

# **Barbalet's Log**

## **September - December 2003**

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### September 2003

**68-78**

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**Tuesday, 08:38 pm, 30 December 2003**

Got the [Noble Ape Mailout](#) online tonight. Nothing political in it. All my musing about the plight of Open Source through this log was removed about three edits from the end. Too much meat for the end of the year and I don't want to seem like a whinger or someone who spends hours in endless paradoxical trains of thought. Reality - that's not what the Mailout is about.

What am I doing for New Year's Eve? Not working on the Noble Ape Mailout. Potentially more work on Noble Warfare. I don't know. I'm starting to feel like Noble Warfare won't be betaed until the Spring (in the nthn hmsph). I don't know. I feel like I am more than half way through the development. But I don't really know. I suspect that is just an illusion.

I've been looking at my White Dwarfs that I am still yet to sell. There is a pile of about 40 - of which I want to keep about 15 at most. They don't sell. I bought 25 for about 5p an issue. And I can't sell 23 for 50p! It's all postage. For second class, that is slow postage, the prices aren't that great. They are quite close to first class to the point where there is little advantage in sending anything second class. Some times it is actually cheaper to send things first class over 700g. Far too familiar with postage rates! Good night.

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**Monday, 10:49 pm, 29 December 2003**

Orc army in transit from the US as of t'row morning EST. Twelve eBay lots online - four with bids. Back at work. Christmas is over.

*Dream a Little Reality*

I got a nice email from Professor Groove this morning.

Being on holiday, I actually had REM dreams. It is a combination of factors. We found through experimentation, that I sleep better with a feather-blanket (insert regional term) under me. It improves my sleep no end. So anyway I had an REM dream that I was in Montreal one Friday evening around midnight and I turned up at the studio to see the WeFunk crew lay it down. There was Groove and Static, Butta Beats was cutting it up with some choppy freestyles. Then I realised I was actually in Scandinavia - Norway I think. Looking at the effects the Nazi's had as an invasion force. I had made a mistake. I never saw the WeFunk studio session. It was just people who seemed like Static, Groove and Butta. An illusion.

The following night I dreamt I went to Sydney with my friend Vy - which actually happened when I lived in Australia. And for some reason, I was left in Sydney with the car and had the option of driving illegally or finding my own way back to Canberra. I got in a taxi and found I had no money. Then I went to an ATM. Paid the taxi driver and he disappeared. Having wandered around Sydney for about an hour, I found my friend Alex 'Gurap' Brooks. Who lives in Sydney. And we spent the rest of the dream cycling around Sydney getting increasingly trapped in dead ends.

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These two dreams strike me as interesting because they both describe the unfamiliar and the familiar with regards to future and past friendship. The WeFunk dream - clearly projects where I would like to be. And in essence where I can project myself with the Beats for Butta collaboration. The Australia dream shows the connections I once had and have lost.

One thing I have found in my life. My location vs emotional connections will never be resolved. There are too many people I have met and befriended for them to even come together in fractions. When I lived in the US, on a rare occasion, I had half a dozen people I knew from different places come together. In Australia too, this occasionally happened. When John Draper or Brian Wiles stayed with me in Australia, they connected some of this. But in general, there has been no connection between the people I have known.

My life is segments spread over huge distances. Memories and locations. Places that no longer exist. The more I live, the more extreme these things become. It is a peaceful paradox. Resolution comes with resolve.

In conclusion, orc army in transit from the US as of t'row morning EST. Twelve eBay lots online - now five with bids. Back at work. Good night.

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**Saturday, 10:37 am, 27 December 2003**

It's a funny thing - the holidays. I thought to myself before I took the holidays off - more time for my own work. I will have a functioning version of Noble Warfare up and running for the new year. It will all come together over the ten days I am taking off. Of course, I missed that two of these days would have family in town, two days for preparation. One day for the post Christmas sales - I am required as a bag porter for that.

I have a few snippets for some dedicated work today. And some t'row. Then I am back to the grindstone. I have done quite a bit. Will it be enough? Who knows. But Noble Warfare is getting closer.

Around this time of year, New Year's resolutions come up too. Pretty high on the list is miniatures - reduction down to months without. I have already cut down dramatically. Aside from a [small orc army coming from the US](#);



And half a dozen others in transit. No more miniatures. The orc army is all pre 1990 orcs. It really represents the history more than anything. I am probably going to cut it down from 75 to 50 and pass them on to Fred Reed. But I have run out of figures that interest me. Aside from my Fred Reeds, I have sold almost all the GW/miniaure related stuff I have. For the first time in the past 18 months, I have no unpainted figures that need painting. The home smelting is non-existent. I have sold most of my lead alloy.

Reducing my possessions even more - resolution number two. I still see my possessions as a noose rather than a luxury. The valuation of possessions based on weight and the substantial cost that each item moved from Australia to the US to the UK has already cost me, makes it relatively easy to sell some of what I own. I'm trying to come to rational terms about what my minimum weight of possessions is. There is an emotional barbarism in selling your possessions. You may find through the log, that I am writing to justify the sale. And I would lie, if I said, I haven't thought about passages from the books I have sold. However, you can not create a false luxury around yourself. If your reality is migration. Then you must always respect that everything you own is at a cost.

Resolution number three - sleep more. Something that was explained to me by Tom Erbe (author of Soundhack for the Macintosh), is as a programmer, you reach a point in your life where you physically can't do all-night coding sessions. This to me, at the time, at 22, didn't seam real. But at 27, I know what he was talking about. To-date a lot of the Noble Ape Simulation work has occurred in the late evenings. With the logs, now, I have two options. I can type English longer and when I am more tired than coding. So the logs have become a buffer for this.

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My forth resolution is to do more good. Aside from giving to charity etc, there are productive things in my life, that cost nothing that improve others' lives. This I am still thinking on. But I feel I need to refocus a lot of my negative energy on improving others lives rather than thinking about my own.

Good morning.

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**Friday, 10:04 pm, 26 December 2003**

Following the poem below, I called my long time distant friend, Craig Ubik Wilson. Craig was part of the John Draper collective Shop IP. We talked for about an hour which was nice. Towards the end of the call I noticed Craig's seasons greetings email, which was the reason I called him, had an email next to it;

*watch par&is Hil%ton get stuffed like an animal ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,, primpeasanthood*

Craig and I agreed this was festive spam that had beaten the filter. Over the past couple of weeks, there have been days when all of my spam was about Paris Hilton. Not really knowing much about Paris, I googled her and found the following photo. Super-imposed on some of my spam filtering on my yahoo account.



I'm not clear which of the two are Paris. Really, I am not clear about who she is bar  
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the Hilton heiress. My question is - do they celebrate Christmas in Nigeria? Is Paris the new Nigerian spam? How many different Paris Hilton emails am I going to receive before people get the message - no one cares! I don't want Viagra. I am not interested in rescuing a rich uncle's millions. I can't understand the logic or the motivation of it all. I can't see the revenue model and it is getting to the point where is beyond surreal.

The thing that caught my eye about the Paris Hilton spam that made it through - it's grammatically correct. The person who wrote the email is University educated. In fact, prim-peasant-hood!

So I am thinking I need to start my own spam advertising for Barbalet's Log. Forget all the animal section, I am not interested in Paris Hilton either. I think the subject should just read;

*get stuffed - Barbalet's Log*

Good night.

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**Wednesday, 07:40 pm, 24 December 2003**

This one was a request from my wife... My contribution is the Manor House Workshop link...

*'Twas the Night Before Christmas  
or Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas  
by  
Major Henry Livingston Jr. (1748-1828)  
(previously believed to be by Clement Clarke Moore)*

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,

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But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

'Now, DASHER! now, DANCER! now, PRANCER and VIXEN!  
On, COMET! on CUPID! on, DONDER and BLITZEN!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!'

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!  
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,

And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
'HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT!'

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**Wednesday, 02:02 pm, 24 December 2003**

I put to my wife today a narrative which I am calling;

*The Open Source Conundrum*

Put plainly, I have been developing Open Source for the past seven and a half years, and I am developing it on seven year old technology. Computers aren't getting cheaper, so where is the ethics in Open Source? Do I sleep better at night knowing I am helping the propaganda of corporate America?

Tied in with this PayPal, Sourceforge and Donations, and the changing direction of the IGDA. Strangely enough.

It will all come out in the mailout. Good afternoon.

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**Monday, 06:53 pm, 22 December 2003**

*Tradition of One*

I watched *Fiddler on the Roof* with my wife this afternoon. I have never seen it, although I owned the musical score on record and regularly took samples from *Tradition* when I DJed. The tale of Jewish forced migration. Now a little less forced but something I feel genetically and through actual experience to this day.

The lack of permanency and some comfort in the lack of permanency is an interesting theme. I must admit, I'm not normally a musical watcher, but I liked *Fiddler on the Roof*.

So when everything changes, what tradition is left. Do you make your own tradition? Does tradition exist over lifetimes now? It is an interesting thought.

*The Emotion of Continuous Selling*

Following Christmas, I am gearing up for more eBay selling. I really stuffed up on a postal quote and I sent the fellow the book without any payment to apologise. I feel sometimes I do not have the constitution for selling - continuous selling. But I have more than 15kg to sell after Christmas. That in itself saves more than GBP100 in shipping costs.

I am also getting to my emotional cusp too. I find some items I can not list them. I have realised that I will always have a core of possessions that I need to have close to me. My real fear, like my childhood miniatures, that I will give away too much and then be left lacking. Or feeling lacking. But the progressive decrease in

possessions and junk in general is good.

I am actually starting to see bare shelves. This is a good thing.

### *Noble Ape Mailout*

Following the narrative last month, I started on the Noble Ape Mailout today. One thing that many not come over in the Log, I actually type quite quickly. So having spent about five minutes seated when my thoughts are fluid, I can have written quite a bit. The thing I find with the Mailout - when I am writing fluidly - I can write a lot. But almost always, I have to go back and edit it down.

I want to write this month about the donation conundrum with Sourceforge - although this Log has documented my musings. My experiences with eBay selling my own possessions has taught me, I don't want to be on the money receiving end for my work. I am also sceptical about donation software.

It's the old shareware problem. People don't register shareware - what is going to force them to donate for open source. Will we start seeing crippled open source? If donations even creep into the equation, will this become a revenue model for open source? It seems a little rich that the publicly listed company comes up with the policy and demands a cut of the donations. Actually PayPal and Sourceforge appear to be getting a cut.

I think of the Simpson episode where the Russians go back to the Soviet Union and Lenin marches from the tomb - 'Must crush Capitalism!'. I fear this is the future for Open Source. That these apparently warm fuzzy open source companies will quickly lose their ethical gloss and just become corporate America. If they weren't already.

In any case, the Log is my venting point on this topic.

Good night.

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**Saturday, 06:07 am, 20 December 2003**

Woke up early... before 6am to listen to WeFunk's Christmas show. The reception over internet radio was bad! I have never heard internet radio which sounds like the radio is poorly tuned. I am talking static. Sad actually. It sounds like a good show.

I'm heading back to bed. Good morning.

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**Friday, 09:18 pm, 19 December 2003**

Back to your regularly scheduled weblog...

*Market for Noble Warfare*

I have been thinking quite a bit about who will play Noble Warfare. There is a stock standard, ['I'm a Linux hacker, open source uber alles. Debian all the way!'](#) Website format which has evolved from strict Times, to Times with boxes in the past few years. I wonder if I should go with less is more on the Noble Warfare website? I really don't know.

I have emailed Fred Reed on getting some stills of the Romans. They are going to be the central clip art for the Noble Warfare site. I am still thinking about the look and feel of the site although I think it needs to be quite uniform.

So, back to demographics. Who will play Noble Warfare. I was looking at the [Sad Muppet Society](#) last night. They seem to embody all the elements of the hardcore wargaming fraternity. They have featured in White Dwarf. They have a carefree attitude and shed loads of half painted, quick touch up miniatures. I found their site good for about half an hour of serious stickybeaking.

One thing I have learnt through Noble Ape. People who won't like the software will download it just so they can publicly slang off about it. So what I want to do, line by line, is get Noble Warfare to a state where people who would like it will download it. Basically I want a word of mouth following. I don't know if studying the Muppets will lead to that. But I think there is a subset of users that would be sympathetic to the Muppets.

When you release software - it is a bit of a myth that you need to track every user. The thing I found with Noble Ape was the software would get downloaded. If you made it available. People would download it. The trick is to get the software downloaded and get people hacking into it. Get people playing it and exchanging it with their friends. Getting lots of people using the software and coming back to get more information and later versions. This is the trick. This is the aim for Noble Warfare. A critical mass of user information is central.

With this thought in mind, releasing too early could be problematic. Perhaps a closed beta? I am already thinking along those lines. Good night.

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**Friday, 04:47 pm, 19 December 2003**

### *Identity Theft 101*

I've had a fun day today. My former webhosts, who refused to cancel my account with them, so they didn't have to pay a refund for their crappy service, gave my credit card details out. It sounds like a disgruntled former employee actually. With my experiences with them, I can understand why they would have a number of disgruntled employees.

So I cancelled my credit card and tried to extract myself from all services that currently have my credit card on file. It is an interesting thing. My former webhosts had difficulty with customer service. eBay failed for a forty minute cycle to change my credit card details. Then an hour later, their expert system kicked into gear and

made it easy to change my details.

The big secret with ecommerce seems to be removing human customer service and replacing it with expert systems. My former webhosts are schmucks. No question about it. But what would happen if eBay was hacked. I suspect all I could do is cancel my credit card and start again.

For all the effort this morning, cancelling my credit card and related hassles only took a morning. I thought it would be more sweat inducing. But it turned out to be rather simple.

It still made me think about all the complexity I have added to my life. eBay for example. Through the eBay charges, I am having real difficulty working out what I am making through eBay. I am feeling it is less, much less, than I originally thought and there have been a number of additional hassles. No payers. Complaining bidders. If I had given everything to charity - what would I have lost?

A good time to reflect on these things.

I have more work to do on Noble Warfare. Good afternoon.

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**Wednesday, 09:41 pm, 17 December 2003**

On holiday now! Woohoo! Just completed my final listing on eBay until Christmas is over. I am still waiting on payments. But there are no more auctions until after Boxing Day. I can't complain. eBay was getting a little wearing. I have a number of things to list following Christmas. But for now, slightly more leisurely.

The file handling is working for Noble Warfare. It is now a matter of writing the documentation and gluing it all together. Initially I'm going to test a dual player mode. Basically human vs human. Once that is working. On to human vs machine.

Not much more to add. Good night.

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**Tuesday, 11:11 pm, 16 December 2003**

*More on documentation...*

Half a day of the 9-5 to go before a few days off leading up to Christmas. Lots of free time to work on Noble Warfare. From the previous entry - prior to the Netherlord snap - I have been continuing my mental outline of the documentation. There seem to be two distinct users. The one who would like a quick start introduction, and the other who would like a lot of detailed information. I suspect they may actually be the same user - or at least a good Venn between the two groups.

So what should the documentation contain. Obviously the quick start track takes priority and should be given the first chapter. Then digression can occur. The code

spec - some background of how to generate your own game files. The division with the [Noble Ape Simulation manual](#) puts the getting started information first. Then the file format. Then the basic digression occurs with a discussion of the interfaces and finally some frequently asked questions. Which really represents the top things I could think of when writing the documentation. I think FAQs in general indicate very few emails are received about the topic in question.

