

Disaster Editorial (NB ALL SOCCERLEAGUE PLAYERS)

Everything has gone wrong this time. I'm having terrible trouble about getting this issue printed, although the copy was ready on time. With a print run of 165+ it takes a lot of time to get the whole thing printed, especially with an 8 page soccerleague report. Costs are also increasing, which means the bigger the zine gets the more money I lose. Having said that I am determined to keep the price at 25p an issue and no higher, while I fear the games service I am offering is lacking something in efficiency, so that needs tuning up. All this means radical changes.

- 1) As from this issue I will no longer print and distribute the soccerleague - indeed I haven't been able to have the last report printed yet - it will go to players as soon as possible. I don't know what will happen to it - either David & Ian will run it themselves or it will be transferred to another zine. Players who only receive Pigmy for the soccerleague will have their credit transferred to whoever adopts it. As for orders, I would advise you to phone David.
- 2) All games other than regular Diplomacy will go to the players only - this means P/9V, P/10V, P/11V, P/7V, P/13 Bourse, Cline, TFPO Stab and Ultra Stab. All regular games will go with the main zine.
- 3) Malcolm Brown is proving incapable of handling his three variants, so in future I will run the Cline, while Paul Prebble will take care of Stab & Ultra Stab. I will forward the game reports as soon as Malcolm lets me have them.
- 4) As yet I have received none of the TFPO credit. If you no longer wish to receive Pigmy write to me - but you will have to wait for your money. Some Fool players have already sent me some cash to tide them over until I receive their credit from Malcolm - it would really be appreciated if the others could do this as well.
- 5) Due to the delay in producing this issue, the deadlines have all been pushed back one week.

ALL MY GAMES BY BY FRIDAY 4TH JANUARY

PAUL PREBBLE'S GAMES BY FRIDAY 28TH DECEMBER

KINGMAKER TO PETE SEALY BY 31ST DECEMBER (USE HIS HOME ADDRESS)

P/7V TO KEITH BLACK BY 31ST DECEMBER

TFPO CLINE, STAB AND ULTRA STAB DEADLINES WILL BE INDICATED ON THE REPORTS THAT I WILL SEND OUT WHEN I RECEIVE THEM.

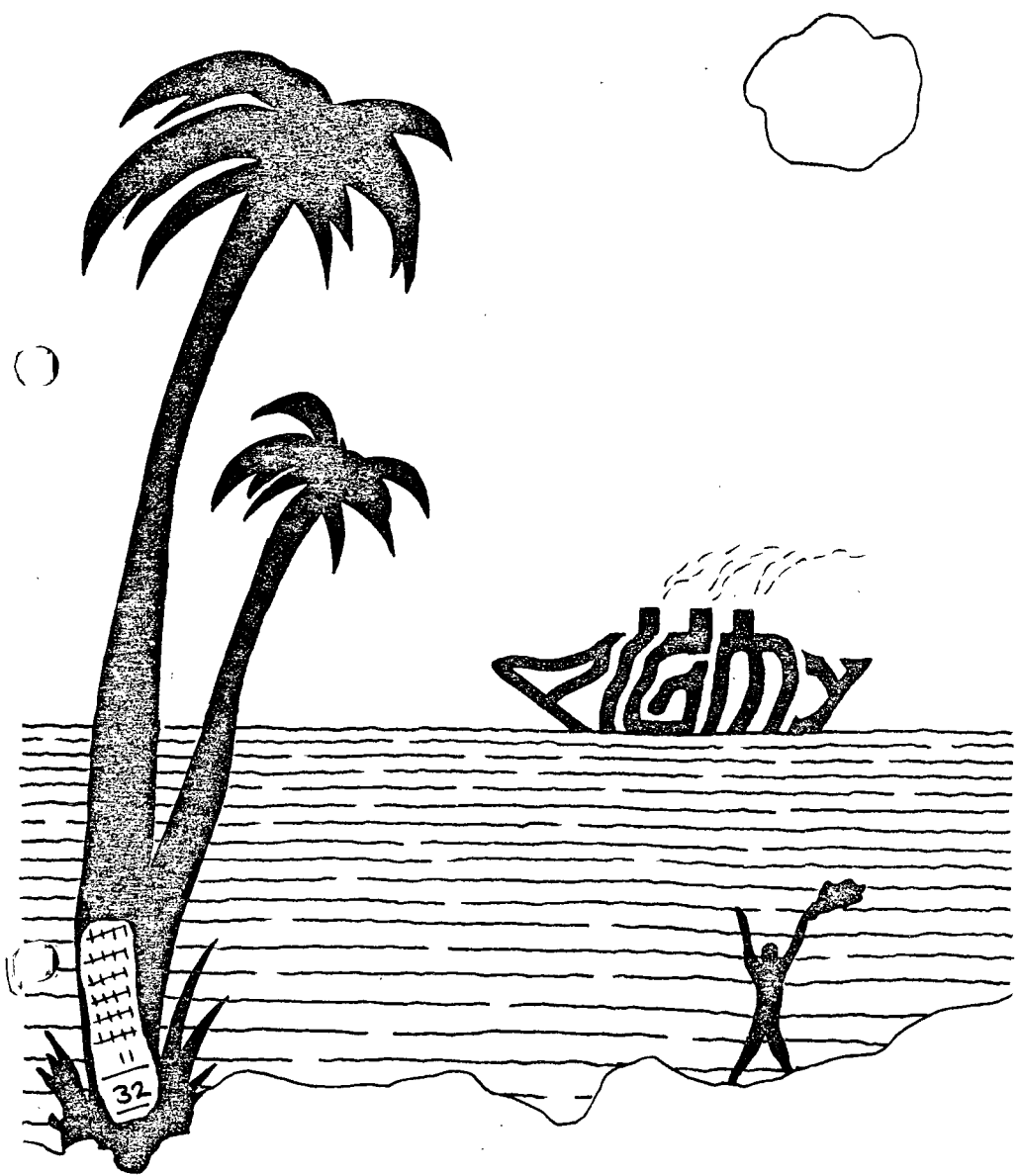
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P/10V & P/11V: Late orders have just arrived from Steve Plater - players note the enclosed re-adjudications.

