

BATTLES OF LEGEND

THE BATTLE OF LA MAISONTAAL

A historical scenario originally by Rick Priestley and battle report
by Ewan Lamont, Andy Hall & Steve Hambrook.

Welcome once again to the fifth instalment in our ongoing series of recreating famous Warhammer world battles into playable Warmaster scenarios. With the release of the Skaven army we now have the opportunity to see how they fare in a really big battle. Inspired as we were by the incredible Warhammer scenario, the Battle of La Maisontaal, we thought what better than recreating this in Warmaster. Once more we'll remind you that the rules for the special characters published are for use with the scenario below, but can be used in other games if you wish. Bear in mind that they are in no way official, so don't turn up to any tournaments with them!

THE BATTLE OF LA MAISONTAAL 2491

The Battle of La Maisontaal, fought in the year 2491, ended in a spectacular victory for the Bretonnian forces of Duc Tancred. Although at first the Skaven and Heinrich Kemmler's Undead forces fought together, this unholy alliance soon broke down when the treacherous Skaven unleashed a number of hellish Warpfire Throwers into the ranks of Zombies in an effort to destroy the Lichemaster. The Necromancer walked unscathed through the green flames, and turned his forces against his deceitful allies. Allowing the Skaven and Undead to engage each other, Duc Tancred held his forces back for a single heroic charge, which smashed the forces of the Skaven, splitting them. Despite this, the rat-men fought on in desperation, attacked on two sides.

While Throt the Unclean directed his mutated creations against the Undead and Bretonnian forces, Grey Seer Gnawdoom hurtled over the battlefield, borne aloft by the power of his magic. Accompanied by a small group of black-clad Gutter Runners, he managed to fight his way inside the temple of Taal and recover the Black Ark. The High Priest of Taal, Bagrian, was killed in this attack, stabbed countless times by the poisoned blades of an Assassin. Many say that Bagrian brought this end upon himself, and that his interest in warpstone reeked of the taint of Chaos.

Once Gnawdoom had this sacred item within his grasp he fled the battlefield, leaving the other Skaven to be slaughtered. Throt escaped the battle, his warpstone enhanced constitution keeping him alive despite horrendous wounds. It was rumoured that after the battle he hired the services of Clan Eshin to exact revenge on the treacherous Gnawdoom.

The Bretonnians took heavy casualties from the relentless press of Undead, for Kemmler kept raising those that fell using the devastating power of his magic and his sheer force of will. Eventually the Lichemaster tired of the battle, realising that the Skaven Grey Seer had already fled with his prize. He slipped into the shadows and was gone.

The monks of Taal praised their god for their survival and the Bretonnians returned to their lands with honour. Duc Tancred devoted the remainder of his life to seeking the downfall of the Lichemaster, tragically bringing about his own doom at the Battle of Montfort Bridge. Some rumours whisper that he walks the world still, cursed to undeath by the foul Necromancer.

The year 2491 was a dark year for the faithful of Taal, the god of Nature, whose temple lay high in the mountains between Bretonnia and the Empire. Here follows an account of these dire events.

Bagrian, High Priest of Taal, walked over the floorboards to look out of the shattered window as the last of the day's sunshine was hidden by the horizon. His face was a mask of cold fury. Shards of coloured glass crunched under his sandalled feet. The beautiful stained glass windows had been inspirational creations, spectacular devotions to Taal that had taken years of loving attention to create. Now they were in ruin, as was much of the abbey. Only the temple itself still stood. The rest of La Maisontaal Abbey had been ruined, and the smell of charred wood and swirling ash filled the cool night air.

The High Priest raised his gaze to encompass the fields surrounding the abbey, and his expression hardened. Dark shapes were

Battles of Legend

silhouetted against the dying red sky; evil, twisted creatures were out there, abominations of nature which had no right to be walking the earth. Those creatures were opposed to all that he believed in, and were an affront to his god.

Concealed with arcane spells of protection and shielding, Bagrian had slipped unnoticed into the bowels of the mighty stronghold of the foul rat-men, that dark, crumbling city beneath the marshes known as Skavenblight. His journey had reaffirmed his belief that these creatures had no place in the world, and he had learnt much of the Skaven in his brief foray. He had discovered that it was the Chaos-infused substance known as warpstone that millennia ago had twisted the rat-creatures into the hideous beings they were today. He had hoped that studies of this dangerous substance might provide a clue as to how to eradicate the unnatural creatures from the world forever. With this in mind, Bagrian magically transported a small black box full of warpstone to his study in the abbey of Taal, high in the Grey Mountains. The rat-creatures flew into a frenzy when they discovered that the box was missing. Despite being magically concealed, Bagrian only barely escaped the seething Skaven lair. How could he have known that the box was an item sacred to the abhorrent Skaven, the cursed Black Ark of the Horned Rat?

It had taken only days for the foul creatures to appear. Taal only knows how they had found him, so far from their subterranean bell-hole, but find him they had. Three nights later, he had been awoken from his slumber by a vision of his god, alerting him to danger. Rushing into the corridor outside his room, he found the night watch lying at their posts, their throats slit. Hunched black figures prowled the abbey, moonlight glinting on their vicious blades. Calling on the powers vested in him by his god, Bagrian caused a great ball of light to appear above the abbey, burning like a miniature sun and illuminating the entire grounds. The black-clad Skaven cowered before the sudden light, and Bagrian quickly dispatched them with his powerful magic. The next morning, fear filled the abbey and shock and fright could be read in the eyes of initiate and monk alike. As night began to fall, movement could be seen in the distance, and the first wave of attacks began. Led by Gnaudoom, a crazed and powerful Skaven sorcerer, and the hideously mutated Throt the Unclean, the twisted rat-men descended on the abbey, crashing over the walls in a horrid, unstoppable swarm.

The monks of Taal stood bravely before them, fighting with mace and hammer. The air was filled with crackling sorcery as the Grey Seer pitted his magic against that of Bagrian. Throt, a powerful master mutator of Clan Moulder, directed his foul rat-spawn creations against the abbey's defenders, and twisted rats of gigantic proportions scrambled over the walls. The battle raged for half the night, and the outer walls of the abbey were slowly reduced to rubble. The overwhelming numbers and ferocity of the Skaven had slowly pushed the monks back.

As the moon reached its zenith in the sky above, a second terror descended on the beleaguered abbey. His soul filled with a growing despair, Bagrian looked into the clear sky, only to see the stars being blocked out by huge, dark shapes. On leathery wings, immense, deadly fell bats swooped down onto the monks, draining several of blood before taking to the air once more. The monks recoiled in horror as an army of the dead marched out of the mountains to the north. The Skaven advanced with increased confidence now that their allies had arrived.

At the head of the legion of corpses strode the dread Necromancer Heinrich Kemmler, the Lichemaster. For years this evil sorcerer had been causing terror along the borders of Bretonnia, laying waste to villages and towns as his army's ranks swelled with those he slaughtered. At his side was the towering figure of Krell the Twice Damned; his soul pledged to Chaos and his long-decayed body cursed to walk the earth once more. No doubt the Necromancer planned to use the power of the cursed warpstone to enhance his already dangerously powerful necromantic abilities.

In horror, Bagrian turned to the small graveyard just outside the abbey grounds as hands pushed up through the wet earth. The bodies of dead monks rose from their graves at Kemmler's command, turning sightless eyes upon their former brethren. Dismay washed over Bagrian, for such obscene acts should not be possible on the sacred, consecrated grounds of La Maisontaal. The Lichemaster was powerful indeed! Groaning, the rotting bodies of countless zombies staggered towards the monks, and the battle became even more terrible.

Bagrian ordered the monks into the temple of Taal, sealing the immense solid door behind them. He knew that if the two parties acted together, they would quickly overcome the last of the abbey's defenders, but that was not in the nature of these suspicious and evil-hearted beings. Indeed, the unholy alliance swiftly fell apart and the two unnatural enemies clashed.

Battles of Legend

While the powerful sorcerers Kemmler and Gnaudoom were focused on each other, Bagrian managed to get past their magical defences. Free from its corporeal burden, his spirit burst from his body and sped into the sky. Soaring high above the earth, Bagrian scoured the lands in an attempt to find some aid for the beleaguered abbey. After nearly an hour of searching, his spirit-eyes found what he sought. Camped less than a day's march away from the abbey was a force of Bretonnian knights. Descending to the ground, his spirit form passed through the command tent, coming invisibly face to face with the proud Duc Tancred.