The format for the Noble Warfare documentation will be similar initially without the Interfaces and FAQ section. Instead, I am planning on giving some background history. Possibly something a little similar to the interfaces section, which will talk about how the Noble Ape Simulation and Noble Warfare share the same code base. I want to give a couple of historical examples of Noble Warfare armies that could be generated and some general rambling.

### *Fluff*

This looks a little unlike the discussion yesterday on this. They call the bridging, mood setting, documentation fluff. Or some refer to it as fluff. But this fluff is relatively critical in games. There is a good division between none and the right amount. This bridge is known in the industry as the wrong amount.

From none, as soon as you add any fluff, it appears you commit to adding a lot. And it needs to be coherent. If I fluffed the Noble Ape Simulation, I might get more users or more loyal users. Who can say. The original Simulation had a lot of fluff. In fact the Project was held together by fluff, that can still be seen in the [Noble Ape March](#), for example. But from the Stockholm rewrite the need for fluff has dropped. In fact from Stockholm software replaced fluff. If people download the software and miss the narrative - this may explain the comments left on download sites.

So Noble Warfare and fluff? It will be interesting. The beauty of this kind of development is I feel like I will see the results of this too - almost like an observer.

Good night.

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**Monday, 09:34 pm, 15 December 2003**

Through all this deep narrative, I missed the really cool miniature shot. The completed Netherlord, c/o Fred Reed's digital camera.



Incidentally, Heresy have release a new, smaller winged demon. Another must have...

Good night.

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**Monday, 09:16 pm, 15 December 2003**

### *Isolation skews perceptions*

Through this log there has been a progressive narrative about isolation and a recapturing interest in miniatures. In fantasy worlds, in adventure and military conquest. Through this, and through some arrogant journalism and corporate computer games bravado came the Noble Warfare development. I occasionally catch myself reading tabletop wargames documents and thinking - 'These are not my people.' The kinship on military strategy seems to appeal to a certain subset of the population that I don't feel akin with.

But the notion of kinship - the sense that I feel comfort from these analysis of reality through paint and lead (or synthetic lead) is artificial. It seems like a stumbling block rather than a means to an end. In fact, I don't feel a closeness created by my collection of miniatures. I haven't played a wargame. I haven't put the miniatures on a board against an opponent. Nor do I think I would want to. Irrespective of wanting - this hasn't been an option.

### *Documentation Focus*

This narrative has a introduction from the prologue. I have been thinking about the Noble Warfare documentation. As the file handling comes together, as the OS end seems more stable and defined, my mind turns to the documentation. There are two components to documentation - how to use the software - and then also some of the mythos behind the software. The latter was the driving force behind the early Noble Ape development (back when it was the Nervana Project).

So what documentation should Noble Warfare have? The idea behind Noble Warfare is simple, you can write your own armies. From the armies you right a points number is given to your army and you can fight other armies of similar or different points. You can create whatever landscape you want. You can create what ever kind of force you want. In fact, I am interested in seeing the scope of the engine. But initially the tests are with large ancient, medieval or fantasy style armies.

*Narrative?*

A narrative is a very powerful thing for these kind of games. A good narrative and nice documentation. The documentation must be aesthetically pleasing and readable. It needs to be useable in a printed or electronic form. But most importantly it needs to be at least 30-40 pages.

The documentation project for Noble Warfare should start about now and follow the same release cycle as the software itself. It scares me more than the actual software, AI problems etc. Getting the right kind of documentation will be a lot of work.

I don't know how to play it - to be honest. Part of me wants to create plain documentation with the view that someone more artistically inclined will pick it up and take it to new artistic heights. But the reality? Who knows. One thing is sure with Open Source development. There is only one person you can count on.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 09:23 pm, 14 December 2003**

Some work today on the file handling. Progress. Slowly but surely. Some things to fix, but getting there. My work was paused with a call from the inlaws with the news of Saddam's capture. I went down stairs made dinner and saw the news footage of the old man checking his head for lice. Crossed with Leberman (sp?) talking about how he should be killed. Are we no further on? Have we not evolved?

Went back to working on the file format. Some honest work to be edifying. Another quiet evening whilst my wife works nights.

I went through some of my miniatures today. I am a lucky man. Honest work. Great wife. Good miniature collection. Many things to be thankful for.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 03:26 pm, 14 December 2003**

*The Ethic of Wargames*

Although the log may not note this, I spend time thinking about the ethics of

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wargames and death. War in reality staggers me. The thought of conflicts - particularly close combat fighting - is something I can not imagine. The accounts particularly of medieval and ancient warfare makes me think heavily about the ethics of wargames. On a number of levels, I have not resolved this in my own mind.

The partial justification I have comes through chess. Chess is perfectly positioned between logic and wargames. There is strategy in chess and there is simulated death. But if you were to put to someone that chess was a glamourisation of warfare, I think it would be hard pressed to convince people of this. Closer to the brutal reality are wargames.

The thing that interests me about wargames is the aesthetic and similarly the strategic aspects of it. The aesthetic of a well painted miniature is something I enjoy. It is something I haven't lost from childhood. But I am not gifted enough with small movements to paint miniatures. Over the past six months, I have amassed quite a collection of miniatures. Although I am running out of space and miniatures to collect. I am only interested in a small subset of the miniatures that are produced. And whilst I might like certain ranges, I am happy to own a good subset of those ranges. I am not a collector where I must have every single one. Just the emotion is enough.

My interest in strategy is relaxation more than anything. And it is solitary. I don't know, as an adult, if I could play wargames. In fact, I don't really think I could. Computationally, I want to write a good wargame simulation - hence Noble Warfare. I think it is a real computational challenge and releasing it open source - is icing.

But the reality of wargames still offers some glamour to the pointless waste of life. If you take the strategy and the aesthetic, then it seems insipid. Like a more colourful and deeper chess. But the painted knights and angled foot soldiers are taken off the field. Their bodies are never left. It is more chess than reality.

Good afternoon.

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**Saturday, 09:49 am, 13 December 2003**

*Low glamour development*

My wife is working from 1pm today. Which gives me the afternoon and early evening for Noble Warfare. A lot of development work is the antithesis of glamorous. In fact writing error resistant file handling code, is probably as glamorous as writing operating system specific code. It is pretty drudgerous. The ends justify the means in development.

You have to do the boring stuff in order for the exciting stuff to arrive. The thing about this kind of development is you quickly go into a game state anyway. Improving or writing a function becomes a game which you play to the end. You

brain has to make something interesting out of it all.

My whole perception of programming has changed since I moved to Wilmslow. In part with my 9-5, also just feeling older. My view that code was something that needed to show something rapidly, was really connected with my life in the US and, to a lesser extent, my life in Australia.

My view on code now, is that it is a long term asset that needs to be built like a house. Foundations, walls, the code needs to be strong and maintainable. Strangely even my view on maintainability has changed since being in Wilmslow.

Progressively, I guess, it will continue to change. I don't think I am producing a lot of after hours code currently. But the code I produce is of a different quality.

### *WeFunk*

I missed WeFunk first thing this morning. I am going to have to listen to the online CKUT stream on Monday morning. I replaced my funk fix with watching the last half hour of Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels. Almost enough funk for a Saturday morning.

Good morning.

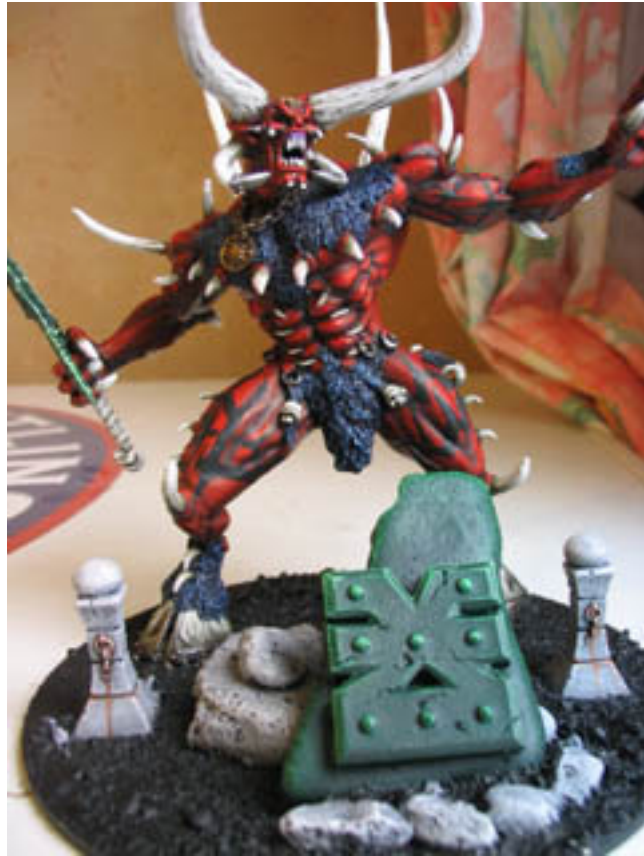
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**Friday, 10:31 pm, 12 December 2003**

### *Dealing with Darkness*

One of the interesting things I have found about the UK winters is we turn off the television and read. The darkness means you want to read more. Now it is dark for all time we are home in the evening, my wife and I read for 1.5 - 2.5 hours a night. We didn't watch television over this time normally. But we would spend it downstairs. Our reading is typically in bed. I think this change of habit with the light has evolved. It isn't a conscious thing at all.

### *Netherlord*

Fred Reed has been busy at work and he has painted the Netherlord. I have a work in progress shot from him. The previous commission I got from him was seven Warhammer Bloodletters - they look like classical hooved and horned demons. I thought some wings on them would look nice. Fred assembled them on larger bases and they are stunning. Following that, I thought the Netherlord would be a good backdrop. As it is so large, I commissioned some tattoos on it as well. The shot below is before highlights were applied. It is based on a CD, to give some idea of scale.



### *Noble Warfare Progress*

The file handling is nearly nailed down. There has been the better part of a week spent to-ing and fro-ing on the file handling design and maintaining compatibility with the existing Noble Ape Simulation - where will the code sit et al.

At the end of all this, hopefully it will be interesting work next week. I will have the file handling and gameplay coded in over the weekend.

### *WeFunk*

Another night of radio, for me first thing t'row morning. I dropped Static and email today thanking him for playing the Odd Squad. The Odd Squad feel of the rap map after their challenging and downright upbeat first album. Devin the Dude went on to small cameos but Rob Quest and his collaboration - the Coffee Brothaz has never taken flight. A pity because their first CD defined a couple of years of my life - in listening terms. Their upbeat fast paced lines and great hooks and vocals. It is a top album.

### *eBay over Christmas*

I'm not listing everything over Christmas, but to make up for it around 27 December I am going to list about fifteen things for 10 day lots. Although eBay doesn't bring in much, it is edifying to get rid of the junk and folks seem to genuinely like it. Selling

stuff on eBay does almost become a way of life. It certainly has added a new angle on my life and it makes me think much more critically about my purchases.

But at the same time, it also gives you a chance to establish emotional attachments or identify emotional attachments to particular possessions. I'd estimate I have sold at least 35-40kg of stuff through eBay. That in itself is a substantial reduction in transporting cost.

### *Donation Driven Open Source*

I have decided not to do a [Noble Ape Simulation](#) release until the first Beta of Noble Warfare is ready. I am putting in so much time into getting the two in sync and the extra traffic and commentary isn't really needed currently. An interesting passive debate is cropping up about the virtues of donation driven open source. It is something I have thought about a lot and even discussed through this very log. I am not convinced. In fact, the more I think on it, the less I want any donation options attached to Noble Ape.

To be frank, I don't see any revenue coming in through donations and I don't want any donation centric stigma associated with the development. This aside, I am not against others asking for donations. My only concern is that there are so many for-profit companies out there behind Open Source that the donation driven motive is producing some very extreme and disappointing results.

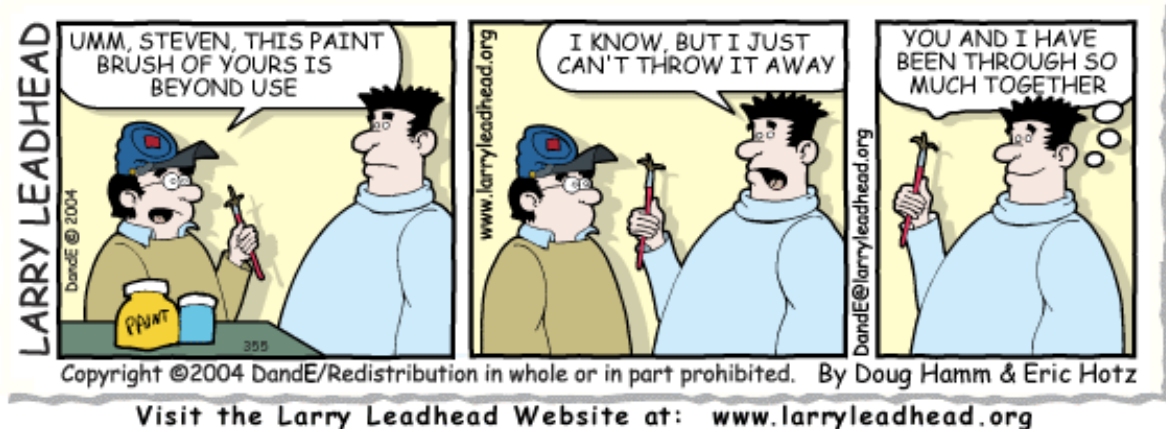
I wrote a 10 paragraph rant about this during the week that I was going to put on the Noble Ape website. But I thought better of it. I don't want Noble Ape to become a political development. I spend enough time with the source code to waste time fielding political emails.

An interesting thing in 2004 will be the IEEE Computer Graphics Applications article on Noble Ape. I don't know how that will go down. I don't think these things are Slashdotted. The only readers will be engineering folk. I don't know if that will snowball or what it will do. It will just be an interesting - wait and see.

Good night.

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**Thursday, 11:01 pm, 11 December 2003**

Fred Reed emailed me the Larry Leadhead link today. I discovered the site a few months ago. The games' club aspects don't really apply to my life. The addiction and the wife aspects do. It really is a dangerous hobby to get involved with. I'm trying hard to cut down. Honest.



Incidentally, the comic displayed above should change every Wednesday morning.

In other news, I bruised my nose by blowing it yesterday. I had some digital photos of it. But good people of the internet, you don't want to see my bruised nose.

Good night!

-----  
**Tuesday, 07:58 pm, 09 December 2003**

This is an amusing story. I sent Dave Kerr an email today. Dave Kerr is the creator of AIPlanet. Dave and I exchanged emails a couple of months back and earlier too. But I sent him an email today on art assets.

*Howdy folks, Dave Kerr in particular,*

*Plodding through the Noble Warfare development, I have been thinking about art assets. Initially there will just be dots in battle, but it makes some sense to have an art asset interface, so if you have a 3d model of Romans or Confederates or what ever you can substitute them into the battle.*

*I was looking at Dave's link on art assets in the donation section of his site. They are understandably pricey. I am interested in Dave's inside knowledge on open source art assets. Is there such a thing?*

*My current plan for the clip art has been to get a skilled miniature painter to paint some soldiers which only set me back GBP72, then I will photograph and digitise them for various clip art poses. It seems like roughly 20% of the cheapest artist for just a single image. Also it provides a reference wargame link.*

*Looking at the 3d clip art available through <http://www.turbosquid.com/>, none of the art assets are as detailed as the painted miniatures. Neither look particularly realistic.*

*Any thoughts?*

**Barbalet's Log [ September - December 2003 ]**

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*Best regards,*

*Tom...*

About eight hours on, didn't have a response and thought, this guy has his number on the internet. I can drop him a line. Let's take the WeFunk attitude - calling people you email can be informative. Edifying.