Credit Your credit is

 This is your very last issue unless

 We trade

 You receive this free



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Steve Agar

Rubbish

Hello and Good Evening. How's that for a nice polite way to start a Dip. zine? To be honest there's not really very much that I want to talk about this time. The one and only Irish zine, An Taidhleoir has just announced a predictable fold at issue 30, Der Garvey actually carrying out the threat I made a few months back. Der was the first member of the Dip. hobby that I ever corresponded with, way back in 1976, I hope he doesn't disappear from our ranks completely. A Voice in the Wilderness issue six turned up as a two page games only issue, apparently they've got duplicator problems. A copy of spirit of the age has turned up, all four pages of it, continuing the marked decline in the Calcraft Empire. I wonder how low Peter can sink. And that's about it really, nothing terribly exciting.

Of course the silly season continues with the arrival of another new zine in the shape of NMR! from Brian Creese and Ken Bain - more about that later. The NGC flourishes with some editors who really should have more sense, voicing conditional approval to Calcraft's demands. Rob Chapman I can forgive as he has obviously been brainwashed by a 1½ hour telephone call from Calcraft himself, whereas Bob Howes' yearnings for an institution (type unspecified... lunatic?) stem from Bob's depth of feeling for nostalgia, of any sort. What is this fatal obsession that some people have for organisations?

On a much brighter note I've noticed several editors have been claiming that this wonderful hobby of ours is about to collapse and die any second. A large helping of pessimism has been overdue for a long time - all these silly do gooders cause far too much commotion. In the good old days everyone talked about how we were about to witness the end of civilised life as we knew it - then Whiskey Mac and spirit arrived, proving that those sages of old really knew a thing or two about this fortune telling lark. Great fun. I forecast a 500% increase in postal charges turning our hobby into a telephone games hobby overnight - these zine things are nothing but a nuisance anyway, I fork out good money for them, but despite four issues of spirit my table still won't stay level...

Inside is a dungeon for 1st level D&D characters - I am well aware that it will not interest a significant proportion of my readers. Still, I have no intention of committing this indiscretion again, and it will give those of you who scoff at Dungeons & Dragons extra ammunition when you see how banal a cramped imagination like mine can make it. Anyway, I think it looks pretty.

In the latest Rhubovia ("latest" in both senses of the word), Tony Crouch asks whether we want a hobby with a few large circulation zines, and a majority of average circulation jobs. He implies that the larger zines are the litho efforts, while the mimeo zines hover around 70-80. I can't see this myself - perhaps Tringham, Calcraft and I have bigger circulations than most, but what about the likes of Clive Booth? Then again there's several mimeo zines with circulations in excess of 100 - Greatest Hits, Lemming Express, Puppet Theatre News, Tinamou etc. When you think about it, most zines have fairly high circulations, with the established ones leading the field - I can't see where litho comes into it at all. I suspect that the average circulation of an established Dip. zine is probably higher now than it has ever been before, though I couldn't prove it.