Looking within the heart of the noble Bretonnian Grail Knight, Bagrian saw that he had a true and noble spirit, and hope surged through him. The Grail Damsel at Duc Tancred's side gasped as she perceived the spirit of Bagrian, though no other in the tent could see him. Swiftly, Bagrian told her of the plight of the abbey of Taal. The Damsel quickly relayed the message to the Duc. Hearing the name of the hated Heinrich Kemmler, the Grail Knight surged to his feet, shouting for his army to make ready to ride to war.

Bagrian glared over the shattered remains of his once proud abbey. As he watched, the two forces came forward once more to resume their struggle. Doubtless, both Kemmler and the Skaven Grey Seer Gnaudoom wanted the warpstone hidden in the strangely decorated black box for themselves.

The forces of Skaven and Undead clashed once again as the sky turned to darkness overhead, their fighting even reaching the inner compound of the abbey below. The sound of chanting echoed through the temple as the monks of Taal intoned devotions to their god. Bagrian was at peace within himself, though he raged against the abominations that stalked the night outside. He knew that if his god decreed that his time was upon him, he would face it without fear. If his god decided that he would live to fight to restore the natural order of the land, then he would survive this day.

There was a sudden shout within the temple, interrupting the chanting that stopped suddenly.

"Look to the west, Father Bagrian! By Taal, we are saved!"

Running to the west windows, Bagrian saw a great cloud of dust billowing in the distance. Riding before the dust-cloud were the proud knights of Bretonnia, pennants dancing in the wind as they galloped towards the abbey. He

saw elements of the Skaven and Undead forces turn to face this new threat, while others kept fighting each other.

Feeling the power of his god flowing through him, Bagrian turned resolutely to the monks who crowded behind him.

"I will join our allies, and smite the abominations this day in Taal's name! Guard the Ark well in my absence."

With those words he swept towards the great double-doors that guarded the entrance to the temple. The doors swung open at a gesture, and he stepped through them. The burnt ruins of the abbey were littered with bodies, some furred, others in various stages of decay. The great doors swung shut behind him, and Bagrian gazed in hatred towards the figures of Kemmler and the Skaven Grey Seer, Gnaudoom. They sensed his power across the battlefield and instantly began their mental assault.

The Skaven army swiftly broke away from the Undead forces, pulling back to regroup. The Bretonnians thundered over the rocky ground and the three armies faced each other, the abbey in the centre. Standing on the steps of the temple of Taal, Bagrian raised his arms high in the air. There was a sudden flash of light, and contorting lightning arced towards the Undead and Skaven ranks. At an unheard signal, the three armies charged towards each other, and the vicious, desperate Battle of La Maisontaal began in earnest.



FORCES

The Bretonnian army consists of 3,000 points chosen from the Bretonnian army selector. This army must be divided into two separate forces, one consisting of 500 points of infantry only (the defenders of La Maisontaal) and one consisting of 2,500 points (the relief force). The High Priest of Taal, Bagrian, is a Wizard and is free with this scenario. The Skaven army consists of 3,000 points from the Skaven army selector. The character Throt the Unclean comes free with this scenario. The Vampire Counts army consists of 3,000 points from the Vampire Counts army selector. The character Heinrich Kemmler is the General and comes free with this scenario.

SET UP

The Undead and Skaven armies deploy first as shown on the map on pg 10, taking it in turn to place either a unit or a brigade until all of their units are deployed. Then the Bretonnian player deploys 500 points of his army in and around the abbey of La Maisontaal (this must be comprised only of infantry and must include the special character Bagrian). Units within the abbey count as Fortified. The rest of the Bretonnian army may only come on via the Bretonnian battlefield edge upon the successful roll of a 4+ on a D6 by the Bretonnian player. The Bretonnian player may attempt this roll once at the beginning of each of his turns.

SPECIAL RULES

Multi-player game: This battle is a multi-player game with three distinct sides; Bretonnians, Skaven and Vampire Counts. Each army acts in exactly the same way that individual armies do and will withdraw after the death of the General or after losing over

half its full complement of units. The game ends either after eight turns or if there is only a single army remaining on the field of battle. Players should take note of each of the stands and units that they destroy of each of their enemies so that Victory points can be allocated at the end of the battle (the easiest way to do this is for each general to build up a 'dead pile' on a spare table or in a box). Each army moves in its own specific phase of each turn and follows the sequence of turns as shown below.

TURN SEQUENCE

Skaven/Undead/Bretonnian

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for eight turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

In addition to the standard Warmaster victory conditions, the army that finishes the battle with the most units within the compound of La Maisontaal gains an extra 500 Victory points.

SPECIAL CHARACTERS

<i>Characters</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Attack</i>	<i>Hits</i>	<i>Armour</i>	<i>Command</i>	<i>Unit Size</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Min/Max</i>	<i>Special</i>
Bagrian	Wizard	+1	-	-	8	1	-	1	*1
Throt the Unclean	Hero	+3	-	-	8	1	-	1	*2
Heinrich Kemmler	General	+2	-	-	9	1	-	1	*3

Special Rules

1. Priest of Taal. Bagrian is the master of La Maisontaal and a High Priest of Taal, the god of nature. He therefore doesn't use the standard spell list available to Bretonnian Enchantresses and utilises the Empire spells instead.

2. Master Mutator. Throt is a Master Mutator of Clan Moulder and as a result has mutated his own body, increasing his constitution considerably and grafting on an additional arm. This gives Throt +2 Attacks that have been included in his profile.

3. Master Necromancer. Kemmler has studied the dark arts for countless centuries. He counts as though he has the Necrarch ability – may re-roll one failed spell throughout the battle.



Battles of Legend

KEMMLER'S DARK ORATION...

So here we are at another Battle of Legend. My track record at these has not been very good, in fact it's down right terrible! And my nemesis (the evil Hambrook!) has an unbeaten record. After Steve asked me to play in this one I stuck a few more pins in the head of the Hambrook Voodoo doll I keep in my desk drawer and reluctantly agreed.

In this battle I was to play the Lichemaster, Heinrich Kemmler, and command his force of Undead using the Vampire Counts army selector. After reading the scenario it became apparent to me that I had to get into La Maisontaal. This was for two main reasons. Firstly, La Maisontaal is *Fortified* which means it cannot be attacked by cavalry, which when going against Bretonnians is a good thing! Secondly, being in control of the abbey at the end of the game gained you an extra 500 Victory points. With this in mind I went for a solid brigade of Grave Guard to lead the attack on the abbey. This would be supported by a Vampire in Black Coach and one on a Winged Nightmare. Getting into the abbey would be no

mean feat, so with the aid of the *terror* - causing Vampire mounts I hoped to better my chances. I also 'maxed' out on Grave Knights knowing that I would probably bump into large amounts of fearsome Bretonnian Knights. Fell Bats would also be useful for getting into the abbey (the internal courtyard was not *fortified*) so I took as many as I could. I filled out the rest of the army with the usual mix of Undead flotsam which was dependant on what we had painted in the cabinet. These would largely have a supportive roll and I hoped to get as many in the abbey as possible if I managed to break in.

After surveying the battlefield I realised that I would need to work with Steve's Skaven army if I was going to crack the abbey. Once in La Maisontaal I would then boot Steve out (as I knew he would betray me as soon as our alliance had run its course). An alliance with Steve would be a shaky one at best as we have both played against each other many times, having a long running (friendly, honest!) rivalry and have never worked together before, could we now? – Andy.

The Undead Horde of Heinrich Kemmler

• <i>Kemmler</i> – General	Free
• 1 Vampire Black Coach	120 pts
• 1 Vampire on Winged Nightmare	160 pts
• 3 Necromancers	135 pts
• 10 units of Skeletons	300 pts
• 6 units of Zombies	210 pts
• 12 units of Grave Knights	1,320 pts
• 4 units of Grave Guard	240 pts
• 8 units of Dire Wolves	320 pts
• 3 units of Fell Bats	195 pts

Total – 3,000 pts

LE PLAN DE BATAILLE

I did not have to think too much about what troops to take - 3,000 points is a lot of troops and I just about begged, borrowed and stole enough to supplement my own reasonable 1,500 point army. As it turned out I had accidentally acquired a very usefully balanced force. My 'useful' infantry came to the 500 points required to defend La Maisontaal, leaving only a brigade of Peasants scurrying after their mounted masters in the relief force. I swapped one of the Peasants units with Men-at-arms so that the Peasant brigade had a bit of backbone and might actually move on the battlefield. I organised the Knights into three brigades, one hard hitting one with the 'tooled up' Grail Knights, one of four units and one

smaller three-unit brigade. The Squires were divided into two three-unit brigades.