So my wife is in the other room. I call this fellow. He doesn't have a clue who I am. It takes me a good two minutes to explain how he knows me. Who I am. He doesn't get it after two explanations. Finally I resort to saying;

AIPlanet... Noble Ape... AIPlanet... Noble Ape...

By which time, my wife is laughing hysterically in the other room. So finally the accent wears off and he says,

'You're the guy from Noble Ape!!!'

So we chat for about five minutes. Good chat. But I realised cold calling people you email. Not a good idea. My wife enjoyed it though.

Good night.

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**Monday, 08:41 pm, 08 December 2003**

Another smattering of thoughts this evening.

*WeFunk in the McGill Daily*

In the intro to WeFunk Show 305, aside from thanking some schmuck who helped in reworking the website, they also mention a McGill Daily article. This McGill Daily article in fact;

<http://www.mcgilldaily.com/view.php?aid=1949>

Obscure shout-outs. Shucks. I think the article misses the point. That the diametrically opposite characteristics and moulded musical interests of Static and Groove create the dynamic of WeFunk that educates either listening group in the ways of the other. It does ring a little too much like a student newspaper article. But in general, I give it an 8...

*Miniature Rant*

I have started voting on CMON (see the side bar for the link). Typically without looking at the voting average, I am usually within one - usually one less - than the average. Some, I am quite a bit lower. A number of times, I have voted a 2 or 3 for a

5 or 6 average. I think at the bottom, I just won't want miniatures that badly painted on my table. Sometimes, I am one above. I have voted on about 30 so far. It's a good way to fill ten minutes, late night online.

I was looking through the Imperial Guard Collectors' Guide (not sure about their choice for the ' in the title). Fred Reed gets about a page. All his old stock work. I have heard rumours that this may change soon.

Also got a nice email from Willi Winter - Gold Demon Germany winner - he has given me a good quote on a single figure that he is going to put on CMON. I like the added feedback. Fred is very good. But the hungry competition of Willi is a different angle. They have totally different painting styles. Fred always has a good interpretation. Willi, I am looking for specific figures that fit his style.

### *Noble Warfare - File Handling*

Noble Warfare is current bogged in file handling. Actually I am totally reworking the Noble Ape Simulation file handling to be compatible with both which is a real challenge. Additional error handling and a couple of functions getting totally gutted. This is only the start.

I'm feeling like doing some reading before bed. Good night.

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**Sunday, 10:05 pm, 07 December 2003**

How much stuff can I type in five minutes. The clock starts... now.

### *Doug Rushkoff*

I got a long email from Doug Rushkoff tonight which was really nice. I haven't seen Doug for a couple of years, and it has been about a year since we last corresponded. We live very different lives than when we knew each other and when I went to stay with him in New York. Both no longer bachelors. But it is good to receive a touching base email. Or the response to one.

### *Romans*

UKHistory has been having a day of Roman programming. I am increasingly interested in the parallels between the Roman Empire and modern times. I've thought for a number of years about the parallels of Roman times and now. The emotions people who live in occupied countries must feel. The Roman programming focused on two aspects of Rome. The Roman military, which is quite topical with Noble Warfare. And also what the Romans brought in cultural terms to the UK.

The military aspects are really interesting. The battle advantage of maintaining a formation against barbarians. The attack technique of the small Roman sword. Designed not for hacking but for a single stab.

Interesting.

### *Linking of Minds*

I have been thinking quite a bit today about the call to WeFunk Radio. Although these things are tiny, it breaks the electronic communication discussed earlier this month with regards to email volleys. The ability to talk on the phone creates a human connection. Different medium. The real-time aspect of a telephone call is real as opposed to email volleys which are still heavily constructed communications.

### *eBaying... and more so...*

Through my recent listings, I have decided I should be more creative with my eBay listings. Some things didn't sell. Some things, it was obvious they wouldn't sell. So I have been going through my things with a more selective eye. I suspect that Christmas time is the worst time to list things.

Five minutes down. I must get to bed.

Good night.

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**Saturday, 07:01 am, 06 December 2003**

### *Calling WeFunk...*

I awoke from a nightmare at about 5.50am, I thought this was clearly a critical mass moment to give WeFunk radio a call. I waited for the funk set to be over to get the good Professor and chatted to him for about 4-5 minutes. I was aware that my brain wasn't the best quality. But there seemed to be natural pauses for accent recognition too.

It seems things are on track for the Butta collaboration in a month or two according to Prof Groove. I will continue to seed them with beats and mixes and when they come to record, they will come to record. Good timeframe for me too with Noble Warfare. Typing of which...

### *Noble Warfare*

I have returned to the GPI interface (ie B&W and single window) to get the gameplay and file handling working. There's still quite a bit of work. I am spending a lot of time writing the linking code between the various bits. But I am impressed with how intuitive it all is.

### *Reducing logs?*

I have been thinking about cutting the [Source Log](#) and put all the daily update traffic

through to Barbalet's Log. There is a good density of development information here and it is getting a little artificial doing two logs. With the movement into two solid developments, I am wondering if a single log will provide all the information required for those cruising the development.

The underlying issue is that I don't actually have a good demographic for the Source Log. It doesn't flow. The Barbalet's Log has some regulars and it covers enough aspects of nerd culture that it might work.

Through the earlier discussion this month, I think reducing the updating and maintenance in the log elements and returning to regular software updates...

*One final thought...*

There has been a legacy of the Noble Ape development, that when ever there has been two developments, the [Noble Ape Simulation](#) has taken a back seat. The Noble Warfare development has potential to do this. But in actual fact the two developments are intertwined and have a shared code base currently. We will have to wait and see.

Good morning.

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**Thursday, 06:27 pm, 04 December 2003**

I'm one of these multiple weblog entry schmucks! A passing thought I missed in my email entry below was that blogshares has gone bust. Well actually, not bust. Just that the person running it wasn't making any money. It's not about the love peoples. Not in the slightest.

In any case, a Noble Warfare games' evening.

Good night.

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**Thursday, 06:21 pm, 04 December 2003**

To: techspkg@ieee.org  
From: Tom Barbalet  
Subject: Weblog Numbers

Dear Mr. McFedries,

I enjoyed your article, 'Blah, Blah, Blog' in the recent IEEE Spectrum, but I was wondering where you got your weblog numbers from.

From my survey of the weblogs on offer and the stats generated on weblogs.com, I can only see a community of roughly 40,000 active webloggers, at most. Of this, only a small fraction get traffic.

It appears to be a far smaller community than weblogging companies would like to publicise. In any case, I am interesting in where your statistics came from. You could be closer to the truth than my statistical survey.

Best regards,

Tom Barbalet...

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from: Paul McFedries  
subject: Re: Weblog Numbers

Hi Tom,

The Perseus survey results can be found here:

<http://www.perseus.com/blogsurvey/thebloggingiceberg.html>

All the best.

Paul McFedries

<http://www.mcfedries.com/>

<http://www.wordspy.com/>

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From: Tom Barbalet  
Subject: Re: Weblog Numbers

Thanks Paul,

> The Perseus survey results can be found here:

> <http://www.perseus.com/blogsurvey/thebloggingiceberg.html>

Hmmm... it's not really clear how they moved from their small survey number to the predicted number of weblogs. The language of the document and its origin appears to show a clear bias in favour of the weblog companies. There is a well-charted decline in weblogs, noted by the authors, which the Forecast section of the document seems to ignore.

My stats checks from weblogs.com shows an absolute maximum of about 24,000 active daily webloggers. Probably closer to 14,000 actual daily webloggers, and a maximum community of occasional updaters around 40,000. The number of daily updaters is also polluted by those who update 2+ times per day. In the past six months, whilst I have watched these numbers, I have seen a gradual decline in daily updaters.

It would be nice to have actual numbers. Particularly traffic numbers.

Thanks anyway for your article and email. I understand it wasn't actually about the

numbers.

Best regards,

Tom Barbalet...

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**Tuesday, 10:39 pm, 02 December 2003**

*Listing my life...*

Back to the eternal eBay listing this evening. Aside from the six or seven lots I got online tonight, I am planning on at least twelve for Thursday which is a free listing day. The original plan was to get everything on Thursday, but the logistics of postage even with tapered payments can be difficult. The past three post office runs have had at least six parcels to send. I am a familiar face in my local post office.

*Open Source... no lift to the top of the ivory tower*

Aside from the edifying listing. I have been pondering open source today. The legacy of open source and the next generation of open source. Part of this came through simple frustration. I was reading Doug Rushkoff's weblog today and he lists Cathedral and the Bazaar on his reading list. It is a good read. But even as a historical text, it is pretty rose tinted. I think books written by millionaires about how they got rich, thinly veiled as a political message seem to be the root problem of the popularist perception of open source. It has no credibility.

So from this narrative, I typed Doug an email. The first email I have sent Doug in probably a year. He may have forgotten who I am. Having sent it, I thought to myself. Done.

But reflecting on open source and the anger I feel with the popular open source narrative on my walk home. I have to write on this. If nothing else to be a single voice. I penned my work in my mind on my walk home. A classic deconstruction of all the elements to ridicule. There are so many places to start potentially.

I don't know if it will ever become anything. Maybe after the IEEE article is published. Maybe then. I have so much work to do on my other projects. I spend my evenings and most walking time doodling what Noble Warfare will look and feel like. How memory will be arranged etc.

*Beats for Butta - Status Report*

The Beats for Butta project - to refresh the unfamiliar - taking Montreal's premier freestyle rappers and teaming him with a worn out has-been-slash-never-was aka yours truly. Add some lame 1990s beats and you have the development. No, I am too critical. I have one reasonable track and one I should never have sent but felt obliged to get them today.

No word from the man himself but the Good Professor Groove has listened to one of the beats and like it as a start. It will be great to get the vocals. Looking forward to them.

*Email - My Emotional Pacifier*

I have been thinking quite a bit about the way I obsessively email folks. I like getting email. It is a quite powerful addiction to have a successful email thread going. And without it, I feel somewhat lacking. I suspect it is in fact a reflection of the lack of friendly human contact I have in the UK. Aside from my wife. But I don't have any friends - no one to spend casual time with - so in this place I have a small band of electronic cohorts who humour me with emails on occasions.

I employee, or purchase services from, a good subset of this group. Many are friendly folk anyway. But I often feel that an email volley isn't quite as edifying as a good cafe chat.

Many of the email volley folk appear in the log as if I had met them for a coffee. I have felt like adding an addition sidebar to the log to include a glossary of folk who appear in the log through their electronic interaction. A good proportion of the people I correspond with, I don't even know what they look like. Fred Reed - total mystery to me. Mridul P - I have a comedy Southpark shot of him.

So these are my musin's for this evening. I have added the subtitle this month, musin' before snoozin'. I don't know if it will stay. It just came to me a couple of days ago.

Good night.

-----  
**Monday, 11:28 pm, 01 December 2003**

Nothing like organising the links for another month. A clean slate to rant on.

Many thoughts this evening before I head off to bed.

*Non Metallic Metal (NMM)*

I have been schooling myself on the cartoony style discussed, no, ridiculed in my log last month. I have realised that I am either fickle or open to a good argument on new styles. Apparently Games Workshop judges marked down folks in the US who had employed NMM techniques in their painting.

So perhaps it isn't about Pax Americana. Perhaps I was a little too harsh about it. It is about transition, I guess. For a good explanation of the effect;

[http://www.scrollmaster.net/tut\\_nmm.cfm](http://www.scrollmaster.net/tut_nmm.cfm)

### *Gurap is in the House!*

My old friend, Alex 'Gurap' Brooks dropped me an unexpected email last night. Alex is pretty solely responsible for the perpetuation of my childhood miniature hobby. Through my teens I used to read White Dwarfs that appeared to be part of the fabric of Alex's room. He was also my lyrical sparring partner for most of the nineties. I haven't had a chance to update him on my various projects, but I passed on the Barbalet's Log URL and I will get on to email him all the major snippets of news.

### *Christmas Lights of Wilmslow*

Last year, we were the only people on the street with Christmas lights. We didn't have garish flashing ones. Just little fairy lights on the inside of the windows and our neighbours really liked it. We got many thank yous when we walked the street and folks who introduced themselves over the lights period came to our aid through the year.

It is funny how putting up Christmas lights actually encourages people to introduce themselves. That it basically designates your house as being friendly and inviting.

This year, my wife has gone all out to improve on last year's lights. I don't like them as much and my wife confessed they will need fine tuning. I seem to remember doing most of the lights last year. Even positioned the suction cups with the patented Barbalet method (they were still up in some hard to get areas a year later!). We will have to see. When the lights are fine tuned, I will add a photo to the log.

Good night.

**Sunday, 03:54 pm, 30 November 2003**

Some months it is really easy to write [the Noble Ape Mailout](#). Other months, it isn't. I think the trick in writing a good mailout is starting in the middle of the month and writing a good and full draft then. By the end of the month, there is more to add, but at least there is a start. Today, I wrote the Noble Ape Mailout in one go, and it was painful. But it is out now.

I spent a lot of this weekend sleeping and reading with my wife. It has been a quiet weekend and a good one at that. I am thinking of going through my cupboards and finding some more eBay items to list. My lots are down below 10 and it just doesn't feel right. Surely amongst my stuff there must be more to sell.

Working on the platform interface code for Noble Ape/Warfare and playing Grand Theft Auto 2 on the Play Station has been the other two things I have been up to. And a little mixing on the Beats for Butta development. I am thinking of getting some Confrontation figures to Fred Reed too.

I've got to start writing the Noble Warfare documentation in the near future. This is in part the logic I described at the start of today's log entry. It is good to have something to brush up rather than to start at the end of development with nothing. I am in two minds about how to begin the documentation. I would like to start with some background and development history. But the legacy of the Noble Ape Simulation documentation is to put all that stuff in an FAQ at the end and start with a 'getting started quick' intro for those that just want to play the game, rather than understand the game.

Tough call. But I think as with the interface, Noble Warfare will mirror the Noble Ape Simulation in documentation as well as interface.

Good afternoon.

-----  
**Thursday, 10:47 pm, 27 November 2003**

*Okay, a little more normalised...*

Following my critical narrative of the CoolMiniOrNot annual, I spent most of last night looking through it. In a good light and with some time on my hands, my view improved. In the end, I came to realise that different styles are a function of progress in the developing art. Rather than some broader nationalistic narrative. In the new light of day, I typed an email to the site's editor and got the following response (I have included my email as well for background).

*Hi Tom,*

*Thanks for the feedback. The selection of styles is more a function of popularity than any conscious editing choice on my part. Even so, having a few thousand pieces to choose a couple of hundred models means that we get a fair mix. Next year's annual will definitely be denser, with as much variety as our community can*

supply us.

