bars could be laid across tables, and so on.



*White Dwarf Editor Sean Masterson gets all arty - Enfield Chambers, late 1980s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection*

And at the end of all this, you would have two pages of a book, complete, in what was known as 'camera-ready-copy.'

I know, this all sounds quite mad now, when anyone with a computer, printer and a scanner could design and lay out a book at home.

This camera-ready-copy would then be sent out to a reprographic house. We mostly used a local company called Sherwoods Photo Litho, owned by a very patient man called Dennis. And in a couple of days, he would return with these pages quite literally turned into films, that could then be used by a printer to make photolithographic plates, from which a book, catalogue or magazine could finally be printed.

As I've said, to most people under forty, who've grown up with computers, this must all sound like banging rocks together, but it was how it was all done.

Anyway, soon after I arrived in the Studio, in 1989, we got hold of first one and then a couple more, Mac SE30 machines. They were early all-in-one Apple computers, with an integrated screen and a mouse. Using them, you could not only lay out a page of text and leave spaces for the artwork, but you could also change the fonts and the header sizes instantly. They felt like magic. Not only could you edit and lay out text, but you could then send the pages straight to a high-end printer and you were almost there.

Anyway, Bryan was both very bright and also a sharp businessman. Having looked at what these machines could do with images and text, he just decided, "Oh, we can dispense with all of these finished artists now. They're just troublesome and expensive, and we don't need them."

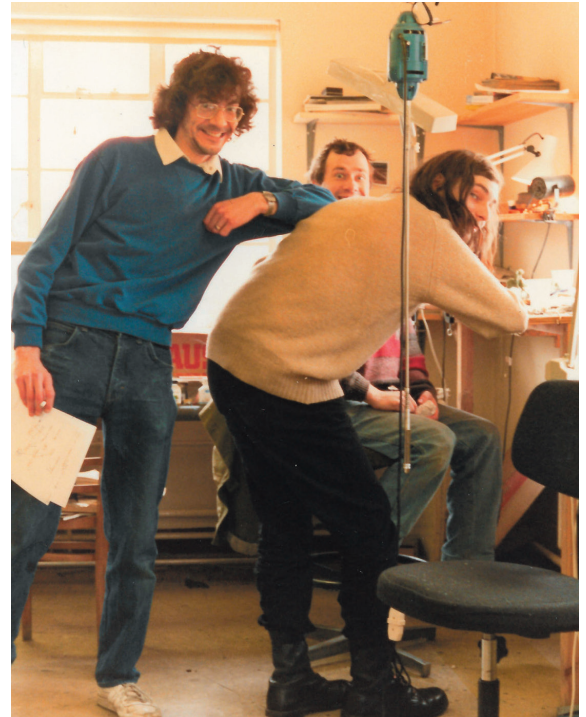
**AP:** It was the very next day, wasn't it?

**RD:** Yes indeed, it was the very next day. One by one, each of the finished artists were called downstairs to the production office and told that they no longer had a job.

**AP:** And this was done at about 5.00pm as I remember...

**RD:** Yes, we all worked from 9.00am till 5.30pm in those days. And so, in the last half an hour of the day, all the graphic designers and production staff, with one or two exceptions, were fired by Phil Gallagher, who was studio manager at that time. And as they came back up, to collect their things, the next one would be called down. It was awful, no one knew if they were going to be the last man standing...

**AP:** And then they all went out to the pub, to the Bell Inn, in the Market Square, because we both went with them...



*Left to right: Phil Lewis, Alan Perry and Colin Dixon  
- Enfield Chambers, late 1980s  
Photo: Trish Carden Collection*



*Apple Mac SE30  
Library Image  
© Apple Inc*

**RD:** Well, I was supervising the production floor at the time, and I was only told that this was going to happen about an hour before it started. I somehow survived that purge and was then put to work at Flame Publications up on Derby Road, with Tony [Ackland] and Carl Sargent for a year or so.

Trish, Aly and Colin from Marauder Miniatures were also based upstairs in the same building. When I came back to the main Studio in 1990, it had re-located to Castle Boulevard and the Enfield Chambers days were over. Anyway, that was the massacre of the 'fuzzy felters'.

**AP:** It certainly was. Yeah.

**RD:** But just as with the Luddites, it was an essential technological change that Games Workshop needed to embrace, and that I later really pushed forward with the White Dwarf team.

**JS:** That's progress...

**RD:** It was a technological revolution, but a lot of skills were lost. Many of which we had to re-learn at a later point.

**AP:** Within about a week...

**RD:** It was always going to happen. The reason we are still talking about it is not because of what was done, but the way in which it was done.

**Both Perrys:** Yeah.

**RD:** But as we've said, there were also many, many wonderful moments in that Studio... Trish [Carden] has talked to us about how Bryan had this idea that the Design Studio should exude cool, just like a rock band and...

**MP:** Yeah, that's right, and it was around that time that Brian May - the guitarist with Queen - first came up to visit us. Andy Jones heard that Brian's son Jimmy was really into Warhammer, and used to go into the Hammersmith store with his dad to buy miniatures. So, Andy asked the manager to let Brian May know that if he ever wanted to visit the Nottingham Design Studio, he'd be more than welcome. It was just a friendly invite...