The plan was simple – the monks and their retainers (Peasants, Men-at-arms and Bowmen) just had to survive until the proverbial cavalry came to the rescue. The only slightly devious bit of my plan was to send all the squires to my far right flank and give the Skaven something to think about (keeping them away from the La Maisontaal).

My big fears were a coordinated Skaven and Undead attack on the abbey, the Skaven sitting in my deployment zone picking off the relief column as it came onto the battlefield or even worse – the relief column never actually showing up! – Ewan.

The Bretonnian Army of Duc Tancred

• <i>Duc Tancred</i> – General	125 pts
• 1 Hero on Pegasus	95 pts
• 3 Heroes	240 pts
• 2 Enchantresses on Unicorn, one with <i>Scroll of Dispelling</i>	140 pts
• 1 unit of Men-at-arms	45 pts
• 3 units of Peasants	90 pts
• 2 Grail Knights, one with <i>Sword of Destruction</i>	250 pts
• 9 units of Knights	990 pts
• 6 units of Squires	540 pts

The Garrison of La Maisontaal

• <i>Bagrian</i> – Wizard	Free
• 5 units of Bowmen	275 pts
• 4 units of Men-at-arms	180 pts
• 1 unit of Peasants	30 pts

Total – 3,000 pts

ATTACK ABBEY, QUICK-QUICK!

My fourth Battle of Legend and so far I have a one hundred percent success rate – something tells me I'm gonna be in for a fall! When coming up with ideas for scenarios for Battles of Legend we generally research all available Warhammer material. This usually involves reading through the history and background sections of each of the army books (oh, what a chore!). This time around I was flicking through the Warhammer Chronicles 2003 when I stumbled upon the Battle at La Maisontaal. This immediately gave me pangs of nostalgia, for I remembered playing the original scenario from the first Citadel Journal, many years ago. Back then I took command of Bagrian and his warrior monks and was soundly slaughtered by the Undead and Skaven armies. How good would this be in Warmaster scale I thought. So, here we are again and this time I'm not the Bretonnians!

So, 3,000 point of Skaven, eh? Well, no one knows Skaven better than me (allegedly!) and they certainly are a difficult army to command. With the Skaven you have to have a decent battleplan, and stick to it, otherwise you can easily end up as rat stew! First I had to write an army list and being that I was somewhat restricted by the numbers of models we had available (I had to grovel to the guys in Direct Sales for use of their burgeoning Skaven army as we have so few painted up in the office – cheers lads!). For a 3,000 point Skaven army your minimum troop choices must be six units of Clanrats and six units of Rat Swarms. To this I added just two more units of Rat Swarms but a healthy eight more units of Clanrats. This

would give me a solid backbone for my army. I took another look at the scenario – I would have to assault a *Fortified* position. Now who better than the mighty Rat Ogres for this job? I purchased the maximum number of units I could have – six! I also figured that if I was going up against Bretonnians and their fearsome Knights I would max out on Warp-lightning cannons – taking three. I also took a couple of units of Jezzails to guard the guns. Three units of Plague Monks and three units of Gutter Runners would give me some hard-hitting and some versatile troops. Finally I took a Doom Wheel – they never seem to do much for me but maybe this time it would fulfil its potential. With my units sorted and already forming up in brigades within my head I considered the characters. I took the obligatory Grey Seer and for battles of this size, the equally obligatory Screaming Bell – tooling him up with a *Ring of Magic*. Three Heroes and three Warlocks I thought would give me enough decent Command and more than sufficient magic support for the army. I gave the Rat Ogres a smattering of magic banners just to give them that edge. And finally there was Throt the Unclean – a Hero but with a massive three attacks, and for free. mm...

Right, now for the battle plan. I seemed to have lumbered myself with a deployment zone in the centre of the battlefield with two opposing armies coming on from either end. The last thing I wanted was to get caught fighting on two fronts. It would make no sense to throw my entire army at the abbey, trying to hold back the tides of Undead and just waiting

Battles of Legend

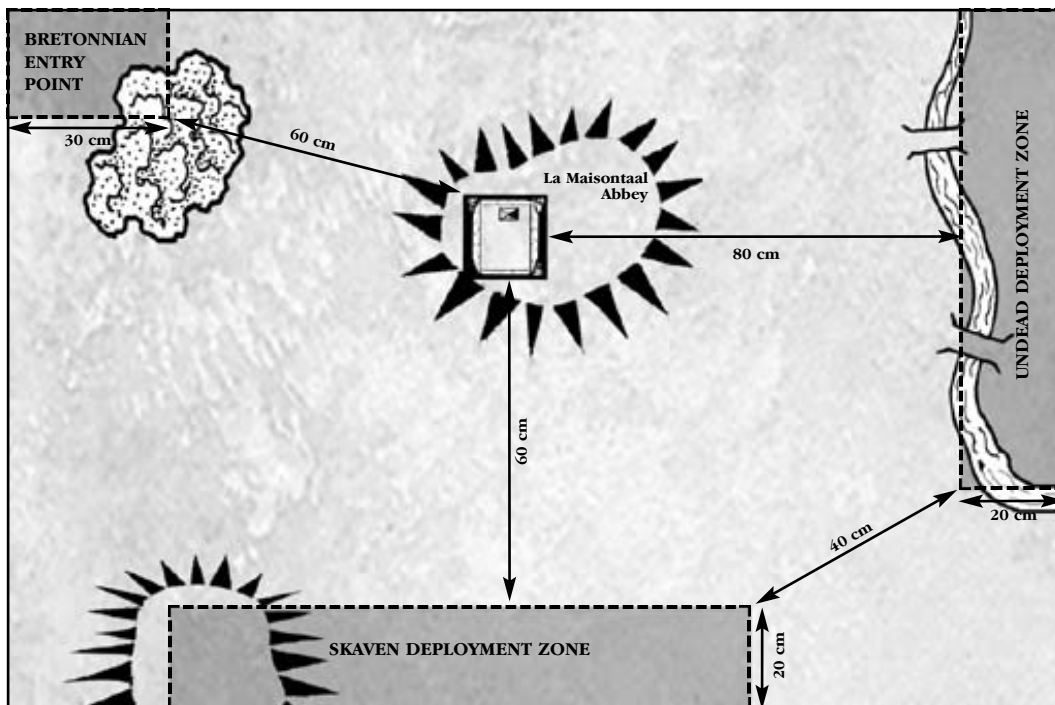
for the fast moving (and hard hitting) Bretonnian Knights to come on and hammer me from the rear! I decided to divide the army into three elements. One, the Rat Ogres and some Rat Swarms and led by Throt the Unclean would advance and assault the abbey. A second force comprising mainly Clanrats and Plague Monks would form a buffer against the Undead and secure my right flank. Finally, the largest part of my army would secure the hill on my left flank and await the Bretonnians with Jezzails, Warp-Lightning Cannons, supported by legions of Clanrats and Rat Swarms. Hopefully, staying in this defensive

position on the left flank would not only force the Bretonnians and Undead to fight each other, it would also be sufficiently far away from the Undead deployment zone that they wouldn't be able to attack me at the early stages of the battle. I could just sit there and watch the battle unfold, applying the greater part of my army when the opportunity arose. When you play Skaven you have to learn to think like one – let the man-things and dead-things annihilate each other then move in for the kill-kill – Squeak! – Steve.