Regards,  
Chern Ann

----- Original Message -----

From: <CoolMiniOrNot mailer>

Sent: Thursday, November 27, 2003 6:09 PM

Subject: Annual

*My copy arrived yesterday and I spent a large part of last night looking through it. The quality is exceptional and the many different styles captured is really good. I am interested in more information on the various styles of painting though.*

*As your site critically grows with more feedback, it would be nice to see some definition of styles coming through. In the UK, I collect a Gold Demon winner and former GW regional manager, Fred Reed's work. I've asked Fred to list on your site. But in general your site features midrange content with a few top pieces coming out. The general styles at the top end, I see in two distinct categories. A darker style with harsher lines and more depth and a smooth contours style which Bobby Wong seems to be the main champion of.*

*In contrast to these two styles, GW locally appears to be developing its own style for harsh contrast figures which photograph well but don't look as good 'in the lead'.*

*I liked the article on light effects in painting in the Annual too. Although I am not a painter, I am a collector and avid follower of the transition of styles.*

*Many thanks for putting out the Annual and congratulations again on the site.*

*Best regards,*

*Tom Barbalet...*

In other news, some real progress with Noble Ape/Warfare this evening. The window handling is now super streamlined and ready for some serious hacking. I am still thinking of the correct method of implementing the multiple windows. But I have broken the GWorld hold and now do everything through quickly defined PixMaps.

*Mole Juice...*

One final thought for this evening. I had a large mole removed on the side of my face on Monday. It is funning looking at my face in a mirror. I typically avoid it. But

with the mole removed, I spent about ten minutes this evening looking at my cheek.

I am an old man.

I don't know when I became an old man. It feels like I was a boy last week. I still feel as if I am treated like a boy. But I am clearly an aging man. Very strange and somewhat disturbing.

The effects of the mole removal on my wife is she says the word mole at random intervals in sentences. She admits almost all the times she does it, it is not conscious. She will just think about the removed mole while she is talking and the word mole will come out her mouth.

Good mole. Mole night.

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**Wednesday, 09:13 pm, 26 November 2003**

One final thought as I change the self portrait of self identity narratives... I have been buying my wife books recently. Books that I would mildly like to read. This use of my wife as an intellectual guinea pig came through my father getting me a book for my birthday and then my wife coming to own it through picking it up and reading it.

I go through periods of reading heavily and then periods of no reading. I read more as a child and at university than I would naturally. I don't always feel the need for words and I rarely read fiction. I'm very much a non-fiction reader. I read rule books. I guess that is almost fiction. The mechanics of wargames and games. But, I have been trialing books on my wife. It is an interesting pastime and it has elements of control, I am still exploring. I am not sure what buying books for someone says about yourself. I am running out of excuses to get her books. But they last longer than flowers.

Good neo-romantic night.

---

**Wednesday, 09:03 pm, 26 November 2003**

*The Self-Identity Narrative*

I have been thinking this evening about the self identity narrative of the upper middle class. Humans have brains and those that believe they are intelligent creatures spend an inordinate amount of time obsessing about their self identity. This reflection becomes a narrative which they try to impart on those around them.

Whilst having this narrative, the world continues. What interests me is the self preservation elements of the upper middle class that allow people to maintain their own self identity narratives without actually progressing. And yet they don't starve. Something keeps them alive whilst they move through their personal

fantasies.

The idea of a self identity narrative seems a little alien to me. I don't feel I need to explain who I am. This isn't central to my being. It is more about finding validity in letting me be. Getting the time I need. Rather than explaining to people who I am.

I was looking for things to sell on eBay yesterday evening and I went through a large box of stuff at the back of the computer-room's cupboard. It contained a lot of stuff from my time in the US and even earlier. Communication with the Australian Film Commission about Noble Ape (or the Nervana Project, as it was known then). These elements are relatively meaningless in my current life.

I haven't built an identity narrative on these elements of my life. Perhaps, that is in fact what it is about. It is about creating a story on what you would like to occur as opposed to what has occurred.

In conclusion, a definition. Self identity narratives are stories you tell others about yourself to describe yourself to those around you. Like most stories they are finite works. So in removing sections, you create something which is semi-factual to down-right fictitious.

### *CoolMiniOrNot Annual*

I must confess, as a dangerous whim purchase, I bought a copy of the CoolMiniOrNot Annual for 2003. My general review 90% luke-warm miniature paint jobs - all the same figures, far too many duplicates. No Black Tree Design! Where are these people. Of the remaining 10%, half were in the US cartoon style and the remaining five percent were actual dark masterpieces.

Really I see miniature painting going in two diverging paths. And CoolMiniOrNot represents a very Pax Americana view. The problem with the cartoon style is that miniatures aren't supposed to be Hello Kitty or Hanna-Barbara. There can be no Disneyfication of miniatures. They capture dark armies where even the good guys are grey. The legacy of the dark miniature is lost in the pages of the CoolMiniOrNot Annual.

I'll stick with Fred Reed.

### *Noble Where? Fare*

I am getting frustrated with the lack of quality coding time I have been putting into Noble Warfare. The past four nights I have suffered a heavy headcold which is still with me, so all the Noble Warfare work has been on paper. And lots of it. For some reason I can type log but not code currently. I think I am working towards a mammoth coding session similar to what I was producing last weekend.

More this weekend hopefully. The windows are locked down. I am debating how to work around the existing platform.c without pages of defines.

Good night.

---

**Tuesday, 09:19 pm, 25 November 2003**

*Website Moving...*

If you are reading this, it is because your DNS name server has updated with the new webhost for barbalet.net. Eight years following my attempts to get web server real-estate in the US, my brother now runs servers in the US and I am subletting some server space from him.

I feel somewhat affronted by faceless companies, it is nice to be giving a modest sum each month to my brother for a reliable service. This has been the fourth move of all my sites. Three in the past two years. I am getting all too adept at moving the sites with a week's notice and it is rather draining. Webhosting is a high profit low risk business and yet so many webhosts fail with customer service.

*More eBay Analysis*

Looking at my eBay profits this month, I have learnt a lot about the harsh and somewhat surprising reality of what my possessions are worth. Nothing I listed on eBay went for a stunning amount. A couple of things snuck above the amount I paid for them but most sold for 20-30% of what I paid for them.

This turn around was what I expected. Having looked at the 'coming into December' bank statement, I have thought about listing more items. It is nice to get GBP50-60/week. It makes me realise how small the margins are in my life.

I have decided to commission some Roman Legionaries from Fred Reed for use in the Noble Warfare site. Seems a good way to tie my two interests together and probably more interesting than commissioning a static artist.

I have a swag of White Dwarfs to list tonight. They never go for much, but I have to get rid of them.

Good night.

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**Saturday, 10:05 am, 22 November 2003**

*Noble Ape Progress*

I got a couple of hours to work on the joint interface used by Noble Ape and soon to also be used by Noble Warfare. A lot of this development is prefaced currently with my webhost progressively dying and my forwarding email breaking down. Thus a large amount of traffic is either being blocked or turned away.

I am having to redesign and strip the site and through something of an

explanation, I am going to explain this in this month's Noble Ape mailout. There are two problems really;

(i) My primary development equipment for Noble Ape is nearly as old as the development itself (circa 1997) and the cost in dealing with the traffic going to the site reliably requires a leaner site (but ultimately a better host).

(ii) I don't have anything to support or develop the Windows and Linux versions and my ability to expand the Mac version is greatly decreased with the growing delta between my primary development machine and the latest technology.

There is an element of immense irony that supporting Open Source - ie embracing free software - doesn't allow you revenue to maintain your equipment. I have thought about donations or allowing donations on the site. I will think about this some more, but it may come to a head on the mailout.

### *Large Lot eBay Selling*

One of the main banes of my existence currently, with failing email and people I want to hear from getting bounce backs, I still get 4-5 emails a day from 'potential' eBay bidders asking about postage. 'How much will it cost to send X to Y?' Giving exact estimates has cost me this week. Four items went out with more postage on them that I estimated for P&P total.

The other thing about these emails, NONE - not one - has ever resulted in someone bidding. So I now provide estimates like, 'I sent a package a couple of days ago to X that cost Y. I hope this gives some ball park for your bid.' I think pretty soon I am going to stop doing that. I guess it is window shopping online!

I am averaging about 20 items on eBay at any one time currently. I got out the most packages ever in a day yesterday - eight. Thanks to PayPal. It is very edifying and slowly the junk is going down. But there is a long way to go. I like the theme rolls though. I will do a large number of videos or books or magazines. It seems more principled and it is easy to set up templates and get a large number of items out.

Good morning.

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**Thursday, 10:43 pm, 20 November 2003**

### *eBay Blues*

An interesting night on eBay. About six lots went through. Half didn't sell. Interesting the ones that sold, and my PayPal account is well plus thanks to prompt payers.

One thing I couldn't believe that didn't go was the Cathedral and the Bazaar. This was listed at 30p or roughly USD0.50. It couldn't sell?! Very strange. Perhaps people aren't interested in Open Source. In fact, the real sellers at anything close to their actual value - still probably 10% are text books. Warhammer stuff too

sometimes sells well.

I am listing scores of videos t'row with the aim to clear roughly half and give the rest to charity. Minimum bid 50p. Anything less is murder.

### *Beats for Butta*

Thumbs up from Prof Groove on my first MP3 track back to Butta. I have to get an MP3 mix of the remaining track currently. Good news though. Butta is going to get told in the next few days and then hopefully some real progress.

### *My New Favourites*

I received a box of Harlequin Fantasy Orcs from [Black Tree Design Miniatures](#) today. They are stunning and quite superior to Games Workshop. I haven't done the actual evaluation, but I think they are considerably better value too. Big thumbs up.

I'm heading to bed. Good night.

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**Wednesday, 11:05 pm, 19 November 2003**

The archive experiments kicks in tonight. It will be interesting to see how it goes. In other news, various ploddings with eBay and Noble Warfare. Not to mention the shortage of Matt Varnish Spray Cans for miniatures. The undocumented shortage has caused cans from 8 months ago to go for record prices. Valuable commodity!

Good night.

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**Monday, 10:45 pm, 17 November 2003**

Both the Noble Ape site and the Barbalet's Log site are going through some heavy reworking behind the scenes. The main work is actually archiving both Barbalet's Log and the Noble Ape Source Log, into 4 month slices in (hopefully) less than 1.5Mb PDF files. This has two thoughts behind it;

(1) There is a lot of information in the logs that are picked up by search engines. This viewing should be put through a central host - like Sourceforge rather than dead-weight hosting.

(2) I want to make all my sites more lean and mean. Basically I am working on my third host move and a new site too. The complexity in content management is getting pretty great.

I've already started this process with the Noble Ape Source Log, but will start kicking it in with Barbalet's Log in the near future. The archive already compiled covers Jan-Apr 2003 and I am working on one covering May-Aug 2003. The PDFs are around 1.5Mb and will be hosted with Sourceforge. There is a substantial

amount of development content in Barbalet's Log which is useful for the Noble Ape development. Obviously there is general musing and fun stuff too, but that fits a lot of Open Source content anyway.

Aside from this, the moving target of the Noble Warfare interface has changed again. I am now thinking of a master map window and a standard zoom in window too. Larger land area, different interface but a smaller zoom window and probably better update time because of this.

Good night.

-----  
**Sunday, 07:50 pm, 16 November 2003**

I've broken the two page barrier with eBay - now listing 26 items - and I am feeling a little burnt out. Auctions for most of next week. A somewhat organised process in place to deal with the auction items as they are paid for and go out. It seems my life is now centred around selling clutter for small margins. The principle is good - the process is slow. I have six items to post t'row and then a day of no auctions. Followed by eight items, I think. Of last week's bidding there are still three non-payers. It's getting done.

Noble Warfare has remained relatively static over the weekend. There was lots of work done on it at the end of last week. So I am not too fussed. But still the deadline is relatively ambitious and I would like to get it out with the Noble Ape Simulation Ocelot style interface. Maybe not the landscapes but at least colour.

One final point tonight, I have kept the television off for almost all the weekend and avoided news services. This has both felt liberating but also like time has stood still. I occasionally buy the newspaper on Sunday and always regret doing so. Newspapers don't seem to be the sharp instruments they once were. I don't think internet or television news has replaced them. I am not sure what has happened to good investigative journalism. Perhaps my thoughts on technology journalists actually apply more broadly.

Good night.

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**Saturday, 11:37 pm, 15 November 2003**

Following the last log entry, I have put six of the Crumb Sketchbooks on eBay. I am keeping my favourite three and potentially listing another depending on the results of the six sketchbooks.

Following heading correspondence with Fred Reed, I have blown my December miniature budget for about a dozen commissioned miniatures, including a [Heresy Minatures' Netherlord](#). The Netherlord is the largest demon ever made. A kind of Spruce Goose of the miniature world. Totally over the top. Fred had drip fed me images of this beast. Please turn away now if you are easily scared.



To get a sense of scale - the discs its hooves are on, are 4cm diameter. I've commissioned a much more detailed paint job than the one shown. It will be interesting to see the final result. Fred is estimating three days of solid work to create + paint the whole thing.

Aside from this, the platform source code of the Noble Ape Simulation has been getting a savage reworking. It has gone from roughly 1,250 lines to roughly 900 and reducing. It is relatively simple, so it is good to get rid of a lot of the redundant code and push more of the doing-stuff into the gui layer.

T'row I hope to finish two of the beats for Butta, as part of the flagging Beats for Butta project. Good night.

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**Thursday, 10:04 pm, 13 November 2003**

*Crumb, Northern California and eBay*

I was looking through some books last night and I found my collection of Robert Crumb compendiums that I purchased in San Francisco over a two year period. I bought my first one in 1998 and read it at UC Berkeley and also in the infamous Berkeley YMCA. I was a different person then.

I was thinking of selling some of the sketch books. I have some of the dated Robert Crumb sketch books which I bought in Berkeley in 2000. But looking

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through them, I have a clear emotional attachment to them. It is interesting actually because I used to compulsively watch the documentary on Crumb. I thought it was an interesting portrait and also it reminded me of northern California.

I guess I once had a romantic view of northern California. Before I lived there. I found online today the Los Gatos Weekly Times. Los Gatos is a 'mountain town' at the foot of Silicon Valley. My memories of Los Gatos was - it is where the wealthy go when they want to attempt to be rustic. I remember going into a bagel shop in Los Gatos and hearing a female customer deriding one of the servers. Everyone was on edge. They had money and they could behave aggressively.

Anyway, I decided there were some things I couldn't sell on eBay. And I had to think about their weight. Through the eBay sales, I am hoping to reduce my possessions by roughly half. That is the mission. I am Stoic!

Why did I like Robert Crumb? His family reminded me of the American dream gone terrible wrong. His ultimate sense of irony. He is an un-American American. As an un-Australian Australian, I found a kindred spirit. Now? His work captures a period in my life.

#### *A Sourceforge for Miniature Painting*

In other news, I have been thinking about what I do with source code similar to a miniature painter. Yet on produces something with cash value and I give away software. This thinking comes from [CoolMiniOrNot](#). This site is an orgy of a dozen well painted miniatures and lots of quite good painted miniatures. I emailed Fred Reed to see if he was interested putting stuff on there. So far no response. I think the British style of miniature painting is very poorly represented. The miniatures are quite cartoony and favour the US style which is very cartoony. British miniature painting has swayed in this direction but has always had more contrast and harsh lines.