This issue looks as though it is going to be a couple of days late - apologies. Although I think hobby organisations are a waste of time, I must do something about setting up an Agar organisation, to help me get this mess sorted out every month. If only I had a filing cabinet, things would be so much easier! As it is, my filing cabinet is the immediate floor around my bed, my in tray is a 10" deep cardboard box crammed with partly read letters and my office hous seem to be 1-6 am. No wonder I keep falling asleep. At this rate I think I'll need a few weeks off to have a nervous breakdown. Gulp...

Good Game? Good game? by Greg Chapman.

So you subscribe to Figgy! Clearly you like postal Diplomacy, and probably you are one of those that feel that it is the only game worth playing by post. What other game, I hear you say, requires no change in the published rules, well, almost none, in order to play it postally? What other game restricts the luck element only to deciding your starting positions? What other game allows such possibilities for player interaction and negotiation? I did not join a postal games hobby, I hear you exclaim, I joined a postal Diplomacy hobby. All other games are like dwarfs beside the giant of Diplomacy. But let me ask you this, what is it that makes you think all this is true? How can you so totally disregard other postal games?

Let's look at the first of those ideas, that of simultaneous movement. Now I can't deny that Diplomacy's innovative feature in popular board games was simultaneous movement, in the same way that the innovative feature of Monopoly was that of player ownership of parts of the board. But why does this matter to you? Ease and simplicity of postal play need not be your answer, for you can change the rules of any game to suit the manner in which you are going to play it, postally or otherwise. If you object to the idea of changing the rules of a game then clearly you never play rugby or lawn tennis, as both these games have changed radically from their original form. Nor do you play chess as rule development in that game has been almost continuous, nor, of course, do you play any of the variants on offer in most of the Diplomacy zines. Again I hear you complaining that by changing the rules you are changing the character of the game - but are you not changing the character of the game simply by playing it by post? Postal play, by definition, takes away the face to face pressure of making decisions within a few minutes of being presented with the situation. It takes away the pressure of interruptions in negotiations by other players and by extraneous events, like your baby crying, your kid sister wanting to come and join in, or your mother telling you not to forget that you've got to be up early tomorrow. It replaces this pressure with time to think, with time to really consider properly what you would be doing if you were your ally, time to phrase your negotiations properly, time to consider what to say and what not to say, and most of all, time to avoid making gross tactical errors. Surely it is a vital and almost necessary part of playing a game that it should put pressure on you. A game that fails to stimulate is one that is quickly forgotten. Many games use this face to face pressure as a vital ingredient. Mastermind is a classic example. Without pressure of time limits any standard code (ie. doubles but not blanks allowed) can be solved in five attempts, meaning that how lucky you are in your first couple of choices decides the winner. So no one would dream of playing mastermind by post would they? But they do, and surely, similarly no one could argue that the game of Diplomacy is not changed significantly by playing it through the post. Well, some do, but usually only to argue that it is improved by postal play - but they would, wouldn't they.

There is no luck element in Diplomacy though. It is all up to the skill of the individual player. So what? The argument that a wargamer usually uses seems to have no flaws to me. The dice are thrown so often by each side in the course of a game, that luck is going to apply equally to all players and that the underlying skill of a player will show consistently over a number of games. Besides which, I challenge the notion that chance does not affect the negotiations in Diplomacy anyway. Can anyone seriously deny that it is chance that determines a good part of the negotiations in Diplomacy? Of course



'I think we can rule out "the butler did it" theory, sergeant.'

VISKOTH THE SAD

This is a fairly simple dungeon, designed for 6-8 1st level characters incorporating at least one cleric.

Legend: The dungeon in which the adventure takes place is an old complex that has recently been renovated by Viskoth, a young magic user. About two months ago rumours circulated that Viskoth (who is famed for his experiments with mirrors) had somehow stumbled on a source of treasure. Several seedy adventurers are known to have been recruited by Viskoth at this time, although they have not been heard of since. For the last week all has been silent at the complex - Viskoth has no longer been making his daily trips to the local town, while no more food supplies have been sent to the dungeons. Two days ago a few dilapidated monsters, mainly scraggy female goblins, were rumoured to have left the complex and yesterday someone glimpsed smoke coming from one of the ventilation shafts.