The Skaven Army of Grey Seer Gnawdoom

- *Gnawdoom* – General on Screaming Bell with *Ring of Magic* 280 pts
- Throt the Unclean – Hero Free
- 3 Heroes, one with Sword of Might 210 pts
- 3 Warlocks, one with *Scroll of Dispelling/Staff of Spellbinding/Rod of Repetition* 150 pts
- 14 units of Clanrats 480 pts
- 8 units of Rat Swarms 300 pts
- 3 units of Gutter Runners 180 pts
- 2 units of Jezzails 160 pts
- 3 units of Plague Monks 140 pts
- 6 units of Rat Ogres, one with *Banner of Sbiielding/Banner Fortitude/Battle Banner* 810 pts
- 1 Doomwheel 150 pts
- 3 Warp-Lightning Cannons 150 pts

Total – 3,010 pts



The Battlefield

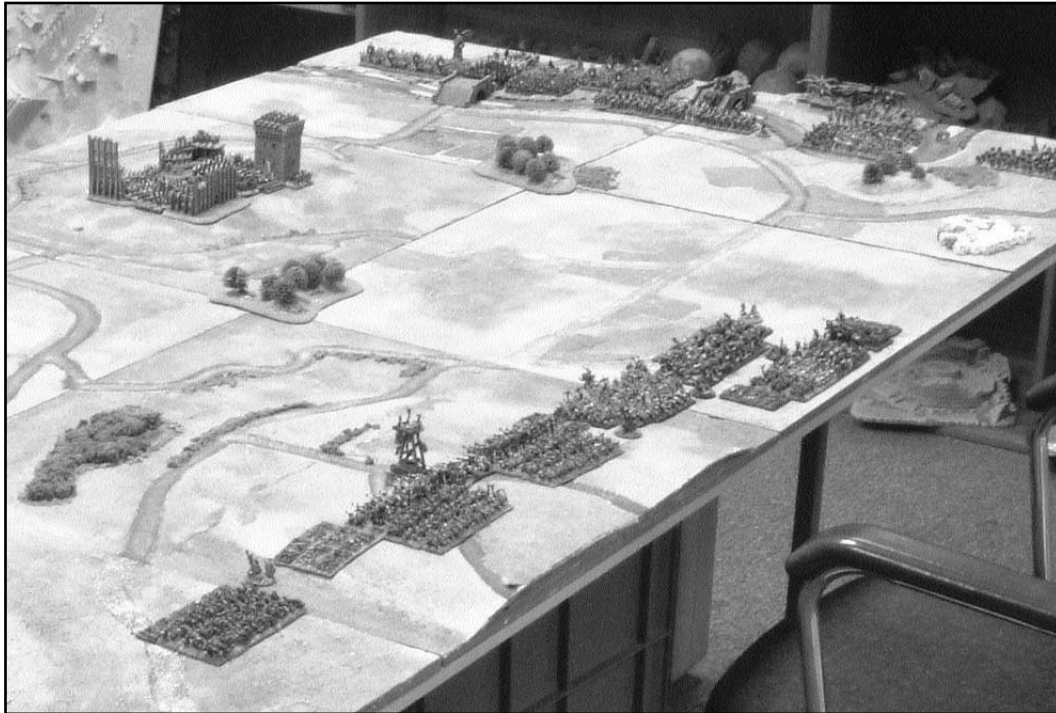
DEPLOYMENT

The Skaven and Vampire Counts armies deployed first. The Skaven army was deployed lengthways across the battlefield. On the extreme left flank, a brigade consisting of three units of Gutter Runners, screened by a unit of Rat Swarms, deployed commanded by a Hero. Slightly left of centre, upon a large, strategic hill, was deployed a monstrosly vast brigade that consisted of three Warp-lightning Cannons, two units of Jezzails, two units of Rat Ogres, six units of Clanrats with the flanks bolstered by three units of Rat Swarms. This brigade was accompanied by the general, Grey Seer Gnawdoom, upon his Screaming Bell, a Hero and a Warlock. In the army centre, to the right of the brigade on the hill, was a brigade of six units of Clanrats commanded by a Hero. To the right of this was a brigade of four units of Rat Ogres, supported by two units of Rat Swarms and commanded by Throt the Unclean and a Warlock. Immediately behind the brigade of Rat Ogres was a brigade consisting of three units of Plague Monks, two units of Clanrats and supported by two units of Rat Swarms. This brigade was commanded by a Hero and a Warlock.

The Undead horde of Heinrich Kemmler, the Lichemaster, deployed at right angles to the Skaven host, with its left flank closest to the Skaven right and its right flank closest to the Abbey of La Maisontaal. On the Undead left

flank facing the Skaven horde were deployed two brigades of four units of fast moving Dire Wolves, each commanded by a Necromancer. Nearer the army centre and on the other side of the river, were deployed two brigades of Zombies and three units of Fell Bats commanded by a Necromancer. In the army centre and on the near side of the river were two brigades of Grave Knights commanded by a Vampire in a Black Coach. Immediately behind these, on the far bank of the river, were deployed two brigades of Skeletons and a brigade of Grave Guard and these were accompanied by the Undead general Heinrich Kemmler himself and a Necromancer. On the right flank, on the far side of the bridge were a couple of brigades of Grave Knights with a brigade of four units of Skeletons to their right. This flank was commanded by a Vampire Hero, mounted on a Nightmare.

Facing these two immense armies of darkness was the Abbey of La Maisontaal. Within the sturdy but partially ruined walls of this powerful fortress, the magic wielding Abbot, Bagrian, commanded a force comprising of five units of Bowmen, four units of Men-at-arms and a single unit of Peasants (these were the actual monks!). Bagrian knew that he would have to hold out until Duke Tancred's reinforcements would arrive and so had prepared his defences well.

*Deployment*

Battles of Legend

Skaven Turn 1

The dreadful tolling of the ancient Screaming Bell signalled the advance of the Skaven horde and with that the battle begun. The Skaven brigades on the left flank and army centre advanced at a steady pace aiming at securing the high ground, whilst Throt the Unclean forced his brigade of ravenous Rat Ogres forward with his barbed whip. So desperate were the great beasts of Clan Moulder to taste the flesh of their foes that they surged ahead of the whole army, almost reaching the abbey walls. The brigade of Clanrats to the Rat Ogres' right moved up in support. The brigade of Plague Monks proved too unruly and were too busy building themselves up into a fighting frenzy that they failed to move despite the irritated wailing of their leaders. Magic cast by a pair of Warlocks against the abbey failed to have any effect.

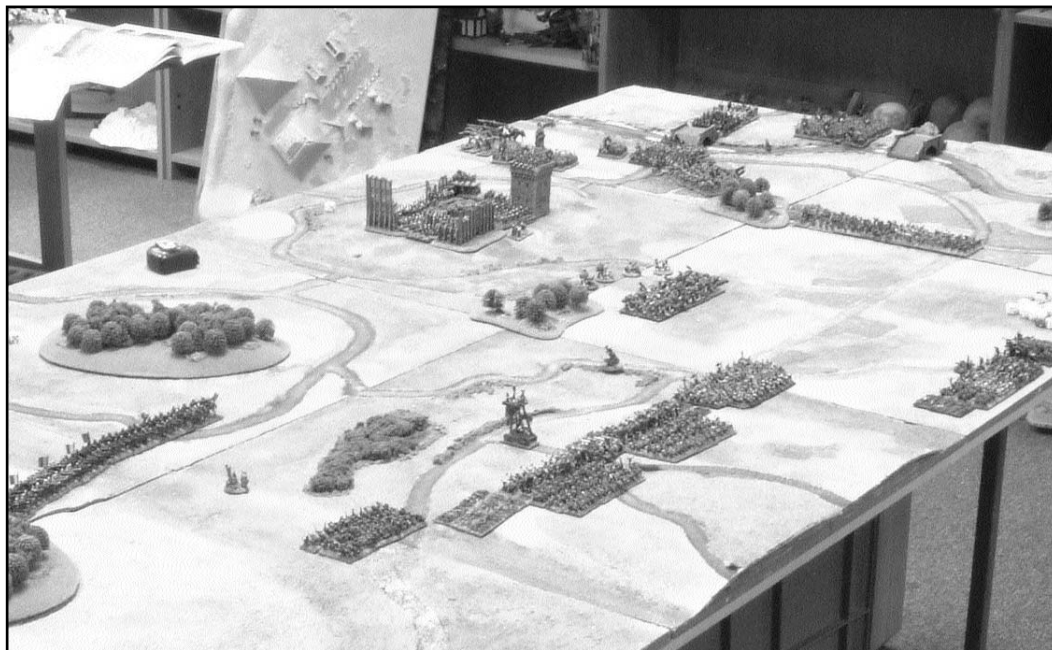
Vampire Counts Turn 1

Slowly but inexorably the Undead horde of the Lichemaster ambled forward, guided by the will of their necromantic masters. On the Undead left flank, the jet-black forms of swift Dire Wolves bore down upon the right flank of the Skaven army that was currently in disarray. The second brigade of Dire Wolves, however, failed to move and became separated from their fellows. The massive brigades of Zombies advanced on the Undead left flank dispelling any illusions about their apparent sluggishness in battle. The Grave Knights in the army centre moved forward to the sound of bones being struck upon drums made of human skin. A tall, gaunt Necromancer directed the Fell Bats