I emailed Fred today about doing a couple of custom miniatures. Actually more than a couple. I want to challenge Fred more. I have been impressed with the results he has produced with more difficult or unusual miniatures. So the aim is to give him more time (there is a subtle equation, time = money) for longer more devoted paint jobs plus get modifications and mixes of existing miniatures. The aim is less miniatures, more detail.

Good night.

-----  
**Tuesday, 08:29 pm, 11 November 2003**

I put a lot of time last night into my [eBay listings](#). I have to confess, I am disappointed this week with how my stuff has been picked up. It is one thing cleaning out cupboards, it is another thing giving stuff away for 10p. I guess I feel edified anyway. The space is good. Getting rid of heavy things I never read/use is good. But still. I am feeling a little low after the initial killer sales.

I am committed to keep listing stuff for at least the next six weeks as a concerted effort to get my possessions right down. Aside from the eBay stuff, I have been corresponding with Fred Reed quite a bit about miniatures to paint in the new year. I am going for a few small groups spread over the first three months of next year. It seems Fred is getting quite a bit of work.

Aside from that working out stats and window sizes for Noble War. I am going to bite the bullet this Sunday and spend most of the day actually writing or modifying the windowing code. That is what I am telling myself - in any case. I am still thinking how it will compare to the [Noble Ape](#) Simulation in terms of interface. It would be great to have a shared interface - well it would make both easier to maintain.

We will have to wait and see.

Christmas shopping done, there isn't much left to do this year bar get the beats for Butta project out to Prof Groove in time for Butta to listen to it. That has taken a few hours in the past weekend, although I am still skating on two beats. More work needed. But it is looking like Sunday.

Good night.

-----  
**Sunday, 05:59 pm, 09 November 2003**

I've been Christmas shopping with the wife in the morning and putting stuff on eBay and reading newspapers this afternoon. Onto the narrative.

#### *Presents of Mind*

This year, both my wife and I bought most of our presents online. We put about GBP250 into the online economy and most of it went to Amazon. In fact, most of the gifts I purchase for Christmas and birthdays come from Amazon.com or the UK equivalent .co.uk.

It's the kind of thing you can do in a lunch break at work or, as my wife found this weekend, on a Saturday afternoon. So come to do the physical Christmas shopping we didn't have a lot to get. Because we both have family mainly overseas, we have to get our Christmas shopping done about two months in advance. This leaves us weekends free around Christmas time to avoid shopping areas. Shopping online helps this too. I have a solid parcel addiction now - thanks to eBay. So getting parcels at work breaks the day up.

#### *Interface - Not In Your Face*

For the past couple of days my mental screen saver has been the user interface for Noble Warfare. What will it look like and will it keep people interested. I have no artistic ability, so it will be little dots duelling it out... but that doesn't have to be

boring. Well, it will be boring for some.

Speaking of Noble Warfare, I got an email today from [Chris Bryant of Alienstar Games](#). I emailed Chris [a while ago](#) about my local host of the game rules and also how I was using some aspects of the game as background or more importantly thought-provoking material for the Noble Warfare game.

*Fred Reed - Master Miniature Artist*

Chris looked at the log today and liked the miniatures shown - thanks to the stunning artwork of Fred Reed. For anyone looking to get in contact with Fred on commission work, please drop him an email (fred\_reed\_8924 at hotmail dot com) and let him know you saw his work here! I told Fred I would progressively be putting more of his work online. The other thing about Fred's work is he is very wise to the history of the miniatures and the colour effects of the paint. You can get some good discussion going with him about various effects he has used.

Aside from Fred, I am a great supporter of [Nick Umanski's NUGaming](#). When I buy new miniatures, I get them from Nick.

Good night.

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**Saturday, 08:54 pm, 08 November 2003**

It's fireworks season in the UK, and as has been the case for the past three years, the council put on a commercial fireworks display over our fence. This year was a little poor actually. They set it to music - which meant less fireworks and higher too. The first year, the fireworks were so low and so numerous that you could feel the heat draft from them coming down.

Anyway, the digital camera held up to the festivities.



Taking the night images really sapped the batteries, so I only got photos in the first four minutes of about fifteen. It got more bold at the end.

In other news, decided through frustration to rework the Noble Warfare interface. Colour all the way through now. Well colour with a monochrome stats/console section. Separate windows et al.

I have also decided that I need to get Fred Reed more miniatures rather than bid on eBay. His style has gotten much darker in the recent package. The image does the work no justice.



More [eBay listings](#) to go online in the next day though. Good night.

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**Friday, 06:16 am, 07 November 2003**

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Mridul P, the author of the GPI source for Linux - that allowed [the Noble Ape Simulation](#) to be ported to Linux - and the current developer of [the Ocelot interface for Windows](#).



Good morning.

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*Barbalet's Log [ September - December 2003 ]*

**Thursday, 06:46 pm, 06 November 2003**

The Ben Price army arrived this morning. Stunning, absolutely stunning. It is interesting actually, buying a studio army that was used in actual battles as opposed having figures painted for display. Fred Reed paints for both functionality and display. Without question. But the Ben Price army has an emotion attached to it which reminds me of Nottingham.

I was contemplating buying an American pro-painted army. Still thinking on it.

In other news, lots of code thinking with Noble Warfare/Ape. I'll make the necessary pruning this evening to the Simulation which will hopefully reduce the CVS complexity when I come to making a Noble Warfare CVS checkin. So much design. So much effort. The development time is still much faster with some design. No real thoughts for this evening. My wife is working late and I am having an early night.

Good night.

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**Wednesday, 09:43 pm, 05 November 2003**

Hats off to [Mr Frosty Mug](#) for answering the pressing question... what would I look like as a South Park character.



You too can answer this burning question.

<http://www.comedycentral.com/southparkgames/character/>

I got a number of images tonight from Fred Reed (of his work), which I will progressively put online and in a new narrative on my current life and regulars referenced in the Log. I am already generating a list of mug shots and requested

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one of the tardy few - Mridul P - to design his own mug-shot with the South Park package and forward it to me ASAP. To date he has been resistive of sending any information. I don't know anything about him bar his work with the Noble Ape Simulation which is without fault.

I have been working on Noble Warfare - and some interesting linking of the Noble Warfare graphics generation with the Noble Ape graphics code. Like all these developments, the Noble Warfare development will add to the Noble Ape Simulation development. But I should be writing that on the Noble Ape Source Log.

Good night.

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**Tuesday, 10:37 pm, 04 November 2003**

Two interesting things have occurred in recent days. The first is that I now include two links from the Noble Ape site through to Barbalet's Log. This has pushed the traffic to Barbalet's Log from about 8 per day to nearly thirty folks a day. Impressive.

Also, I have realised that even with all the talking (/typing), on a central emotional level, I have no interest in buying miniatures or getting excessive numbers of miniatures painted. I have lived the childhood fantasy out in about eighteen months. All I have left to do is make my own Prince August casts - which is about four weeks of work. Looking at the eBay images of the Ben Price army, I realised I have a collection. I have no more emotional need for this. There may be a few miniatures I want to buy and get painted. But I have the legacy I was looking for. The Ben Price army fought a demonstration battle at Black Library Day 2002 at Games Workshop HQ. I am at peace.

The new project is Noble Warfare - getting Noble Warfare working as a game. Not just a five-minute curio but something that people can play for hours on end. That is a substantial challenge in itself.

Watched the last half of the last episode of Wife Swap tonight. Interesting. Not as voyeuristic as previous episodes. Interesting that the husbands swapped too. I need to live in Wales! I have never seen a more beautiful setting.

I mentioned to a workmate today that I should write to BBC about the Time Commanders and Fightbox quandary. To what end, was the conclusion of the conversation.

Good night.

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**Monday, 11:08 pm, 03 November 2003**

Greetings obsessive miniature fans. I won the eBay lot with [Ben Price](#) on the studio/demo battle Imperial Guard army. Quite pricey in the end. Some serious bidding in the last minute - actually the last 30 seconds. I think it was worth it. Here are a couple of the snaps in a log format.

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Good night.

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**Monday, 08:43 pm, 03 November 2003**

*Time Commanders (the good version) - RIP*

I watched *Time Commanders* at its new time and it is losing its gloss. The new time and a somewhat different format means the suspense is reduced. I am also getting really bored with the people they have fighting the battles. Imagine finding people with the least strategic ability and giving them a war room. It fails to grip - there is no analysis - and you are just waiting for their first mistake.

I would like to see experts fight the battles. I would like to see people with some understanding of strategy and a good chain of command. Getting three sixteen year olds and a teacher to play seems to be a waste of time. It makes painful television.

Also, I am getting more critical of *Total War* and the simulation interface. The polygons are breaking down and there is clearly less time spent rendering the battles post-production. The realtime AI is jerky. The attacking soldiers who move,

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turn, look, jiggle a little on the spot and then raise their weapons - five seconds for an attack animation - all lost. It detracts from the battles.

The new time seems to plug BBC3's *Fightbox*. I watched *Fightbox* for two minutes. It was really embarrassing. Jerky, poorly rendered graphics with morbidly obese science fiction junkies playing. Disturbing. The quality in *Time Commanders* has people who don't play games watching. *Fightbox* was so poor, even people who play games will be cringing and turning off.

### *Noble Warfare Simulation*

I registered some domain names today and have opted for the slightly beefier *Noble Warfare (Simulation)* or *Noble Warfare*, as the name of the new real time tactical game. I am working on the GUI this week. Quite exciting.

Huge screen to play it on. Active play area of 704 x 704 pixels with an additional 320 x 704 of additional information and console information. Getting the screen updates will be the real killer. I am thinking of blocking the screen up and triggering events to update it per rectangle rather than the whole screen. So much work, many problems, but it is coming together. It will be fun once the initial GUI is up - then it is tuning - more tuning and a beta. Good timing.

### *Weblogs - Static*

I wrote [a couple of days ago](#) about the decline in weblogs. I went onto weblogs.com today and the high stats have increased. So I got my maths wrong. In the past six months it looks like an increase of about 5-10%, not a progressive decrease. But realistically the numbers look effectively static. There hasn't been a huge growth and certainly not sustaining growth.

I wonder if it will just become people who have axes to grind. I really don't know what the weblog model was. What the ideal is.

When it was developers, it made some sense. When it was PHP hackers it made some sense. Even the occasional non nerd. But I find it difficult to introduce the concept of weblogging to anyone I know. And these are computer literate people.

My feeling about weblogging. It is in some sense about open-ness. I hope this comes through in the log. I am someone who can type fast and for me writing a couple of paragraphs takes a minute at most.

So getting text online isn't an issue. For my own development with *Noble Ape*, the weblog allows me to pinpoint when changes occurred. It enables me to keep ahead of the development and construct history information where needed.

My personal log - in part it is about keeping in touch. A number of people I never hear from read *Barbalet's Log*. I get a lot of cosmetic searches. Some really funny ones.

*Mobile Phone Weblogs - They Are Real*

I found by chance [my first mobile phone weblogger](#) today. For months I have seen articles about this new mobile logging phenomenon. It looks like there are at least two dozen of them. A virtual pack.

This one is relatively new. But it could catch on. I would rather have my digital camera and no phone. I don't like the idea of being contacted everywhere or logging every minute of your day with photos to boot. But this site is done tastefully and an interesting insight (or reminder for me) of travelling around the US and how alien it can look.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 10:21 pm, 02 November 2003**

I have been working on [the eBay listings](#), for the past hour or so. It feels quite edifying - putting old possessions online for sale.

I'm sending a large parcel to Fred Reed and probably putting in a similar sized bid on eBay t'row evening. I am telling myself I am cutting down on miniature purchasing and generally cutting the excess WRT possessions. But I think the reality is more - I am refining my possessions.

It will be interesting to see how many of the current lots go. What the pattern will be with the books. Which books get bid on first. If the videos will sell etc. We will have to wait and see.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 10:24 am, 02 November 2003**

I'm putting this huge image in both my logs, but it is really worth it. To get the Ocelot interface out to Windows users too! The difference between using the Simulation under the GPI and Ocelot is really an emotional one. Hats off to Mridul P!



in regular updates or weblogs in general. Something else interesting I have found. People are actually making a conscious and documented effort to shut their logs down.

This is a Barbalet predicted down turn. What it echoes is that the weblog community is probably equal to the numbers I quoted and didn't have enough community definition to maintain the growth initially publicised. Whilst I don't feel vindicated, the small community aspect and the fragile community aspects of weblogging seem to have been missed in the fundamentally uneducated technology media. Press release in, news story out.

Incidentally, I don't read any technology news sites any more. For a long period I read CNet news and occasionally slashdot, but I find the major news services feed me rare technology updates and I would rather find stuff on the grass roots level than be told this is the latest thing.

More smart phones than PDAs currently. The smart phone companies feel vindicated, but they may well still go the way of the PDA.

Good morning. Once again...

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**Saturday, 08:24 am, 01 November 2003**

I am becoming a man of rituals in my old age. If ever there was a time for children to reform me in a different direction, I think the time is now. Every month I archive my two logs, and get the fresh month's log ready. Every month, another Noble Ape Mailout. These rituals are really more commitments to doing things in a particular way. But I do wonder about it.

*Going Postal - UK Style*

The UK has been crippled with snap (unofficial and official union sanctioned) postal strikes. The result is letters and packages that would have normally taken a day or two can take a week or more. Interesting really the informal strike action that seems to be taken at random. But in general I am 100% behind the postal workers. I think the people at the top of Royal Mail are corporate scum who have no place getting large cheques from slashing jobs. The mail is one service that is absolutely critical and if they need the number of people they currently have, pay them.

The idea of waste and money being wasted, seems to be a corporate term for 'we want more profits'.

*This is going to be a weblog of contrasts today. Glaring hypocrisy masks on. The glare will be particularly bright.*

So this morning I am caught between two sets of packages and the fact I have to send two eBay items out. Do I wait at home for the two packages in transit or do I

head into work for one package which will probably be there and post the two books. One thing is for sure. I will be doing a lot of walking today.

### *Making Money Online - I Like It*

From my eBay profits last night, I have been thinking seriously about returning to independent free enterprise. The first thing that comes to mind is miniatures. But I worked out, to make a profit even with my budget lead supplier, I would need to sell each figure for roughly GBP1.50 covering slow sales etc.

The other thing I do... is write software. My thoughts were to write an encrypted interface into Noble War, so some (not all) of the war battle files, could be secured by a third party and sold. I, in turn, could license the encryption component with a required donation. The only part that wouldn't be open source would be the key generator on my end for generating 'you are a valid seller of encrypted battle files'.

I am still thinking on this.

Good morning.

**Friday, 09:44 pm, 31 October 2003**

What a week. Apologies for the lack of logs. Lots on as usual and just not enough time. I got a great email this morning. I'm going to see if I can include it with colour. I have done this before. Manuel's original email first;

Hello,

my name is Manuel Troska. I'm from germany. I read some of your logs at

<http://www.barbalet.net/log/mar03.html>

I read that you own a copy of the book from Mickey Kawick. I own it, too. It's a wonderful book for one who wants to write a strategy game engine like age of empires or similar engine. But i have some problems with compiling the source with visual studio 6. Have you ever programmed a sample engine with the code of the book? I don't really know where i should begin. It's sad that there wasn't a sample where Mickey put all the thinks he wrote together. If you have or can give me some tips, i would be very happy.

