

# THE MAN BEHIND THE MODELS

The Colin Grayson Interview By Steve Hambrook

**SH.** *So tell me a little about yourself?*

**CG.** Well, I'm 41 and I'm from Yorkshire but now I live in Nottingham and I've been working for GW since 1989. I started working for GW as a mould maker back when GW was at Eastwood. I've always dreamt of either being a sculptor or an artist. My other hobbies include mountain biking and photography, oh and working up graphics and animation on my Amiga computer – it's my friend!

**SH.** *What about your professional background? Do you have any formal training either from within Workshop or are you self-taught?*

**CG.** I went to art college in Portsmouth for 3 years and studied audio-visual exhibition design...

**SH.** *Whoa! What's that?*

**CG.** Well it revolves around designing exhibitions for companies involving 2D artwork, tapes and slide shows with drawings, photography and film making. So that was all very artistic but didn't really have anything to do with sculpting toy soldiers, so I suppose the answer to the question is I'm self-taught. I've always loved everything to do with the military and I've served in the

RAF for 2 years, so because of this and the fact that when I was younger you just couldn't get the variety of minis that you can these days I had to make my own. Using silicon rubber moulds I would cast up my own mini conversions and accessories as a hobby. I would make anything from pouches and weapons to entire figures sculpted out of milliput in my own style (and no, you cannot see any of my earliest attempts!) and then cast them up. I also studied two years sculpting training at Games Workshop.

**SH.** *What was it that inspired you to become a miniature sculptor?*

**CG.** I think I was inspired through necessity. As I mentioned earlier when I was collecting minis back in the 70's there weren't that many companies as there are today and certainly not that many different varieties of minis. I really wanted some Renaissance figures but couldn't find a company that would produce any in the scale I desired. So, I had a go with milliput sculpting putty. At the time I was making a few models for film animation classes at college so it all tied in together really. I suppose I just wanted to fill in those gaps that were left by figure companies at the time and make the stuff in my own style and kind of create a whole little world in miniature.

**SH.** *Have you been big into toy soldiers since you were a kid?*

**CG.** Yep, I do love all things to do with the military. I first started collecting Airfix models and then it was into Minifigs, Napoleonics especially.

**SH.** *I remember that my favourite toy soldiers from as early as I can remember was the Airfix Battle of Waterloo set. Do you remember what your's was?*

**CG.** Oh God, that's a



*Colin – working feverishly away...*

*Colin Grayson Interview*

difficult one! Er... Aeroplanes, I think – I love em. When I was about seven I had a Phantom and a really good little Russian fighter. I think Airfix US Marines were the first soldiers I bought.

**SH.** *Who have been your biggest influences?*

**CG.** Now this will sound cliched what with us supporting the films that are coming out but it was Tolkien and Lord of the Rings. Of course I did read this first in 1974 though. I think that about at least 80% of my artwork for school was inspired by LOR. I also collect a lot of books for reference and reading. All sorts of books but mainly military history. Films are also a great source for inspiration and imagery.

**SH.** *What was it first like working with the likes of Jes Goodwin, Dave Andrews, Gary Moreley and the other big names at Games Workshop?*

**CG.** Brill! I admire Jes, Gary, the Perrys and respect their work but it's all about working together and you can learn loads from them.

**SH.** *You've designed the Warmaster Kislev army and the Albion miniatures that are featured in this issue of WarMag, among other things. What is it about sculpting miniatures in the Warmaster scale that appeals to you?*

**CG.** The scope for creativity with the Warmaster range is just great. When you're designing Warhammer miniatures you need to make your standard rank and file, heroes, champions and musicians, but with Warmaster you can make the heroes as characterful as possible – have blokes sitting at tables, tents, barrels on huge thrones stuff you could never do with Warhammer. You can also interpret certain models from Warhammer into Warmaster in a different way as with models like the Empire War Altar. The freedom to make little vignettes and personalities is very refreshing. It's a



*The new Warmaster tournament award*

whole world apart from the Necrons that I'm working on now which work to a very tight brief and are very specific.

**SH.** *The Gobbo Fanatic Cannon, now that's a bit mad don't you think? How did you come up with a concept like that?*

**CG.** Actually I originally made this model as a confused counter! If you take a look at the Gobbos they're scratching their heads, holding the firearms the wrong way around, climbing into the cannon etc. They don't look very competent at all. This was supposed to be placed next to a unit when it becomes confused in the same way that the casualty counters are to be used for when a unit takes hits.