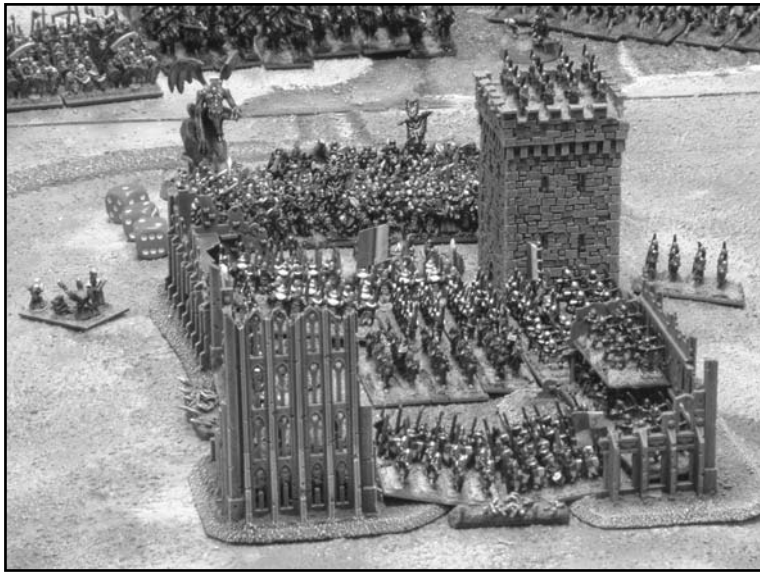
across the battlefield to land to the far side of the abbey. The brigades of Grave Guard and Skeletons in the centre and right flank, respectively, advanced to within bow range of the abbey. The race was now on to reach the beleaguered abbey that sat like a small beacon of light within a sea of darkness. For a fleeting moment though it was as if the Lichemaster was ambivalent to the fate of the abbey for his Grave Knights and Skeletons on the right flank just stood their ground, like so many statues, their torn pennants fluttering in the breeze.

Bretonnian Turn 1

With the two titanic armies bearing down upon the abbey, Ewan, the Bretonnian general, knew that the sooner his reinforcements arrived the better. He rolled for each of his units and was dismayed when just two brigades of Squires arrived on the battlefield – where were those Knights? Making the most of what was available, Ewan moved the Squires up in one long line to within bow range of the Gutter Runners on the Skaven left flank. The Bretonnians within the abbey drew back their bowstrings and unleashed a hail of fire upon the advancing Skeletons driving them back from the walls. Their fire against the advancing Rat Ogres was swallowed up by the multitude of Rat Swarms that preceded them and had little discernable effect. The Squires on the Bretonnian left flank had more luck and the heavy cloud of arrows unleashed against the advancing Gutter Runners wiped out their screen of Rat Swarms entirely (six units of Squires in line – eighteen missile attacks!).



The battlefield at the end of Turn 1



Turn 2 – Kemmler’s forces assault the abbey

Skaven Turn 2

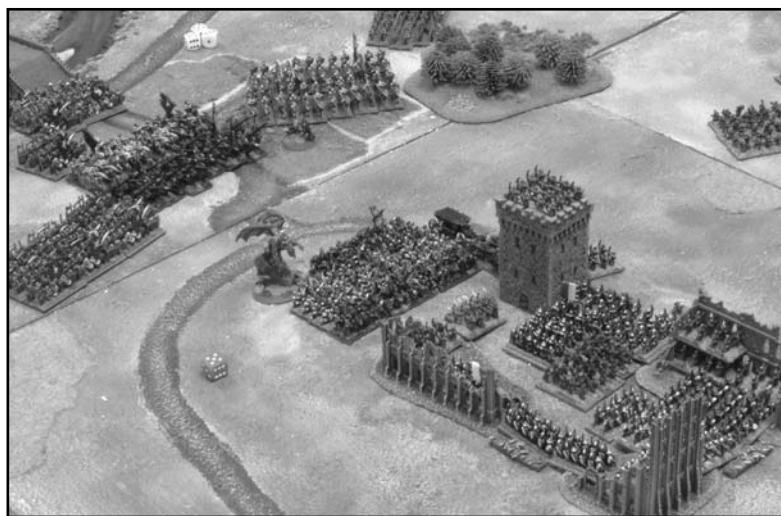
Noticing the gradual deployment of Bretonnian reinforcements, Grey Seer Gnawdoom started to enact his masterplan. He ordered his main brigade onto the brow of the large hill on his left flank, to take up defensive positions where the artillery and Jezzails could sweep much of the battlefield. The Clanrats disengaged from their parent brigade and pulled back to act as a reserve. The scouting force of Gutter Runners, now devoid of their screen of Rat Swarms, diligently moved into the small patch of woods at the bottom of the hill, where they could disrupt any frontal assault upon the hill. Even with ravenous Dire Wolves bearing down upon them, the brigade of Plague Monks on the Skaven right flank still stubbornly refused to move, discipline it would appear had gone completely! In the meantime, Throt’s brigade of Rat Ogres was advancing steadily upon the abbey but they seemed to be on a collision course with the advancing Undead legions. It would be sheer folly to get embroiled in a pointless combat with the Undead – deal with them later, Gnawdoom had instructed the ambitious ratman. Throt ordered his brigade to swing around and take up a position to the left of the abbey – the opposite side to the

Undead assault. This would split the Bretonnian defenders and the Undead would, in essence, aid Throt’s assault.

Once the Warp-lightning Cannons and Jezzails were in position, Gnawdoom ordered them to open fire on the Squires. With a massive crackle of energy the cannons fired, supported by a Warlock casting *Warp Lightning*. After the smoke cleared, a couple of units of Squires had taken a bit of a battering and were in disarray (they had lost a couple of stands and were confused).

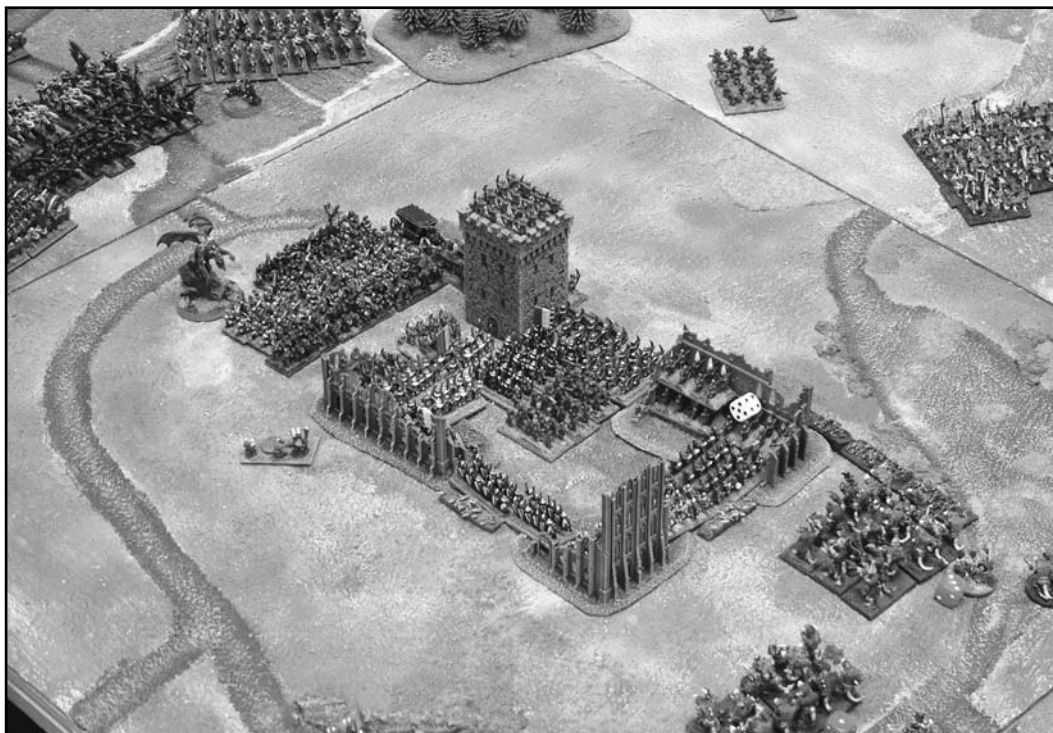
Vampire Counts Turn 2

The Lichemaster could work out what the Skaven were up to but was unsure as to whether they were his allies or his enemies. He ordered his Grave Guard to assault the abbey immediately and in this they were supported by the *terror-causing* Vampire on Black Coach. The brigade of Grave Knights was ordered to protect the flanks of the Grave Guard as they assaulted the abbey whilst the Zombies continued their advance down the centre of the battlefield to act as a buffer against any Bretonnian reinforcements or maybe the Skaven. On the Undead left flank, the Dire Wolves advanced into charge range of elements of the Skaven right flank. The Lichemaster pondered for a moment but before he could



Turn 2 – The Undead forces are repelled from the abbey

Battles of Legend



Turn 3 – The abbey of La Maisontaal comes under attack from all sides

decide the fate of this mysterious third force, an impetuous Necromancer made that decision for him. The evil wizard cast *Vanbel's Danse Macabre* upon a unit of Dire Wolves and they went crashing into the flanks of a unit of Rat Swarms – battle with the Skaven had commenced. The Lichemaster considered for a while a suitably, painful death for his insubordinate minion as battle was joined.