DM: The point of this scenario is that Viskoth actually created a gateway into Hell by accident. For a time he managed to send adventurers and monsters through the gateway, who returned with treasure - but some of the creatures brought back a terrible plague with them, which has systematically wiped out most living creatures within the complex. On top of this 3 Lemures have stumbled through the gateway and are now inhabiting the room in which the gateway is situated. Although Viskoth is now dead, the Gods have punished him for his evil deed by imprisoning his soul within his body. Viskoth's soul can only be released if the gateway is closed.

The entrance to the dungeon is a simple stone staircase, doors at the top and the bottom of the staircase have been broken down ((by fleeing Goblins)), while the door of room 1 is open.

Room 1: 70'x60'. 4 doors (2 secret). The SD (secret door) in the N wall is magically concealed and can only be detected by a detect magic or a one on a D6 (for characters capable of searching). The room is fairly bare, except for a table in the centre of the room and a statue in the NE corner. Table: on the table are four unusual hand mirrors, made of rough shaped cast iron - they look as though they have been designed for some specialist purpose. Statue: granite statue of MU (Viskoth). No hidden traps/hollows etc. except that statue holds a granite book, which looks as though it would open if the key to the lock on the book could be found. The lock is very complex - thieves have only half of their usual chance of picking it. In NW corner is the remains of a fire. Once book opened see Note 1.

Room 2: 50'x40'. 3 doors (1 magic SD). Smelly room containing four Giant Rats (2,2,3,4). Few cp's in corner of room. Dank and nasty.

Room 3: 50'x100'. 6 doors (2 SD). Library. Bookcases on walls all either empty or smashed, except for NE bookcase which seems okay. Books look in good condition, but crumble at touch. Crack running round bookcase - if bookcase pulled from wall a Giant Tick (8) leaps out. In centre of room collection of odds and ends, candles, woods etc. including six glass containers (suitable for acid). If lots of noise is caused in room (eg. bookcase pulled over) 6 Giant Centipeads will rush out of SE corner at intruders. Picture on SW wall - golden dagger (not magic, worth 20 gps) behind it.

Room 4: 80'x50'. 3 doors. Against W wall are the remains of 4 dwarfs, chained to wall. Looks as if bits of flesh have been carved of them. Killed within the week. One dwarf carries potion (whisky). Unoccupied chains on E wall. No treasure or weapons.

Room 5: 50'x50'. 1 door. Empty lecture room - stone benches around N,E,S walls, with dias in middle of room.

Room 6: 50' x 40'. 2 doors (1 magic SD). Empty, dusty room with giant web on ceiling.

Room 7: 70'x50'. 1 door (secret). Six skeletons (3,4,4,5,5,8) lying on floor at E

end of room. looks as though they died in agony - contortions etc. Total of 8 gps if all skeletons searched. The skeletons will defend themselves if touched.

Room 8: 60'x20'. 2 doors. A long pit in centre of room, at the bottom is corroded remains of armour, weapons etc. In middle of N wall is iron ring - if pulled out (comes 1" out of wall) pit fills with acid in about 10 seconds. Similar ring on S wall emptys pit. Pit itself is about 6' across, 40' long and 8' deep. Some gold objects shine on bottom (total value 24 gps). Once pit filled then emptied, walls will retain sufficient acid to give a nasty burn. Glass vial will hold acid.

Room 9: 50'x20'. 1 door. Bright red room - dazzling. Trapdoor in SW corner revealing Goblin horde - 80 cps, 2 sps.

Room 10: 50'x25'. 1 door (SD). Fake treasure room, contains about 2,000 gps of worthless treasure. Door on spring - slams shut and activates a Darkness spell - just intended to scare.

Room 11: 50'x40'. 1 door. Massive circular table in centre of room, covered with thick grime. Scraping off grime reveals magic mirror which will hold those looking at it mesmerised (until mirror smashed). On ceiling is another grime covered circular mirror (15' radius). If this mirror revealed and then either mirror smashed, mirrors harmlessly implode. If either mirror broken without revealing both mirrors, both mirrors explode. In event of explosion, 1-6 hits for those near mirror, 1-3 hits those in room not covering face etc., 1 hit for those taking cover.

