

Dark Shadows

What is Dark Shadows? It's a number of things: it's the name of the summer WFB campaign that Games Workshop is sponsoring to drum up interest in its game, similar to the Armageddon campaign they ran recently for W40k. It's also the name of the booklet that came with White Dwarf number 244. However it extends beyond the book and like the earlier 40k command much of it revolves around its website on the internet.

For the most part, I'll be concerning myself with the booklet that came with the White Dwarf. Its 24 pages (not including front and back cover) and it has an image of a "Fen Beast" rising up from the mire to aid a Dark Emissary on its cover. The inside cover has an image of "Truthsayers", the heroic good rivals to the evil Dark Emissary already depicted on the cover. After a short introduction, the booklet launches into how the campaign works and then gets into the meat of the background. There are two pages of background information on Albion, useful in this regard, followed by a very interesting map of Albion (two pages). Albion is essentially a land of ancient magic and stone circles (Ogham stones) and Giant guardians.



Having placed Albion in history, the next part "Shadows Gather" looks at the current state of agitation in the Old World and Albion's role in this, another two pages. The gist of this is that a Dark Master has appeared and sent out his agents to seize control of the island - should he succeed the world shall end. He is challenged in this endeavour by the agents of the Old Ones (those who visited the world in the ancient past, a role previously filled by the Slann) known as Truthsayers. Each, the Dark Emissary and the Truthsayer are given a rather mediocre profile and magic rules. Inserted next is a rather random page detailing Fen Beasts.

More rules continue, from which a little background information can be gleaned: rules for Winds of Magic, the weather in Albion (dreary, dreadful, and depressing), six scenarios that offer little more information except for some details on Ogham Circles, and a rather limp "Albion terrain generator".

Of greater interest are the campaign ideas, although these pale in comparison to the detail of the earlier background information. There are a few sketches of the same Dark Emissary with a few variations (different numbers of horns) on the inside back cover.

GW has managed to develop Albion. This may not please everyone, especially the way in which they did it - and it does seem as if they have completely thought it through. Giants guard the island? Well how much do these giants eat? Wait, what do they eat? Sheep? How have Giants managed to keep an island shrouded in fog free from invasion? They sink ships with stones, but how do they see the ships arriving? The background material is also epic in scale - everyone is descending upon the island - what are the armies foraging off of? How did a lot of these groups even get there? How did the Orc and Goblin hordes get to the island? And the Chaos Dwarfs? A bit far from home for them?

All in all, this product is a mixed blessing: Albion is developed, but the development is towards the epic and unsustainable - dozens of armies fighting over a small island in a sort of pay-per-view TV wrestling Battle Royale with little thought put into it. For those looking for an excuse to fight, Dark Shadows does accomplish this. For those looking for background, Dark Shadows does offer something - but the two combined are a poor fit.

A special note, for those that are interested further information can be gleaned from [GW's web page](#) . GW was slow to take advantage of the internet, this website is a step in the right direction with more details being given to the island and its locations and it serves to form a type of community related to this summer campaign. Furthermore the entire booklet can be found there at their website making the purchase of the White Dwarf for its free booklet unnecessary.

Reviewed by Garrett Lepper