The Grave Guard assaulted the abbey walls with ladders and scrambled over the rubble of the numerous breaches within them. After some fierce fighting they were driven back from the abbey with losses on both sides (a stand each). Meanwhile, the Dire Wolves utterly destroyed the Rat Swarm on the Skaven right flank and then advanced into the flank of a unit of Clanrats. Surprisingly, the Clanrats managed to drive off the Dire Wolves and then destroy them in turn!

Bretonnian Turn 2

Again Ewan rolled for his reinforcements and again he was sorely disappointed – not a single unit arrived this turn! You couldn't help but sympathise with him. Aware of the size of the forces bearing down upon the abbey and aware of the pitiful forces at his disposal, Ewan knew that he was going to have to use them effectively and sparingly. The Squires on the Skaven left flank were ordered onto the hill to the Skaven's extreme left, in an attempt to outflank the Skaven defences and remove

themselves from the fire arc of the Skaven artillery. This did, however, leave the two confused units of Squires staring down the barrels of many Jezzails and three Warp-lightning Cannons! The Squires unleashed a startlingly accurate volley of arrows against the Gutter Runners skulking in the woods, at the foot of the Skaven-held hill, and drove them back, slaying many (a stand was lost and a unit confused in the drive back). The abbot of La Maisontaal, Bagrian, looked out over what appeared to be a rippling, dark sea of enemies and apart from a handful of mounted Squires in the distance he could see no signs of respite.

Skaven Turn 3

As far as Grey Seer Gnawdoom was concerned everything was going to plan, his shock troops were in position to assault the abbey and very few Bretonnian reinforcements had arrived. Three units of Rat Ogres and a Rat Swarm hurled themselves against the abbey's fortifications with reckless abandon. His single eye gleaming with barely contained blood lust, Throt himself joined the assault on the abbey. Meanwhile, the brigade of Clanrats that were positioned as a buffer against the Undead hordes in the centre of the battlefield charged the advancing Zombies using their initiative as their discipline collapsed (I think that was my first error! – Steve). Gnawdoom was furious – this would bring the Undead down upon his army in full strength. He would wear the fur of the Clanrat's leaders as a cloak!

On the Skaven right flank, after their rude awakening by the charge of the Dire Wolves, the Plague Monks and their supporting units finally found a semblance of discipline and wheeled around facing off against the remnants of the Dire Wolves.

On the Skaven left flank again the Warp-lightning Cannons spoke their litany of death, destroying one of the stranded units of Squires and inflicting horrific casualties upon the other.

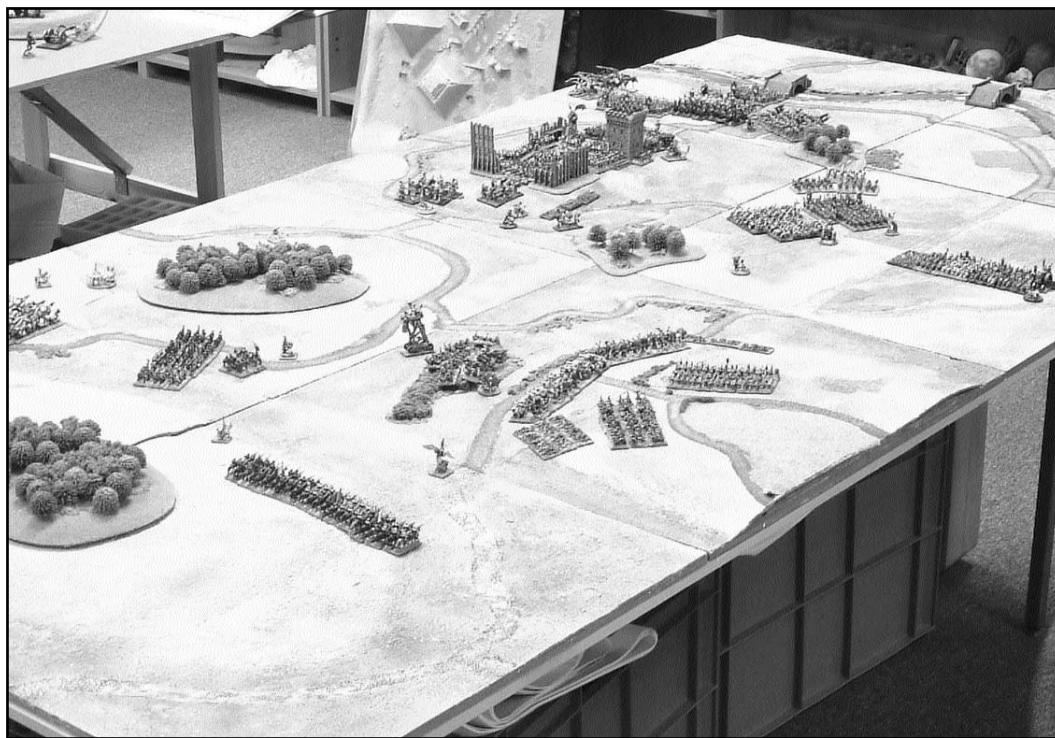
In the assault against the abbey, a Warlock successfully cast Death Frenzy on the Rat Swarm taking part. Unfortunately, the eldritch magic proved far too potent for the very lowest of the Skaven forces and they simply tore themselves apart before they even reached the ramparts (Yes, I managed to roll two 6's! – Steve). The Rat Ogres were repelled with heavy losses, as the men defended the ramparts with a grim determination. One unit of Men-at-arms, emboldened by their success against such huge odds, sallied out of the abbey intent on catching and slaying the vile Throt. The men fought valiantly but eventually had to retire behind the ramparts after most of their unit was destroyed (three stands of Rat Ogres, a whole Rat Swarm – destroyed by their own spell – all for the cost of two stands of Men-at-arms!). The Clanrats fared much better in their battle against the Zombies, however, and destroyed three units for the loss of two stands (with only a single attack each when caught in

the flank, Zombies don't stand much of a chance!).

Denied his 'easy' entrance to the abbey and now embroiled in an escalating battle with the Undead, Gnowdoo seethed – this was not going to plan...

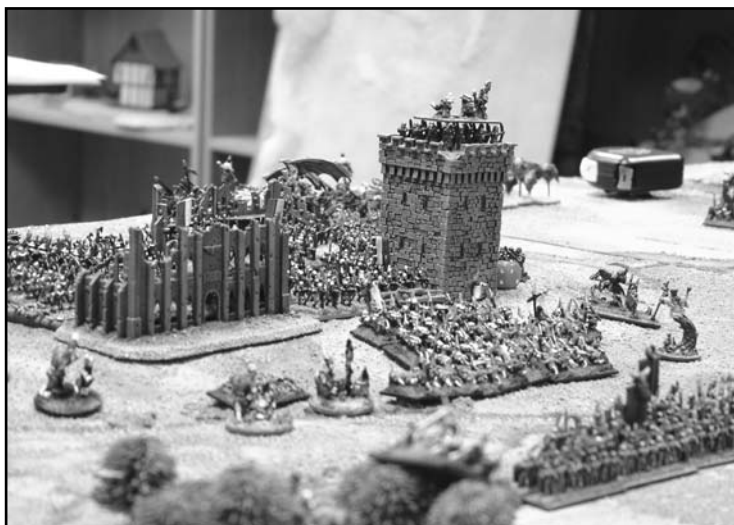
Vampire Counts Turn 3

'So the puny ratmen think they can take on the might of the Lichemaster?' thought Kemmler as he saw his expendable Zombies being hacked down in droves. The Lichemaster knew that he held all of the aces – he had far more troops available to assault the abbey, the only Bretonnian reinforcements were currently harassing the Skaven army so they couldn't afford to waste troops fighting his horde. The Lichemaster decided that he would teach the irritating Skaven a lesson and smash the brigade of Clanrats in the centre of the battlefield. This would let the impertinent ratmen know that the abbey was his and that they should concern themselves with the encroaching Bretonnians. In the meantime, the Lichemaster ordered the assault against the abbey to continue. A Necromancer sent a shambling brigade of Skeletons to engage the doomed Clanrats in the centre. However, all the other orders issued that turn fell upon deaf (or dead!) ears as the massive Undead horde came to a halt. Orders issued to the Fell Bats failed, as did those issued to the Grave Guard to continue the assault and those to the Dire Wolves to charge the Plague Monks on the



The battlefield at the end of Turn 3.