Thanks in advance  
Manuel Troska

Now my response...

Great email Manuel,

I read that you own a copy of the book from Mickey Kawick. I own it, too. It's a wonderful book for one who wants to write a strategy game engine like age of empires or similar engine.

Yes and no. It is a favourite of mine and best in the field still. It is quite out of date and I don't like his programming model. I think it results in programs with problems like age of empires WRT user programmability, memory use and AI problems. Not to mention event stalls. I think all these issues came after writing the book. I'm working on my own AI engine for a RTT game - releasing it open source in a couple of months.

But yes, in general Kawick is a great read and gets you thinking about the right areas/problems.

But i have some problems with compiling the source with visual studio 6. Have you ever programmed a sample engine

with the code of the book?

Sorry, no. I think I looked at the source once and just thought - this isn't going to be productive.

I don't really know where i should begin. It's sad that there wasn't a sample where Mickey put all the thinks he wrote together.

I think that is called Age of Empires (TM)! But seriously, I saw Kawick as a sketch guide for writing RTS games.

If you have or can give me some tips, i would be very happy.

Feel free to ask questions.

If you want to look over the Noble War source, I'll email you when I release the source or get you a BETA version. It is quite different to Kawick's approach in fact I go against him on a number of points - but mainly to avoid the event stall problems and the general slow downs as the game becomes more complex. ...

In addition to this, I have been emailing Prof Groove on cognitive and ion channel simulation. He mentioned he is doing his PhD on cognitive response to music - I am paraphrasing. It reminded me of the first Noble Ape Experiment from [28 December 2002](#).

In addition to this, I found a small Imperial Guard army on eBay. It's slightly pricey but it is an ex-Games Workshop demonstration army that features on the front of their Annual Report for 2002. I'm not putting any links through to it or photos of it until/unless I win it from eBay. But the fellow who is selling it is [a real character](#). Check out the photo of him with the bear and the caption. He's a former GW employee who is now working for Climax on Warhammer Online.

I get quite jaded with the internet, but sometimes I find people who offer a new window to the internet and Ben Price seems to have [a new window](#).

In addition, somehow through Ben's site, I found a link [this Warhammer Online job ad](#). Check out the default for *Criminal Record*.

Following this. Dinner out with the wife - one trick-or-treater - and nearly UKP40 on my three books on eBay. Good night.

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**Tuesday, 08:31 pm, 28 October 2003**

An hour of Wife Swap and orc sanding tonight. I have about twenty orc bits that I need to sand down. I am still waiting on the modelling tools - but it means I can spend more time preparing the figures. I forgot to order the tiny drill too used for

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making holes for wire to go through. This gives the figures some substance and is a basis for the green-stuff putty to attach to.

In other news, more paperwork on Noble War. Getting to the statistics definition and the gameplay. The memory work is being refined to the point where I don't know if I can get anything more out of it. Looking forward to getting it online. I have settled on the window size of 1024 x 704 to start with. That is 128 x 88 of 8 x 8 tiles. Although it won't be a tile based game.

Good night.

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**Monday, 09:06 pm, 27 October 2003**

I'm changing the format ever so slightly on Barbalet's Log. I also want to use the same style of random images that I use on the [Noble Ape](#) site. Aside from this burst of colour I haven't done any work on the mailout today but some work on paper for Noble War. Both the *loader* and the game play in general. I hope to have the paper work committed to code in the near future.

Not much else to report. Good night.

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**Monday, 06:50 am, 27 October 2003**

*Another Day...*

Up early this morning as my wife is doing the early shift. Always fun. I have been debating getting the 'Log more political next month. Through the recent Gulf conflict - well, recent and ongoing - I sat on my hands and wrote some logs which never reached the web.

The thing about including political ramblings in a web log is it quickly becomes dated and I have read a number of web logs - even web logs where I agree with the political sentiment - where it just sounds soap box. It just sounds like someone rambling in a half informed manner. So maybe I won't put in any politics.

*Conflicts I Can Resolve*

Noble War, whilst being in the very early days, is coming together well. Based on testing feedback, I have simplified the memory management to be simpler and faster. I'm writing a trial loader this week and hope to get some graphics together in the next week or so.

Good morning.

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**Saturday, 11:35 pm, 25 October 2003**

Interesting day. I started early this morning - couldn't sleep so I checked email and found a few emails from [WeFunk's](#) Prof Groove and an email from Fred Reed who

I haven't heard from for about a week. Went back to bed and slept through WeFunk live, but went into work and caught it - still warm - on the CKUT archive.

A mysterious Tom was thanked for his web assistance and got a request track played - Galt McDermot's Coffee Cold. To honour the occasion, I think I may have even had a cold latte next to me. Amazing to get a thank you and a request played live in Montreal. Many thanks to the good Prof for the thank you and the request. Tight show. A number of new tracks - Show 305.

Groove also confirmed early this morning that Butta Beats is willing to listening to some of my backing tracks for a potential collaboration coming in the new year. I found some old tracks I want to pass on and I may move them up for some 2003 flavour.

Aside from that. Lots of work on Noble War and used a whole sheet of metal sandpaper getting some Orcs ready for joining. Good night.

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**Friday, 06:53 pm, 24 October 2003**

It has been an interesting few days since my last entry. I have been talking with my workmates about casting lead. Something I hadn't talked about yet. It is a great weight off my mind actually. Talking about it openly. It makes me feel more at ease and less like I have a secret life actually.

In general people have been very interested with my tales of smelting and other experiences. I smelted 5kg of lead last night down to small ingots and my lungs haven't forgiven me. I am a little concerned about the long term effects of so much lead on my lungs and hands. I am being relatively careful but lead dust is pretty omnipresent and the lingering heat effects are quite real. One of the amusing ones is a snappy temper.

Aside from the lead, I have been working on and planning Noble War - the wargame engine. And corresponding with Develop magazine on the IGDA White Paper which has been interesting thanks to this very Log. I thought this week's episode of Time Commanders was the best ever.

Good night.

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**Tuesday, 09:22 pm, 21 October 2003**

I slept for most of today and am feeling a little better. I am listing [books on eBay this week](#). Hopefully will be sufficiently interesting to get sold. The aim currently is to clear out a lot of stuff. Four items a week for the next couple of months should do nicely. The main problem is the time it takes to actually do a listing - about 30 minutes typically. For the failed White Dwarf bids - this is time wasted.

I am feeling Stoic in any case.

In other news, my WeFunk radio hosting has pushed my bandwidth limit. So I am thinking about reworking both sites and of course cutting back in show listings. I am yet to email Groove about this. I think save it for t'row when I will have had a good night's sleep.

I'm going to start on [the Noble Ape mailout](#). Then off to bed. Good night.

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**Monday, 09:17 pm, 20 October 2003**

I'm heavily coldy tonight. Stuffed nose and stuffed head. Early night and maybe a sick day t'row. Maybe just working from home.

I spent most of the evening writing some cool memory management code for Noble War - formally known as Nushacker. I never thought memory management could be cool, but it works into the whole optimisation theory of the development.

And I got an email from Prof Groove with some serious Barbalet's Log gold. Thanks to the Professor of Groove, I give you...



*Thumbs up, it's Butta Beats in 2001, and slightly blurred in 2002*  
Good night.

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**Sunday, 06:54 pm, 19 October 2003**



Re-Designing Some Favourite [Prince August](#) Miniatures...  
Good night.

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**Sunday, 10:17 am, 19 October 2003**

As I am writing this log entry, I am supposed to be finishing off a piece for Develop mag about [the IGDA IPR White Paper](#). This month's issue of Develop features a single page article on my favourite show, *Time Commanders*. About three paras are devoted to the Time Commanders engine, [Total War](#). The article includes the quote;

*...the fact is that Time Commanders would not exist if the time and investment in the Total War game engine had not already taken place.*

Zzzz... aka the press release and the quality information that comes from it. Where is the journalism in this?! Nusbacher's my man, but this nonsense(!) The problem is - there is no serious open source wargaming engine. There is nothing like GNUChess for wargaming. Otherwise, these kind of claims would seem even more laughable. The Total War site is your typically no-information sell-sell site. Only the first page of the link provided for Total War is not press release photos embedded in HTML.

Viva la Nushacker! Good morning.

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**Saturday, 06:58 am, 18 October 2003**

Up early listening to WeFunk live. Some serious docs to work on today and t'row.

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### *Lead... More Lead*

Spent a large part of last night casting figures. The plan is to get some test figures back to Prince August for moulding. I am getting sick of the same moulding errors.

The plan is to case the weapons (bows, swords, spears etc) and shields separate from the figures. Oh and slotta bases! Also cast from the base to the tip of the figure. I am not sure why you would case into the body of the model! It is a huge headache, because you case right only to screw up in removing the lug from the body. In terms of being able to recast duds - this is where casting figures gets a big thumbs up. There is no record of mistakes with casting figures.

So the plan is to get a set of three skeletons in various poses and get three orcs in various poses and then make a weapons mould. Three moulds and case from those three.

### *England, France and Australia too*

You hear in funk and hip-hop songs on occasion when they want to make something sound worldwide - they will refer to England, France and Australia. I can only speak for two of the three. But funk and hip-hop is seriously underground in both England and Australia. In Australia, it is connected to the machine that goes ping.

I don't know if any of these groups have ever set foot in Australia - or even England. But it has a tinge of cultural imperialism and plain unadulterated ignorance - to use a classic American term. It makes me want to record a reply from what life is really like in a country like Australia. Put all the funk musicians on boats and push them out to sea. Aim gunships at them and ask them what time it is.

### *Nine Majesty vs Butta Beats*

Feel the hypocrisy with the previous paragraphs. I caveat this with - I have never set foot in Montreal or ever seen either Butta or Nine Majesty perform live. But [WeFunk Radio](#) has been playing and plugging the Nine Majesty album(s) heavily over the past two months.

Personally, I like Butta better and think he needs to get some serious studio time so he can release a studio CD. I've passed my views back to Prof Groove and [Haxwell](#) - offered to do a few remixes.

Good morning.

-----  
**Thursday, 05:57 pm, 16 October 2003**

Before I get onto the ramble, my quest to bring more of the WeFunk family online to Barbalet's Log features [Chilan](#) tonight.



Chilan is a well known vocal sparing partner with Butta Beats on [WeFunk Radio](#). In fact he features in Show 291 which I am co-hosting currently. The building of Voltra-Funk continues.

I emailed Fred Reed today about getting some more/better figure photos because I am finally updating my personal/Noble Ape information. After a couple of months of quiet, I think I need to put the HTML together. My plan is to have a few spin off pages from Barbalet's Log to keep my personal interests documented - mainly for myself - but also for internet voyeurs such as yourself.

Explaining my current life and interests is mainly to promote those people and causes I would like to support. Although it seems small biscuits sometimes, [Noble Ape](#) gets some serious traffic and it would be nice for folks like Fred or [Prince August](#) or even larger orgs like the RSPCA to see some of that traffic in through-put. Since I started hosting WeFunk shows, I have been thinking a lot more about how I handle traffic and what traffic actually means.

More on this in the near future.

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**Wednesday, 09:47 pm, 15 October 2003**

### *Lead in the Brain*

I spent my evening casting figures. From about nine casting attempts I got two figures. I actually had three but I dropped one on the tiled floor and I thought I would recast it. It is harder than it looks and the moulds eat metal seriously! I am going to have to order more metal. I am currently getting about four figures to the bar. I have two more bars left and about half a bar worth of cast off metal. The moulds improve as they are used. They get warmer and the metal flows better. Quite addictive and great fun. It is more expensive than I initially thought. I am going to have to order some serious metal.

### *The Voltra-Funk Conundrum*

In other news, I got a link to Barbalet's Log from [Haxwell](#). He runs the WeFunk playlist archive which I linked to [a couple of months ago](#). It's good that the WeFunk ***Barbalet's Log [ September - December 2003 ]***

fan related sites are slowly linking up. Forming some kind of super internet robot?!

### *Open Source Wargaming - Free as in Free*

I found a link from Patrick (aka my first eBay purchaser)'s website yesterday but I couldn't get any of the information because the site had a plugin frontage that my browser wouldn't load. From the info I got off the site today, they encourage people to keep their own local hostings - so I am doing this to get the information out through any means necessary. In my development of the Nushacker large battlefield engine, it is always good to look at tabletop rules. With this, I give you [Alienstar's free wargame rules](#). Although they give the rules away free they maintain copyright. Please respect this!

### *Vindication or Syndication?*

Which reminds me - the IGDA IPR white paper was [formally launched today](#). Woohoo and good night.

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**Tuesday, 09:40 pm, 14 October 2003**

I sold my first item on eBay tonight, to [this fellow](#). Interesting site. One of my favourites and where I found the Prince August link is [this one](#). Good night.

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**Monday, 09:27 pm, 13 October 2003**

The theory is that the long suffering [IGDA](#) Intellectual Property Rights in Game Development White Paper is released today. I have checked the IGDA site and it doesn't look up yet. Some good news - one of my eBay items has a buyer and eBay didn't notify me. Which means, I will not know if any of my items have been purchased until the auctions close. I thought about selling more miniatures tonight - but went against taking digital photos just yet.

Lots of bit work today. More documentation to do and some good correspondence from Fred Reed and Prof Groove. These two seem to be my staple corresponders currently. I send Fred about 15 miniatures a week currently - although I am cutting down. And I host a few [WeFunk Radio](#) shows for Groove. It's funny actually because I have been a WeFunk fan for around a year. Listening to the shows and then corresponding with Groove. It is a luxury.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 08:46 pm, 12 October 2003**

Before my childhood obsession with Citadel Miniatures (now all Games Workshop) there was [Prince August](#). The company is still operating as I found late on Friday night. So by Saturday morning I had ordered six of their fantasy moulds. Straight from my childhood. Stunning that this still exists. The irony is the ones from my childhood are still in their new fantasy range. I don't think they have

updated these in fifteen years.

Here is an example of three of my favourites...



Good night.

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**Friday, 10:32 pm, 10 October 2003**

I'm a bit disappointed with the lack of interest in my [eBay items](#). I guess it is still a while from the end of the auctions and things could pick up closer to the sell time. Looking through the other entries on eBay, it seems Warhammer stuff just isn't shifting like I remember it a couple of months ago. It could just be selective memory too.

I have started work on the strategy game AI. So far there is heaps of different event handling and it looks like memory management will be needed for 'garbage collection' and like-memory grouping. I think that should speed up the AI components. I hope to have a demo by next weekend.

This weekend, the wife and I have the weekend off. A luxury rarely afforded these days. I hear the IGDA IPR White Paper will be launched on Monday too. So the weekend should be free.

Good night.

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**Friday, 06:47 am, 10 October 2003**

Exposing the inner workings of logtrack, I found the previous log entry had been corrupted and had to be updated manually. Not logtrack's fault. My word processor did it and I must have been sufficiently asleep last night to miss it. Back to normal this morning. And a good morning to you too!