Room 12: 40' x 60'. 1 door. Rest room - full of comfy chairs which attempt to hold, not harm, any sitting on them. If chairs attacked they scream (attracting 3 Gnolls (5,8,13) from SW door. Inside sofa is bag containing 80 gps. Some smashed pictures, and 6 small hand mirrors.

Room 13: 80' x 40'. 2 doors (1 magic SD). Horrible smell - roll under constitution or lose all strength bonuses. All wall torches in E end of room. In W end of room pile of about 30 corpses, mainly human, surrounded by 6" deep trench filled with inflammable liquid. Air vent in ceiling. Smokey smell. Corpses all rotting - signs of death from plague. Anyone crossing ditch has 5% chance of catching plague. 20% if bodies touched. Death within 3 hours - could pass plague on. Work it out for yourself. 25% of population totally resistant to plague. Lighting liquid burns bodies.

Room 14: 40'x60'. 3 doors (1 magic SD). 2 Zombies (7,9) sitting on chairs at N end of room. Each Zombies wears ring with magic inscription "As we are" - if worn, wearer turns into a rotting corpse, instant death - unless saves against magic. In secret panel in back of left chair is 50 gps. The zombies attack immediately.

Room 15: 60'x50'. 3 doors (1 magic SDO). Mirrored ceiling. Trip wire across all doors causes humming sound from trunk in NE corner of room. Humming grows gradually. After 5 minutes humming breaks mirror - 1-6 hits against all in room. If trunk smashed, humming stops. Lock has been sealed to prevent picking. In trunk is protection from fire scroll.

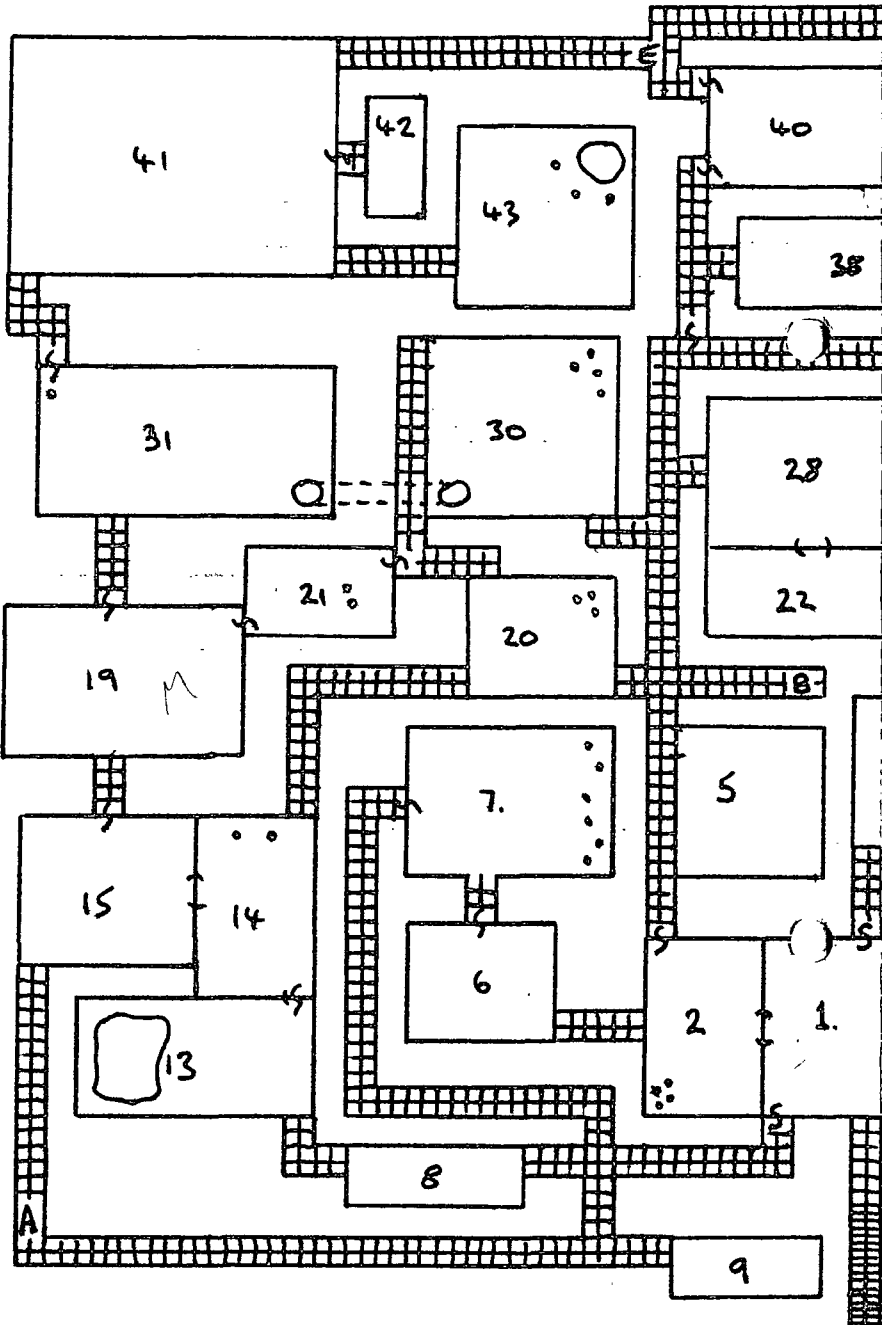
Room 16: 70'x40'. 3 doors. Torture Chamber - usual things eg. rack, iron maiden (containing body, human, 32 gps), chains on walls and from ceilings, giant metal hooks, thumb-screws etc.