Battles of Legend



Turn 4 – Skaven renew their assault against the abbey

Skaven army's right flank. More importantly, the personal orders of Kemmler issued to his Grave Knights to charge the Clanrats in the flanks failed also, even when he invoked the power of his *Orb of Majesty* (boy, did Andy swear like a trooper at this point!). The Lichemaster bellowed with rage at his disobedient army of automatons and cast *Vanbel's Danse Macabre*, moving a unit of Grave Guard to assault the abbey alone.

In the ensuing combat with the Clanrats, without the benefit of the Grave Knights charging their exposed flanks, the Skeletons were outmatched and driven off. Similarly, without the aid of supporting troops, the Grave Guard assaulting the abbey were easily driven off by the defenders.

Bretonnian Turn 3

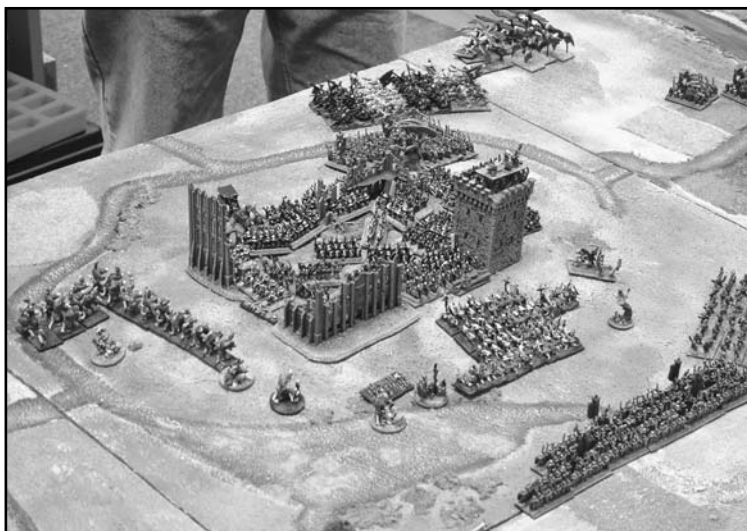
With the failure of both the Skaven and Undead assaults on the abbey, the Bretonnians had a breathing space. Ewan rolled for his reinforcements, this time a brigade of Peasants and a brigade of Knights arrived amidst the mayhem of the battle – but would it be enough to turn the tide? Not wishing to commit the Knights just yet, they were held in reserve for their noble fellows. Within the abbey Bagrian ordered the Peasants into the courtyard to guard against a possible assault by Fell Bats inside the fortified perimeter. The Squires on the Skaven

left flank moved further around looking for weaknesses in the Skaven defence. The archery from the abbey proved ineffectual and failed to destroy or drive back any assailants. The archery from the Squires was more successful and drove the Gutter Runners in the wood back in confusion. An Enchantress that had arrived with the Knights moved up and successfully cast *Eerie Mist* upon a unit of Rat Ogres assaulting the abbey. The abbey was still holding out but for how long? Without the aid of large brigades of Knights, the Bretonnians were incapable of launching any

form of counter - offensive and were at the combined mercy of two armies.

Skaven Turn 4

Gnawdoom squeaked his bitter rage at his subordinates – did he have to do everything? His troops were to fall back from the Undead and offer a truce – he couldn't afford a battle on two fronts especially now the Bretonnians were starting to appear in strength. The Clanrats on the right flank passed a series of orders and fell back in good order to guard the right flank of the Skaven position on the hill. The Plague Monks, however, again proved uncontrollable and charged headlong into the Dire Wolves opposing them using their initiative (I tried explaining this to Andy that they had to charge because of their special rules – Steve). Skaven emissaries squeaked an



Turn 4 – Again the Skaven are repelled!

offer of truce to the Lichemaster, offering all manner of reparations after the battle and the abbey had fell to either of their armies. Reluctantly the Lichemaster accepted. The brigade of Clanrats in the centre of the battlefield was ordered up to support the Rat Ogres in assaulting the abbey. Squealing a mixture of encouragement and threats, Throt enticed the Rat Ogres into attacking the abbey again although one unit was too bewildered by the effect of the spell to do anything. Mindful of the Squires that were attempting to outflank his position on the hill, Gnawdoom ordered his firing line and supporting units to march further round to the left and plug the gap in the rear of their line. This also brought the firing line into range of the elusive Squires and they dutifully opened fire, killing some and driving back a unit.

In the ensuing combats again the Skaven were successful against the Undead and the frenzied Plague Monks tore through the Dire Wolves, slaughtering them utterly for the loss of a single stand. The assault against the abbey resulted in dismal failure again as the Bretonnians fought like men possessed and drove their foes back with great slaughter (two stands of Clanrats and a stand of Rat Ogres for a single stand of Men-at-arms – God I hate attacking Fortified troops! – Steve). Still the abbey held out.

Vampire Counts Turn 4

Freed from the annoying depredations of the Skaven, at least for now, the Lichemaster could turn his full attention towards his true goal – the abbey. Provided his troops obeyed him that was! Skeletons advanced towards the abbey from the Undead left flank whilst Zombies and more Skeletons advanced from the centre. A brigade of Grave Knights was ordered to bypass the abbey and position itself to counter the eventual attack of the Bretonnian Knights. Again the Grave Guard assaulted the abbey, this time from the opposite side to the Skaven and also the rear wall. This time, they were led by a Vampire on a Black Coach and another mounted on a terrifying Winged Nightmare. The combat was fought to a bloody stalemate with many dead on both sides (just one more hit and Andy's Undead would have carried the battle into the interior of the abbey). And still the abbey held out...

Bretonnian Turn 4

Slowly the defenders of the abbey were being worn down. It was a war of attrition and one that the defenders of La Maisontaal knew they could not win – they needed to be relieved desperately. This time the dice were kind to Ewan and his two remaining brigades, those of the Knights, arrived but would they be too late? The Knights thundered across the plain towards the beleaguered abbey, colourful pennants fluttering in the breeze. They failed their second order however, and the brigades fell just short of the abbey – the Skaven breathed a sigh of relief. The brigade of Peasants on the left flank were ordered to move against the Skaven on the hill but refused. The remaining Squires, facing the bulk of the Skaven on the defended hill, saw a weakness in the Skaven line and decided that they would attempt to earn their spurs and charge rather than simply wait to be annihilated by the guns. Two units of Squires failed their orders and sat impotently staring down the barrels of the Jezzails but two other units passed and spurred their mounts into a gallop. At this point Gnawdoom's heart froze (and I certainly squirted the musk of fear! – Steve) as he realised the chink in his armour – don't leave Rat Swarms to hold any part of your line! The troops in the abbey kept up a defiant defence, showering the attacking Skaven with arrows and driving a unit back from the walls.

The courageous Bretonnian Squires drove a wedge straight through the Rat Swarms holding the left flank of the Skaven line. The rats simply disintegrated under the fury of their attack. With a unit totally destroyed and another driven back into the reserve brigade of Clanrats, the Squires continued to press home their attack. As the squealing rats swarmed



Turn 5 – Skaven renew their assault against the abbey

Battles of Legend

over the brigade of Clanrats panic began to set in the Skaven lines (how apt, as Ewan managed to confuse three out of three units of Clanrats, the jammy git! – Steve). With the rats destroyed, the Squires, having yet to suffer any casualties, advanced into the flanks of a unit of Rat Ogres and fortuitously into the flanks of all three confused units of Clanrats. The protracted combat left two badly mauled units of Squires in the Skaven army's rear and three slaughtered units of Clanrats – surely these brave Squires had earned their spurs?