**SH.** *I'm a bit ignorant when it comes to actually designing miniatures could you briefly explain to the layperson how you would go about designing a figure?*

**CG.** Making a Warmaster strip isn't all that different to making a standard 28mm (warhammer ) miniature. You start with an armature (a wire frame) in a vaguely



*Just a few of the Warmaster miniatures on Colin's shelf*

*Colin Grayson Interview*



*A new Skaven warrior (in 28mm)*

humanoid shape and then build up over it with green stuff. You work up the body, legs and head and then make about three more. Then you get these cast up as templates to work on and start adding arms and weapons in different positions to add character. Often you can make up a lot of different heads and weapons and chop and change with each stand. The characters obviously need a little more attention. You need to get some cast up and arrange them so that they will fit nicely onto the bases and rank up in units although some arms are meant to be bent to allow them to fit.



*Skink shaman and lackeys*

**SH.** *So, do you actually play Warmaster then or do you just stick to the aesthetic side of the hobby – figure designing, modelling and painting?*

**CG.** I do play but I'm more of an occasional gamer, designing, modelling and collecting is my main interest. I have just recently partaken in a massive game of 16,000 pts a side, which was played on a Saturday for about eight hours. We never got the game finished but it was tremendous fun anyway. I have personally about 6000 pts of Empire and about thirty units of Kislevites and have built a large Orc army of 5000 pts.

**SH.** *Miniature and games designers alike often find books and films a good source of inspiration. Is there anything that you've read or seen lately that has got you just itching to attack the green stuff?*

**CG.** I saw that dinosaur program on the telly and the animation of the dinosaurs was ace. I can't say that it inspired me as such but certainly gave me a few ideas when I was already sculpting the Lizardmen. I think these sort of things categorise you into action rather than just copy what you saw.

**SH.** *Do you ever get to design what you really want or is it always stuff that has been dictated to you?*

**CG.** It's a bit of both really. At the moment I'm working quite closely with Jes on the Necron project which is to a very rigid brief. I have to follow Jes's concepts and he knows exactly how he wants them to look. Obviously though, if problems arise and maybe minis cannot be cast for various reasons then it need to be adjusted. As I mentioned before Warmaster is pretty good because it allows you a lot of freedom and allows you to be as creative as you like.

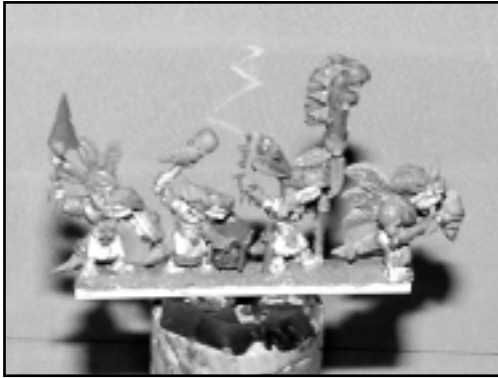
**SH.** *So what is there that you really want to get into the Warmaster range?*



*Saurus heroes on Cold Ones*



*Colin Grayson Interview*



*Saurus heroes*

**CG.** Skaven, I want to see some Skaven they're my favourite fantasy race. Arabians would be cool too, I've even done some concept sketches of war elephants and magic carpets and stuff. Scenery is another cool thing that is lacking or at least scenery that is properly to scale. Mountains should be huge and impassable with maybe a few passes and forests should be vast and force players to manoeuvre around them. Warmaster offers a far more interesting scenario set-up and I for one want to see bigger, better battles with bigger, better scenery.



*Skink heroes – trumpeter on Kroxigor*

**SH.** *And what can the readers expect in the pipeline for Warmaster? What secret grand plans does Rick have up his sleeve?*

**CG.** Well it's not so much a secret now but I'm working on the Lizardman army and I believe that Dark Elves may be next. I'm working on the Lizardman Stegadon at home and he's simply enormous, he stands to about 20mm at the shoulder and takes up three Warmaster bases. I'm also working on a T-Rex for the hero and he's about as bulky as a Dragon. The army in general is very much adorned with plumes and feathers and I imagine it will paint up a treat being

quite brightly coloured and exotic.

**SH.** *What would you see yourself doing if you weren't a figure designer?*

**CG.** Probably working as a model maker for film animation.

**SH.** *In the good old days when I was growing-up you didn't have this playstation and computer domination of the games market. What, with the onset of technology, do think is the reason that tabletop gaming is still just as popular as ever?*

**CG.** I definitely believe in change and progress but I think that computers and playstation are still worlds apart from tabletop gaming. They both have their little niche. I can spend hours on my computer at home and then wind down with some hours painting. Miniature gaming will always remain more tangible and collectible.

**SH.** *One for Rick – coffee or tea?*

**CG.** I'm with Rick on this one, I do like my tea, in fact the coffee I'm drinking now is the first I've had in ages.

**SH.** *And finally, one for me – who's your favourite Muppet? Animal or Beaker?*

**CG.** Actually neither – I think Fozzy Bear because he's always the victim and that makes you feel sorry for him.



*Slann general (or band conductor!) – work in progress*

**SH.** *Thanks Colin for taking the time to talk to us and I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say that we can't wait to see the Lizardman army when its finished.*

**CG.** Cheers