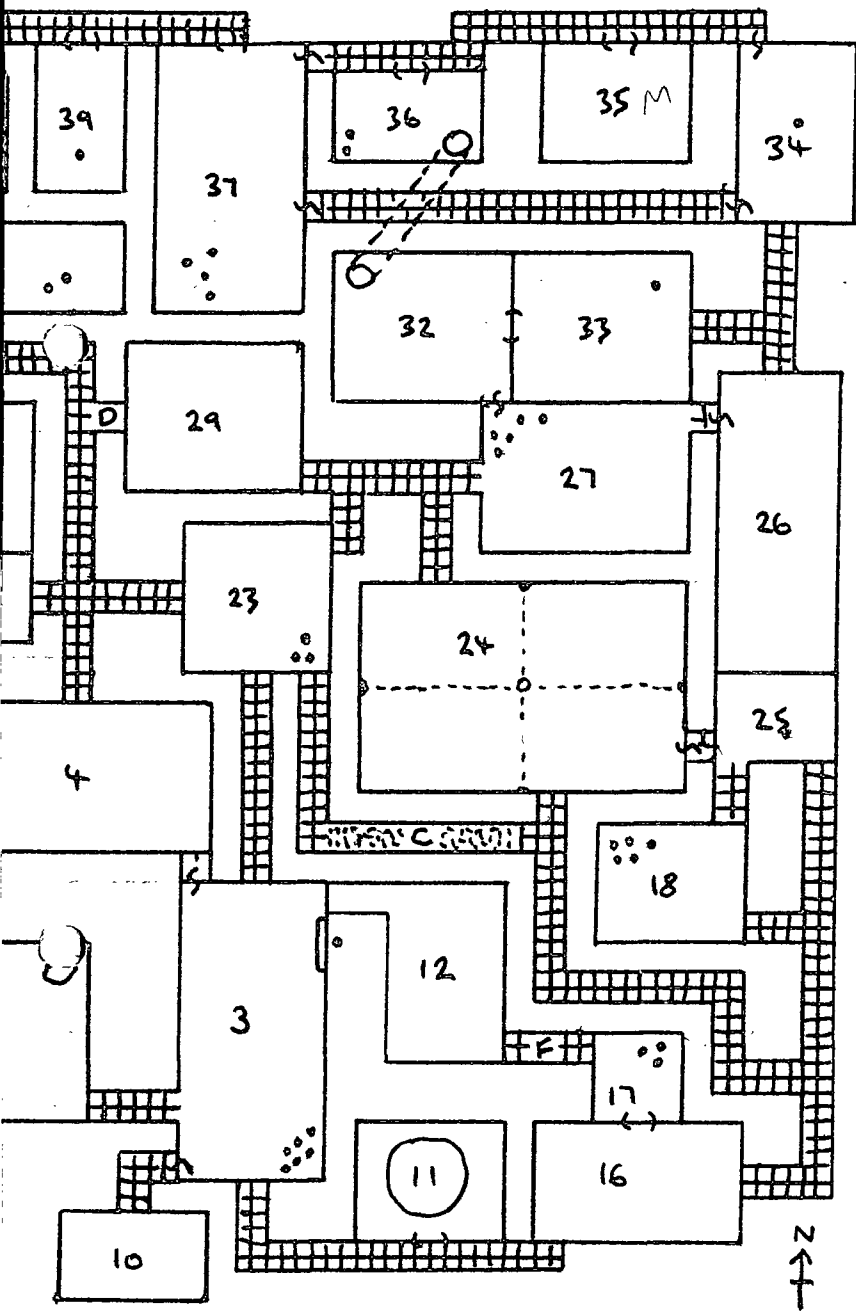
Room 17: 30'x30'. 2 doors. 3 Gnolls (5,8,13) sitting round fire in centre. Total of 6 gps on them.