Skaven Turn 5

At this point it took the execution of several Skaven commanders for Gnawdoom to stave off an utter rout of his army, taken as it were, by the rear. Eyes bulging and bloodshot, Grey Seer Gnawdoom screamed at his Rat Ogres to destroy the interlopers. This seemed effective enough as both units of Rat Ogres on the hill managed to wheel round and charge the two remaining stands of Squires to the army's rear. With the arrival of the full Bretonnian force things were starting to look bleak for the Skaven, they had to get a foothold in the abbey or risk losing their assault force. Again the Rat Ogres assaulted the abbey, this time supported by Clanrats who charged the front gates. The Plague Monks, their blood up after slaughtering the Dire Wolves, passed three successive orders to get themselves within charge range of the Undead marching towards the abbey. A Warlock successfully cast *Death Frenzy* on a unit of Rat Ogres assaulting the abbey and this time the brutes were not destroyed by their own spell. The Skaven Jezzails and Warp-lightning Cannons poured fire into the remaining Squires to their left killing some and confusing those that remained.

Despite their weight of numbers and the success of the Rat Ogres, the Skaven assault against the abbey failed again as the Clanrats were massacred (err... I think that this was my last mistake! – Steve). Throt's assault force had once again failed to storm the walls of the abbey and now lay at the mercy of the Bretonnian Knights. Blame the debacle on that fool Throt the Unclean – thought Gnawdoom!

Turn 5 – Bretonnian Knights to the rescue

Vampire Counts Turn 5

The Lichemaster smiled as he saw the Skaven beaten back from the walls of the abbey for the last time – let the Bretonnian Knights take them he thought, the abbey was his. The Lichemaster would teach the impudent Skaven not to double-cross him. Whilst the Grave Guard renewed their attacks on the side and rear walls of the abbey, supported by their Vampiric masters, the Skeletons and Zombies were ordered to charge their former Skaven allies in the rear and secure the front wall of the abbey for assault. A Necromancer managed to *Raise Dead* and threw a fresh unit of Undead against the tired defenders. The conflict reached new levels as the Clanrats, completely taken by surprise were cut down to a man for little loss to the Undead. The relentless assaults by the Grave Guard, however, finally paid off as their superior numbers finally forced their way into the courtyard of the abbey (terror is always handy when attacking fortified troops and the Undead managed to wipe out a unit of Men-at-arms, taking the walls). The Lichemaster's troops were finally within the abbey and he still had plenty of reserves whilst the Bretonnian infantry were still far away. There was no way that the Bretonnians could hold the abbey now, besides they still had the remaining Skaven to contend with anyway. At last the abbey was about to fall and the mighty Lichemaster would get his revenge.

Bretonnian Turn 5

Things looked really desperate for Bagrian, his abbey was on the verge of falling – it really was time for the cavalry 'in the nick of time'. Again, the brigade of Peasants on the Skaven left flank

resolutely refused to budge – had they not seen the demise of the brave Squires? Not a terribly good start. Then two brigades of Bretonnian Knights galloped across the plain and levelled their lances. One crashed into the rear of the remaining Rat Ogre units that had been assaulting the abbey, whilst the other brigade charged headlong into the Grave Knights and the freshly raised Zombies behind the abbey. The third brigade of Knights was held as a reserve on the Skaven left flank lest they attempted anything brave. Enheartened by the arrival of the flower of Bretonnian chivalry, the survivors within the abbey renewed their attacks on the Undead. In a masterly display of archery, the remaining Bowmen in the abbey drove one unit of Grave Guard out of the courtyard with clouds of arrows. The remaining haggard, battle-weary Men-at-arms and Peasants within the abbey charged the last unit of Grave Guard in the courtyard with a defiant cry. The two Enchantresses joined the Grail Knights and another unit of Knights and successfully cast *Shield of Combat* upon them (there he goes again – only a re-roll on all of his armour saves! – Steve).

The charge of the Bretonnian Knights was like the wrath of the gods themselves and they swept all before them. The Grave Knights folded like paper before the lances of the Knights, as did those Zombie and Skeleton units caught in their advance (the *Shield of Combat* spell staved off so many possible hits and allowed the Knights to advance into Andy's second line of Grave Knights pretty much unmolested and shattered them too). Similarly, the Rat Ogres stood little chance, taken in the flank and they were scattered with Throt the Unclean among the dead. The conflict within the abbey was of an equally, glorious vein. The righteous Bretonnians destroyed the Grave Guard utterly and Bagrian himself despatched the Vampire in the Black Coach. The Bretonnians had reclaimed the abbey and now the Undead were in an untenable position, facing so many Knights with their own heavy cavalry destroyed.

Both the Undead and Skaven armies retired from the battlefield having failed to capture the abbey and receiving a severe mauling from the Bretonnians. The Bretonnians were victorious and the field belonged to them. Glory be to the Lady of the Lake...

VICTORY POINTS

Bretonnians	1,780
Skaven	565
Vampire Counts	365

RUN TO THE HILLS!

And so another loss, why do I bother? Of course it's not my fault – I blame Steve! As I said in my intro, the fate of the game would be decided on how well Steve and I worked together. So, because we completely failed to do this the game was lost! It all went wrong for me in the third turn when, in true Undead style, my army completely failed to move and I lost an entire turn of assaulting the abbey. If I had managed to attack that turn I would have been in the abbey much earlier and in a far better position to repel Ewan's Knights – Oh, the vagaries of dice! When I did get to attack, my tactic of attaching character amounts that caused *terror* to my units worked and Ewan held on by the skin of his teeth in the first round of attacks but I managed to get the better of him in the following turn.

If the Undead and Skaven had co-ordinated their assaults better instead of having a scrap in the middle of the battlefield then we would have stood a much better chance. Oh well, it was a fun game and much merriment and swearing was had by all. As always I'll end by saying: I'll get you next time Hambrook! – Andy.



The battlefield at the end of the game

Battles of Legend

RUN AWAY, QUICK-QUICK!

Now, what was that I said about having a battle plan and sticking to it? Yep, it seems that I 'bottled it' and sent in too many troops against the abbey – I would have got the Rat Ogres in and really started the slaughter if I hadn't thrown those useless Clanrats into the fray as well. Damnation! Also, I should never have got carried away fighting Andy's Undead with my right flank force – oh well, force of habit I suppose! Finally, I was guilty of pretty much a cardinal sin with the ratties – misuse of Rat Swarms. These are just there to die, nothing else. You use 'em to cover front and flanks as you advance and support when you defend but never to hold ground. Because of my stupidity, Ewan managed to get a couple of units of Squires through a weakly defended part of my so-called 'hill fortress' and mangled a good bit of my army. Just think what could have happened if it were a brigade of Bretonnian Knights – I would have been done for!

Still, when all was said and done it was a great victory for Ewan who held out in the abbey tenaciously and didn't waste his reserves as they only came on in dribs and drabs but used them sparingly and to great effect (the git!). Hats off also to Andy who at least managed to get his troops into the abbey, which was more than my rabble could! And, of course, he got the opportunity to stab me in the back, which is most characterful! – Steve.

LE GRANDE VICTOIRE!

The plan (what there was of it) worked but how did it work so well?

It was all down to peasantry and witchery, the real heroes of the day were the common foot soldiers defending La Maisontaal, giving me a huge amount of Victory points for holding it at the end of the battle and for me this mini siege was the most fun bit of the game. The Squires (the other commoners) did a sterling job in tying most of the Skaven army up.

On the witchery side there was my dice rolling. Confusing three units of Skaven in one charge almost reduced Steve to tears and two successful spells in the last turn of the game meant my Grail Knights could re-roll their armour saves and in that turn they destroyed seven units of Undead, three of them Grave Knights, for the loss of only a single stand! There is nothing you can do against that kind of luck.

We got a bit knackered toward the end and the knightly charge did turn into a bit of a slog (too many dice rolls and casualty records) but otherwise it was a fantastic game. It was a real pleasure to help the Fanatic boys out and I would gladly help them out again though I live in fear that the next time I go to the Studio they might try and burn me as a witch! – Ewan. (Yeah, I know where you live Lamont! – Steve).



The players – Ewan Lamont, Andy Hall & Steve Hambrook