**AP:** And we all knew nothing about this of course... Nobody mentioned who was coming in?

**MP:** Yes, so late one afternoon, it was around twenty past five or something like that. Alan had already gone home, and I was just finishing some bits on a figure I'd been working on that day, when I became aware of someone coming into the office behind me.

So, I turned around and there was this tall, fuzzy-haired bloke standing there with Andy Jones. And I thought, "Oh blimey! That's Brian May from Queen!"

And he was just lovely. We chatted for about twenty minutes, and I showed him what I'd been working on and how we sculpted miniatures. He was genuinely interested in how they were made. Meanwhile, his son Jimmy, and another friend, who'd come up with them, were running around on the production floor and talking to all of the finished artists.

**JS:** What a great story.

**AP:** Yeah, I was just sorry I missed him.

**RD:** Well, the heavy metal connections all got a bit crazy at times, like the Sabbath flexi-disc on the cover of White Dwarf 95 and so on. This was all driven by Andy Jones, with Bryan's agreement of course.

There was another time when Andy invited this insane American metal band, called Gwar, into the Studio. And they all arrived wearing these completely over the top, latex and leather costumes that they wore on stage! It was like having a group of Chaos demons running round the offices.

**JS:** They were known for spraying their fans in blood and wearing these outrageous kind of Chaos warrior suits. I went to see them at Rock City with Andy...

**RD:** You went to see Gwar?

**JS:** Yeah, and there was blood spraying everywhere. Everybody in the venue was just covered in fake blood. We came out of the concert and then walked home across Nottingham, past Police officers, thinking... Hmmm, just keep walking...

**MP:** And how was the music?

**JS:** It was... it was alright. But the show was completely outrageous and very entertaining.

**RD:** So, after that interesting diversion into Rock 'n Roll, let's go back to 1987. Rogue Trader has come out, the business is booming and you're both making toy soldiers?

**AP:** Yeah, but even after 40K, life didn't really change much for us really.

**MP:** I genuinely preferred making fantasy miniatures to sci-fi. I think that in the whole of my time at Workshop, I only made two Space Marines.

**AP:** And I'm going to say that I've never made a Space Marine in my life. I'm very proud of that.

**MP:** I made two. A lot of effort.

**JS:** And which ones were they?

**MP:** I don't really remember... It actually might have been three models. One was a general or Space Marine commander, sitting on a throne, with his legs together, or as close as you can get them, when you are wearing power armour! And the other two were his personal guards, holding their weapons, their boltguns, up to attention. I don't think they ever got released, and so they are probably still out there sitting in a drawer somewhere...



White Dwarf 98 - Imperial Commander by Michael Perry  
Robin Dews Collection  
© Games Workshop 1988



**RD:** So finally, jumping forward, I've got to ask you the question about the Chaos dwarfs and those hats!

**AP:** Oh, well, that was... I'm going to blame Rick for that. He said, "Can you make them look like Babylonians?"

**JS:** Babylonians... Right! I am so sorry to interrupt, but I have to say these miniatures are still loved today. They are adored and loved.

**AP:** Well, it was just great fun making them, because he said, "Could you make them like Babylonians, curly beards and everything... but with really tall hats?"

So, I made a few with big hats, tall hats, and he said, "Oh no, I think the hats need to be a lot bigger than that..."

And I just thought, "Really? Well okay." And so, as you know, the hats ended up being taller than the actual dwarfs wearing them.

And we made lots of different shapes, like crazy tiered wedding cakes, but they were great fun to make.

**JS:** Were you having a laugh and just pushing it a bit?

**AP:** Well, I was, yeah, but then Rick was playing along as well. Every time I'd show them to him, he'd giggle and go: "No, bigger! They need to be bigger!"

**JS:** Well in truth, I think he was under pressure to make them bigger...

**MP:** Oh, yeah. I can imagine somebody else who would say make them bigger...

**RD:** Well, Bryan was based over in America at the time, and Rick had to keep him informed as to how the Chaos dwarfs were progressing. And the way Rick tells it... He would be on the phone to Bryan in the US saying, "Well, the hats are actually quite big, Bryan." And Bryan would just push back and say, "Nonsense, I know it's the Perrys. They'll make them traditional; they'll make them historically accurate. Tell them to make the hats bigger!"

And Rick tried to explain, "Well, they are quite large already, Bryan." But Bryan wouldn't have



White Dwarf 161 and the arrival of the big hats!  
Robin Dews Collection  
© Games Workshop 1993



*Old friends Alan Perry, Jervis Johnson, Rick Priestley and Michael Perry, show off their quick play Napoleonic rules - Valour and Fortitude  
Photo: Perry Miniatures 2022*

any of it, and he insisted that Rick instructed you to "Make the hats bigger!" And after all this to-ing and fro-ing, this whole crazy saga ended up with Rick faxing photographs of the Chaos dwarfs to Bryan, who immediately got on the phone and shouted down the line: "What the hell is going on with those hats? Are you all taking the piss?"

**AP:** That would be Bryan all over, and then of course, he'd say, "I never told you to make them bigger!"

**JS:** Thank you both so much, guys. That's more than enough for now. I am sure we could fill a book with you two alone.

**RD:** Yes, thank you, it's been great.

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