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**Thursday, 09:31 pm, 09 October 2003**

*Time Commanders*

My favourite TV program currently is BBC 2's Time Commanders. The BBC blurb *Barbalet's Log [ September - December 2003 ]*

reads;

### *Time Commanders*

8.00-9.00pm BBC TWO

*In this exciting game of military strategy, wannabe warriors enter a virtual world and take on the greatest generals in history - from Julius Caesar to Napoleon - in an attempt to overturn history.*

*In the specially designed studio, a battlefield map is spread across the computerised floor and the team is faced with a giant wallscreen. The team's task is to recreate key battles in an attempt to devise winning tactics to defend the country from invasion. When the grand strategy has been deliberated and decided, they send their troops into combat, co-ordinating their soldiers via their PCs.*

*In the first programme in the series, an amateur dramatics team from Manchester is faced with the task of taking control of Hannibal's Carthaginian army on the snowy battlefield of Trebia in 218 BC. Using hi-tech, real-time computer graphics, the team attempts to reproduce the tactical genius of the great Carthaginian general against a better-equipped and highly disciplined Roman army.*

*Observing the team's every move and scrutinising its military strategy are two experts, Dr Aryeh Nusbacher (Senior Lecturer in War Studies at Sandhurst) and Mike Loades (historical weapons specialist), who also reveal just how Hannibal fought the actual battle over 2,000 years ago.*

[Dr Aryeh Nusbacher](#) seems to feature heavily in my viewing patterns currently. He is also on Battlefront - a program on UKHistory that talks about the weather's effect on warfare.

The only downside with Time Commanders is they get clueless people in to fight the battles. They should have people that have some strategic experience. Every week the people make the same mistakes. Only one of the weeks I have watched have the people used their archers correctly.

It is interesting because I would assume a certain amount of strategic understanding would be implicit. People should understand how to use troops. But the program illustrates that strategy is learnt through experience and analysis.

The program has empowered me to write a real-time strategy engine similar to the Noble Ape development. Maybe even using elements of Noble Ape. I have a number of 'napkin diagrams' which I hope to translate into code in the near future. I think the main issue I have found with strategy games is AI lag and interface responsiveness. The interface needs to be responsive over AI response. Too many games suffer due to lack of interface responsiveness because the program has to calculate 1,000 battle outcomes exactly at that moment.

More soon on this development. I'm having an early night tonight. After I add a little to the [Noble Ape Source Log](#). Good night.

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**Wednesday, 06:29 pm, 08 October 2003**

I bought a new digital camera - one up from the bottom of the line - to take the eBay images. The main requirement was that it would work on my work and home machine. It is pretty good actually because it is viewable just as a USB hard-disk on both. Anyway, I thought I would add three photos to the weblog of...



*My walk in to work today...*



*and my walk home...*



*including the Barbalet titled, Muddy Lane.*

Good night.

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**Tuesday, 10:24 pm, 07 October 2003**

Wife Swap is an interesting, quintessentially British show. Akin to the 7 up series, it is a moderately middle class, class analysis with a typically up and coming middle class family swapping spouses with a unemployed (class) family. The distinction, the new class division of the unemployed class is something which is critical in understanding modern society and often missed in traditional class analysis. From the late 70s, there has been a terminally unemployed class in Australia and the UK. So the program shows the ambitions of the up and coming middle class with the unemployed class' survival requirements. An interesting point made in this week's show - the unemployed family had a higher income on benefits than the up and coming middle class family.

What is interesting about Wife Swap is how ugly the middle class family typically appears. How quickly the husband gets nasty with his temporary spouse. And also how the middle class wife typically has real problems adjusting to the unemployed environment which typically also has two to four times the number of children, the middle class wife is used to looking after.

It is a challenging program to watch. It makes you wonder about how ugly the middle-class really is. How far they have come from basic survival and how they

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probably couldn't cope with unemployment. I don't think the program would work in the US or in Australia. It works in the UK because the distinction in housing is not that great between the up and coming and the unemployed. The housing conditions are typically identical minus additional beds. An interesting social phenomenon none the less. Good night.

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**Tuesday, 08:58 pm, 07 October 2003**

Three things this log.

### *eBay Reversal?*

I have started [selling items I bought on eBay back on eBay](#). I'll be happy with a 70% loss but a sense that I have my life under control. I got a package from Fred Reed today and dropped the most expensive painted miniature. No surface damage. I suspect I may have grazed the base. But the emotion that overcame me, made me realise - I can't collect miniatures indefinitely.

So I am selling what I don't want and keeping a small select of mags and all my 'Fred Reeds'.

### *Helping WeFunk*

Well after months of talking, I am now hosting one [WeFunk Radio](#) show and will start hosting others. It is 55Mb per show, so quite a hosting requirement. Prof Groove aka Nick Foster has set up a download quota after a couple of weeks of correspondence. It is looking good and good to give something back to WeFunk. It is something which I look forward to each day. Not always playing through the headphones but there when some soulful music is needed.

### *More Moving Nightmares*

I had another [moving nightmare](#) last night. I wasn't sure if I was in the US or Australia. But I had a house warming for a place which was about the same size as [the Shed](#) only all the sides were glass windows from floor to ceiling. It was in a reoccurring area, where I looked out onto an oval. Quite similar to my current abode - but the size of the shed. It was very bright and summery in the dream. But I had the terrible sense of lack of permanency which always features in these dreams. I remember looking at the bathroom of the place too. It was a disabled bathroom and rather grotty. I remember thinking, so this is my new home. All my things were in boxes.

It isn't the helicopters of Vietnam or the sounds of German torpedos in the north Atlantic - but clearly my subconscious is trying to say something. The feeling of total lack of control seeps through these dreams.

I was going to write something about my current favourite TV show, Time Commanders. But I have just realised Wife Swap is on TV and I promised my wife

(currently at work) that I would watch it this week.

Good night.

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**Saturday, 11:50 pm, 04 October 2003**

Log in the morning and a log in the evening too. Spent a large part of the day working on Noble Ape and also a small part of the day enjoying the Playstation a work mate passed on to me. I don't know if I convey poverty or just hope(?) but my workmates do occasionally pass on their unwanted electronics.

For me, I am impressed with the depth of the Playstation (I). Although the games aren't current, it provides a lot of entertainment for a couple of pounds plus postage on eBay. The two games I have currently, Grand Theft Auto 2 and Rainbow Six. I am a huge fan of the Rainbow Six series. I think the level of tension and strategy is incomparable. Although I am not a huge fan of 3d polygonal graphics, I make an exception for the Rainbow Six series.

I don't know what other games I will get for the Playstation. It isn't as time consuming as I thought. Something that will fill occasional hours every week.

The progress with the Noble Ape source code has been good. A couple of challenges with this new release, including the integration of the Apple Distribution code. I included the source today although there isn't any linking code for it yet. In addition, some bread and butter changes to the file handling. I am also thinking of reworking a large section of the internal hardwired ape logic. This should really go in the Noble Ape Source Log... but in the interim, I will write about it here.

I have been dusting off some old Chaos Marine figures I got off eBay earlier this week. They were coated thick with black paint and I have spent the evening stripping the paint off with vinegar and flexible plastic scrapers. It is working. Strange but true. The details and the original metal is coming through. I hope to get them and a few Orks onto Fred Reed early in the week.

One final point, I read an interesting article in this month's Game Developer mag on the Warhammer Online game. It is one to watch because they are using a constantly updating game framework with software updates too. The combination of an online world and updating software hasn't been done in large scale/formal computer games in the past. The technology is all straight down the line, but I have some interest in the venture - although I don't currently own any Games Workshop stock... The time will come. Good night.

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**Saturday, 06:44 am, 04 October 2003**

Up early and listening to [WeFunk](#) live.

*Rich food, no alcohol*

I went out to a film and dinner with my wife last night. We didn't end up eating until 9.30pm and the food was rich. Since my recent illness, I have stopped drinking alcohol. I normally would have about 6 to 8 units of alcohol or about 4 to 6 beers a week. Going down to zero is quite refreshing.

I stopped drinking from October 2000 to February 2001. My life in the US and the UK was sufficiently hard I just didn't think alcohol would help. Now, it's more competitive actually. I haven't had any alcohol in a couple of weeks and I want to see how long I can go. I have been through a usual weekly stress times two and I have been to places where alcohol is served and been out with workmates drinking alcohol.

### *The Hobby*

We saw the film last night at the Trafford Centre. I haven't been to the Trafford Centre for a couple of months. In fact, [my last trip was logged](#). So I went back to the site and there was a sign saying - if you want to continue to follow your hobby, the nearest stores are...

It occurred to me, this was a strangely personalised poster for the community of schmucks. [Since last month, I have been thinking about what future my following of the Hobby will be.](#)

My following seems to be tagged with eBay currently. Two things I want to cut down. I am improving on eBay actually. Moved from a UKP60/week to UKP40/week. Slowly recovering. I have thought about going cold turkey and spending more time on [Noble Ape](#). But my time on Noble Ape is already a ministry of one. The developer following has been flagging a little in the past couple of months. It is nice to have a hobby which isn't generated by me.

So returning to the slowing down. My rationale is that I have more old White Dwarfs than I need. I have more miniatures than I can use. The priority is painting the miniatures I have. And slowly I am passing on my miniatures to [Justin 'Fred' Reed](#). And this is my current logic. Lots of this seems to be tied with the total lack of time I have to work on Noble Ape currently. But after the IGDA IPR Committee White Paper comes out. And I do have time to work on Noble Ape...

I'm heading back to bed. Good morning.

**Monday, 10:38 pm, 29 September 2003**

*Strange Dream*

I had a strange dream last night. I was sitting in a fundamentalist church listening to the preacher. I was in the US. He was reading a section of a terrorist letter - I assume from al Quaida - and he was dissecting it like a scripture - analysing it for evil and where they were conflicting with scripture. I have been to fundamentalist churches on a few occasions through my life and I am familiar with the style. The overhead projector whizzed as he went through the section of the text.

Towards the end of the sermon, I felt incensed to ask a question so I raised my hand and the preacher's gaze fell on me.

'I am not sure if I am allowed to ask questions, I am new.'

The preacher looked at me and laughed,

'Oh, you are allowed to ask questions, so long as you...'

His voice trailed off and the congregation laughed.

'I'm sorry I didn't hear what you said,' I continued, 'Clearly the document presented is a hateful text. Clearly it has no merit and it's motivations are destructive. My only concern is the legitimacy you may be giving it by devoting so much time to it. It would seem appropriate to be discussing a section of scripture with this level of detail, yet you are spending so much time analysing what is effectively a simple, poorly constructed document of propaganda.'

At which point I woke up.

*IEEE Article*

I spent most of the weekend writing an IEEE article and what I have found particularly striking is how writing such a sustained piece has effected my mind. The example of the lucid dream remembered above, is just one of a series of dreams had over the past couple of nights.

I feel myself dusting aspects of my mind with this document. Generating the document seems to be working bits of my mind that have remained dormant for a long period. And I like it. I feel these sections should be worked out.

[WeFunk](#)

Prof Groove and I have been corresponding about a number of aspects of the radio show and web site which has been in the background of my life for the past year. Interesting corresponding with Groove. He's very bright and it is refreshing to correspond with someone who is so focused. He has promised to scan in some

images. It will be nice to see WeFunk Radio in operation.

*Where ever you go... always take the Weather...*

I have finally dusted off the old weather simulation I first wrote in 2000 and then reworked in 2001. I hope to integrate it with the Simulation in the near future. It looks pretty cool actually with the clouds and other aspects. Good to have the code on hand to integrate too. It took me about half an hour rifling through CDROMs trying to find the 2001 code.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 10:35 pm, 28 September 2003**

Sorry for the lack of updates. All my hands on keyboard for the past couple of days has been finishing up the IEEE article. I don't know how it has gone. I feel a little like the eye of a storm - but it should be okay. I have read through it four times today alone - adding little bits - taking little bits away. I need to write a brief mailout in the next day or so for the Noble Ape development.

I have been having interesting correspondence with Prof Groove of WeFunk radio fame. He has been emailing me on the WeFunk website following my donation. More soon. Tonight - an early night before an early start. Good night.

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**Thursday, 10:58 pm, 25 September 2003**

It has been a while since my last log entry. I have been sick earlier in the week and concentrated on the [Noble Ape Source Log](#) last night as the Noble Ape site had been neglected after the release of the Noble Ape Simulation 0.664.

I have been powering through the IEEE article over the past four days. I am doing a substantial rewrite to a new structure and I have been going through how the article meets my new structure tonight. It seems to be coming together well. It is more positive and flowing than I originally saw it. So much the better. I am sure it will be edited to shreds. But it is still a good experience.

I am closing down my eBay purchasing or at least trying to curb it. Last week was UKP60. For that I got about 50 miniatures, 24 White Dwarfs and a set of rule books. But really, the miniatures boiled down to about 30 that are super cool. The White Dwarfs, I will try to read over the next couple of weeks and the rule books were a little weak. I feel okay, but I will still have to pass the better miniatures onto Fred Reed for a lick of paint.

More t'row night when I will have more to type about! Good night.

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**Saturday, 07:01 am, 20 September 2003**

Tuning into the last fifteen minutes of WeFunk Show 300. My lungs are a little heavy

from the week of illness, so I will head back to bed following the end of the show. I suspect they are doing the special show next week when DJ Static returns. Although -14 minutes from the end, they have been known to play records rather than freestyles.

This weekend is owned by the IGDA IPR White Paper. The last weekend. Or so I am led to believe. It will be good to have it out. It seems like the process has been far too laboured. But the ends will justify the nonsense. It is a document that might be overly criticised. I don't know how it will pan out. I am hoping it will increase the membership to the Committee from folks with good experience and ready to work!

WeFunk was a bit of a let down, I guess the 301 show is going to be a big one...  
Back to bed.

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**Friday, 07:21 pm, 19 September 2003**

[WeFunk Radio's 300th Show Tonight!](#)

I don't know if I will wake up early for it, but I donated US\$50 to the cause. I have also finally registered my monthly donation of UKP10 to the [RSPCA](#). To the WeFunk crew and the great and small animals of the UK - I am returning the favour.

*Logging for the Uninitiated*

In other news, I was reading down the log today - in fact a couple of workmates found the log. It hadn't happened before. The out of the way nature of the log kept it fresh for late night Eddie Murphy fans and people doing searches for Butta Beats.

I guess knowing me professionally and then reading the log is somewhat strange. I have talked about the logging culture and how it is totally alien to a majority of people. I don't know of anyone who logs to the extent I do and I can't explain my logic in doing it. It isn't like software development.

I do occasionally get recognition for the log - occasional emails. When Chess K. died, people got in contact because I made one of the last statements about Chess and kept it online. But to me, it feels like the end of the internet sometimes (akin to the end of the Earth).

*Truth vs Engineering*

I have been rewriting my IEEE article. There is a section that talks about my movement towards active licensed open source. The section talks about prior to formally putting an open source license in the software what occurred. It discusses a rip-off situation which I have talked about sporadically through the log. In fact, in terms of aggressive and generally nasty IP assaults, the IEEE article could easily digress. I have limited the writing to a couple of paragraphs easily smudged into the 7,500 word piece.

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The general narrative is very positive. The rip-off section describes the problems with open source ethos. In fact, it is really just a narrative about my development. An honest narrative.

Perhaps I am focusing on this section unnecessarily. But it is something I have been thinking about. It falls in to a sea of text.

### *One Final Word*

Congrats to Groove and co, for the 300th show! I hope Butta Beats gets some time on the mic amongst the Nine Majesty CD promo folk. Give it some classic WeFunk flavour! Good night.