Room 18: 50'x40'. 2 doors. 5 sleeping Goblins (3, 4,4,5,6). Short swords. Total 1 gp. All furniture broken up for firewood. Listening at doors hears snoring.

Room 19: 80'x50'. 3 doors (2 SD). Empty but dusty.







Room 20: 50'x40'. 3 doors. 3 Spiders (large) (2,5,7) in NE corner. Very, very dusty. Can't see clearly - spiders have initiative. 5% chance of sneezing = -1 on throws to hit. No treasure.

Room 21: 50'x30'. 1 magic SD (NE), one SD. 2 Kobolds having an argument over sharing dead Giant Rat. Kobolds (3,4).

Room 22: 70'x30'. 2 doors. Changing room: ripped up furniture. Ragged coats on hangers (in one is a coat spider, save against poison or arm useless). In lining of one cloak, scroll of fear.

Room 23: 50'x50'. 3 doors (1 secret). As soon as a door is opened, three Gnolls (7, 8,9) attack from SE corner. Armed with battle axes. In SW corner of room is mutilated body of young man (Vidal) and alive young girl (Grindel) (5). If girl unchained and questioned says she was kidnapped, with her brother, about 5 weeks ago by raiding Hobgoblins. When she woke up held by 6 Gnolls in this room. There were food supply. If girl asked where other Gnolls went will point to SD. Gnolls have 5 gps.

Room 24: 110'x70'. 3 doors. Mirror room. In centre of each wall is mirror, with a beam of light coming from each, crossing over central dias, on which stands a iron key. Around dias 4 square holes - if hand mirrors found in room 1 placed in holes will reflect back rays of mirrors. If this is not done, anyone putting his hand into beam to get key has his hand burned off. If hand put in single ray, just burning sensation. Iron key unlocks statue in room 1.

Room 25: 40'x30'. 3 doors. Empty.

Room 26: 40'x100'. 3 doors (1 SD). Very spooky chamber - aura of evil. 3 central pillars - inside middle pillar hidden gems (worth 80 gps). Wet walls - water seeping down from above - roof unsafe.

Room 27: 70'x50'. 2 SDs. 5 Hobgoblins (2,4,6,6,8) armed with morning star eating roast flesh in Nw corner of room. Small fire. Total treasure = 3 gps.

Room 28: 70'x50'. 2 doors. Bedroom - 4 poster bed = trap. When springs depressed top falls, delivering blow as flail x 2. Linen chest at foot of bed full of blankets, but cure serious wounds scroll hidden in lid.

Room 29: 60'x50'. 2 doors. Empty.

Room 30: 70'x60'. 2 doors. 4 Goblins (3,4,5,6) in NE corner of room - taken by surprise - discussing something (how to get out of dungeon). Short sword. Hidden locked trapdoor in SW corner of room. If questioned Goblins say used to stock treasure in treasure room and give rough guide to room 10.

Room 31: 100'x50'. 2 doors (1 magic SD). Empty except hidden in NW corner is Gnome (14). Seems friendly, but when within 10' of party goes berserk (plague) and attacks nearest creature. If bitten 25% chance of getting plague.

Room 32: 60'x50'. 2 doors (1 SD). Empty. Secret trapdoor in NW corner, unlocked.

Room 33: 60'x50'. 2 doors. Armoury: full of plain weapons etc. A suit of armour (plate) comes to life, attacking anyone who touches it, armed with x2 handed sword. 1 hit will demolish it. Nothing special.

Room 34: 40'x60'. 3 doors (2 SD). Empty, except drinking fountain in middle of room - when used water weird (11) appears.

Room 35: 50'x40'. 1 door. Forge - some partially completed weapons, bits of metal. One bit of metal = lump of gold, worth 38 gps. +1 magic dagger among bits of weapons.

Room 36: Tunnel up in SE corner. In SW corner 2 Goblins, short sword, (4,6). Only a few cps.