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**Wednesday, 09:10 pm, 17 September 2003**

I have been really ill for the past couple of days. Heavy fever and quite congested. The congestion is maintaining but the fever is gone. I haven't slept so much since I was last this ill in 2000 in the US. I slept for a week solidly then. This time I can only spare a couple of days.

### *No Logic Life*

It's funny the dreams you have with a high fever. I had one dream - this is almost a reoccurring dream with different twists - but I had returned to the US with my mother and my grandparents and we were living in these standard style US apartments. My only experience of US apartments were in California. So the usual plasterboard. Everything pre-fabricated. Very simple cooker etc.

When I lived in the US, I had no furniture. I had nothing. I slept on a blow up camping bed initially and then I got a simple bed and desk and chairs. But my life was very empty. Nothing more than the simple minimum. I think it reflected on my sense that everything in the US was temporary. There was no permanency. I bought some videos in the US and some computer games. But that was about it. I maintained a bike. But I didn't have hobbies. My life seemed to be very focused on particular things.

The last place I lived in the US, I can't think how long I was there. But I felt I was going to leave very rapidly and I did. This emotion took a good year or so to get through me when I moved to the UK. The sense that I am going to be somewhere for longer than a couple of months. The fact that I have some existence and right to an existence is very new. So the whole focus of the dream was me explaining to my mother and my grandparents that we weren't staying in the place we were living and we had to move rapidly. The whole dream was me trying to explain to them the logic of my existence in the US. That this life was, in some way, explainable. And it wasn't - of course there was no logic to it.

### *Slowing Down on the Hobby*

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When I have been up in the past couple of days, probably four hours at most, I have been reading through my White Dwarf magazines. Since I started this log, I have been tracking my re-discovery of my childhood Warhammer poverty. In fact, in reaction to my lack of small figure armies in my early teens, I have been buying a number of miniatures from my childhood and have seen that they are professionally painted.

Aside from this, I have purchased a small forest of White Dwarf magazines from my childhood until the present. Through all of this, I still haven't played a single game, nor have I found anyone interested in playing in my area. So the question over the past couple of months has been, can I continue a collecting interest in this without any external feedback? All the figures, bar a small number, I would ever want professionally painted, I had professionally painted. I have three shelves stacked with White Dwarf. No external feedback. No Hobby?

I purchased 24 White Dwarfs today for GBP5.40 (about USD8). Clearly they have no long term collecting value. Do I sell up? Do I stash them?

I guess it serves as a reminder about what my childhood should have been. Or what I saw for a brief couple of hours occasionally on a Sunday rather than going and spending time with my step-mother and father.

*Gone Noble, Been Ape*

One other thing I have been pondering through fever is [Noble Ape](#). In particular a documenting database for running along-side the code. Basically taking log-like technology and putting code references in too. I am still working on the outline, but it is looking like an archiving database with an HTML out function. So the end product would be an HTMLised programmer's manual, and the programmer would just put in text occasionally relating to things they were working on.

Aside from this, I have also been thinking about the direction of Noble Ape. The direction of the cognitive simulation component is something which needs to be resolved. I have added an event record for the land that will allow ape communication through the event register. But without 50+ apes roaming around there won't be a lot of communication.

The next couple of versions will start to introduce this. It will probably mean a reduction in the computation of the brain function. I am looking at/for a trade off somewhere. The Apple code is very useful but also very system specific. More when I have had a chance to think about it - post cold-head.

Good night.

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**Sunday, 09:30 am, 14 September 2003**

I got a mailing list email from Prof Groove of [WeFunk Radio](#), this morning. It incited

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me to respond and offer some hosting space for their growing show archive. I am sure I am small biscuits for the WeFunk hosting, but I thought I gotta get that bandwidth filled and what better resource to give it to...

Other than that, a whole lot of IEEE writing (on Noble Ape) and some soul searching about the next [Noble Ape](#) release. I think I am just going to have to knuckle down to a date and release the Simulation then.

Good morning.

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**Friday, 10:50 pm, 12 September 2003**

As a medium, I get bored with the web quite quickly. It has been a number of years since I found sites that I thought were interesting and now my online diet revolves around three or four news sites and occasionally updated weblogs. I don't find a community. I don't find a quality of information. The greatest online joy I have currently is occasionally finding old miniatures on eBay.

The log serves as an interesting link in some sense. I like the idea of people occasionally stumbling across Barbalet's Log for their own interests. For example, I get some relatively regular searches on people's names. Either it is the people themselves or it is someone looking for more information.

I rarely get emails from these searches. On occasion, I have tried emailing people when they do searches on their own names and find Barbalet's Log, but I don't get responses.

The anonymous nature of the internet is a modern thing. It isn't part of the old internet. It makes developing software difficult at best. I am thinking of putting feedback information in the [Noble Ape Simulation](#). I tried it in the past with little success. But I would like to be able to track what users would like to see. What should go in future versions. It is easy to type that, but actually getting productive feedback from a user is a different thing.

The strategic documentation for Noble Ape becomes out of date within a month. I read, for kicks, [the May '03 Development Plan](#). Some minor similarity, but a lot of the tasks have been put on the back burner. The link list apes was something I was talking about for some time. Then the Apple Distribution came along. I don't think the two are mutually exclusive - but processing brain simulation cycles in blocks of sixteen make it relatively inefficient for the five apes wandering the landscape currently.

I should be getting to bed. I have an IEEE article to work on this weekend and the IGDA IPR Committee to prod. Good night.

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**Thursday, 10:13 pm, 11 September 2003**

My wife has a heavy cold, so I am sleeping in the guest room this evening. The

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guest room doubles as a computer room so I can fall from Barbalet's Log into bed.

An interesting log entry from [the Noble Ape Source Log](#) with the heavy caveat - interesting if you are a super computer nerd. I like nothing more than to troll through profiling data. Particularly because the new land format makes the Simulation seem a little jerky. We can't have jerkiness in the Simulation. It is what distances the Simulation from OpenGL! The way you fix jerkiness - you tune the code through profiling.

I think last night's log entry was enough politics for one month. I have decided to focus my political anger into writing offline rather than writing online. Typing of which, I received my first issue of Computer Graphics Applications today - the periodical I am writing for in May 2004. Due sometime soon - or at least first draft in some time soon. Interesting style and a lot of modification to go.

Good night from the guest room.

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**Wednesday, 11:36 pm, 10 September 2003**

*The man rhetoric and corruption couldn't catch*



Two years, billions spent, tens of thousands killed, what has been achieved? What has been learnt? Good night.

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**Monday, 10:49 pm, 08 September 2003**

I got an email from Golks at [High Priced Talent](#) today - well I read the email today and responded. It appears the folks at HPT want to put a link in to Barbalet's Log for the four months of supporting links I have been giving them. Unfortunately all the searches I get for 'ape sex' don't come through to here, but go to the [Noble Ape](#) website. But if you want information on Eddy Murphy's 'Stevie Wonder is a musical

genius' skit, Barbalet's Log is the place to come.

Really there haven't been any strange searches on this site recently.

I am still waiting for the day when I receive an email from the [WeFunk](#) crew even though I seem to be relatively top on Google for WeFunk radio related trivia/online information. I plan on making a nice donation at pledge-time and all who visit the site should consider doing the same. In the short term, one group of crazed Canadians should keep me busy.

One thing I found interesting, Golks asked for some biographical information. In the past I would have pointed to my online bio but that now points to here.

Lesser known facts about Tom Barbalet? My [DJ/musical work](#)? I don't know. Most other things are aired pretty heavily here. Anyway my wife is getting up at 5.40am, which means I am getting up at 5.40am. Good night.

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**Sunday, 04:55 pm, 07 September 2003**

I'm feeling a little better this afternoon. I wrote an interesting passage for the IEEE article and went out for a late morning stroll. I have a small chicken curry for one on simmer and it feels like a Sunday afternoon should.

I have nearly finished everything for the Noble Ape 0.664 release aside from the b&w interface and a minor file handling point. Should be resolved in the near future. The manual alterations are coming along well too. Good afternoon.

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**Sunday, 08:16 am, 07 September 2003**

I've been feeling a little low recently. A combination of factors. My wife has been working evenings which means I really don't see that much of her. In the past I used these times to do my own work - which in part I have done. But increasingly I am finding myself exhausted from my 9-5. My leisure time has expanded to fill my dutiful after hours time.

Summer is well and truly over in the UK. The nights come crashing in and the temperature - whilst sunny - is much colder. Growing up in Canberra, we had cold winters, but the polarity of summer and winter changed gradually. Not like here.

I have regular memories of Australia - which isn't a good thing. My feelings on Australia are complex. There were a number of good times and a number of people I miss, but I think I could never return to Australia to live - for a number of reasons.

In my own mind, I think of Australia sometimes as a person. A bureaucrat who is jaded and consumed by rhetoric. Someone who will never be able to assist and needs to be ignored in order to survive. Someone who is always helping someone else and views you as an inconvenient nuisance. Someone who will enforce their

irrationality. This has been represented by my dealings with Australia having left Australia. These are the kind of people in the public and private sector I have to deal with.

The last time I was in Australia was also around the time of the Republican debate. This embodied every reason I wanted to leave the country.

(1) The odds were stacked!

The Prime Minister got to choose half the delegates. The Prime Minister's wishes were over represented.

(2) Romancing the past

There was long discussion about a golden age before I was born. Somewhere in the 1960s and early 1970s. As a 23 year old at the time, I thought these kinds of discussions clearly isolated me and my peers from this debate.

(3) Compulsory Voting

Sometimes your greatest strength in a democracy is not to vote. If neither party represents you - why should you be forced to vote. It forces a politicisation of the population which is totally artificial and illogical. Like everything else, the vote was compulsory so people had to choose between as it is or ... . No third choice.

(4) Two Party Corruption

In large part because of (3), the political parties looked to increase their strength in the new Republican model and make the president a puppet of which ever party was in power. Because the parties held the substantial majority in the 'debate' the republican model put forward was so flawed, as to be laughable. The usual egos stepped into the ring and the 'debate' reverted to (2).

(5) Status Quo Maintained

As the Republican model was so flawed, most Australians appreciated inacting anything more to strengthen the two parties would be fatal. Old model stayed. Monarchist danced in the streets and nothing was learned.

(6) The Monarchy

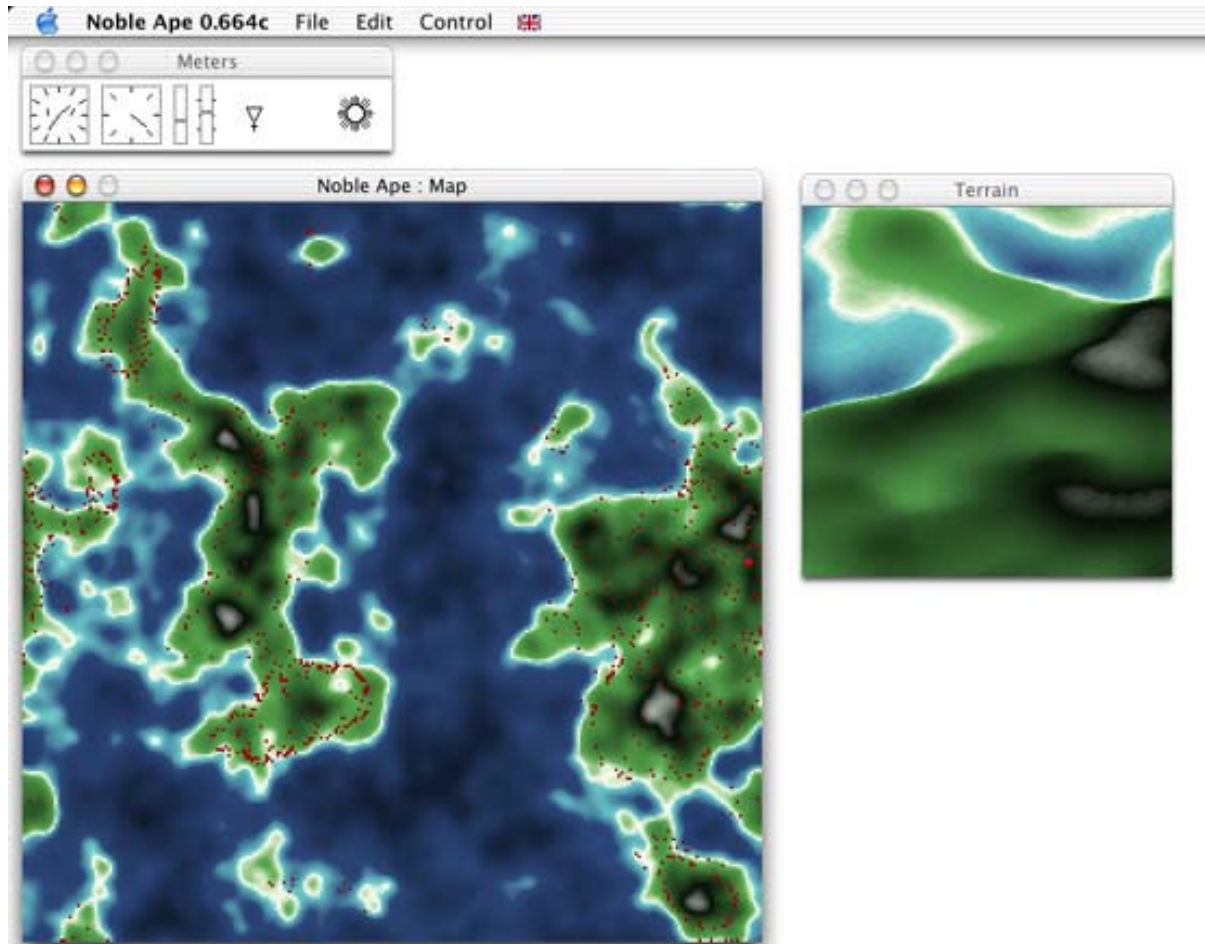
One of the things that held me back moving to the UK sooner was a thought that I would feel even more consumed by this supposedly necessary evil. In Australia, there is a popular feeling that Australia is still ruled by the Queen - who in many people's life time has actually removed an elected government (1975). Strangely, I feel less under the Queen's thumb living in the UK. Although I cringe at peerage. The Queen has a ceremonial role in the UK. In Australia, partially because some of the colonial mentality never died, she felt like a distant and uncaring ruler.

So these are my cathartic thoughts. Good morning.

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**Thursday, 11:10 pm, 04 September 2003**

A rather large image this evening of the new land format running on the Noble Ape Simulation on Mac OS X. Technically this should be on the Noble Ape site - and I will put a link to it in the next couple of days. But I thought it was too cool to miss out on here.



Lots of time spent testing the new land format and thinking about a Noble Ape strategy game?! More soon. Good night.

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**Tuesday, 09:55 pm, 02 September 2003**

I have decided to continue my ethereal narrative in my logs. I occasionally write long and pained logs only to delete them having thought a little. It is a difficulty actually. What is available in the log doesn't represent all of my narrative. Yet I continue to push log entries out. Writing the pained logs is cathartic in itself even if they never see the light of day.

I have been thinking about this quite a bit recently. The development in the logs and the new land format for Noble Ape. The Noble Ape land format - because it is

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something which is so much better than the previous island - is something I am feeling a little driven about currently.

I wish I could have more time developing it actually. That is my only frustration. Although there are some difficult points about increasing the map dimensions. But it is coming sooner than I think. Good night.