

# WARMASTER SIEGE

## The Last Siege

By Rob Hardy and John Bennison of the Copmanthorpe Conscript.



The Orc hordes mass to assault the walls

### The Venue

The Last Siege is a battle report of a HUGE Warmaster battle played as a demonstration to the public at Sheffield Triples. The Triples are an open day for Sheffield Wargames Society and are held over 2 days at the University's Octagon centre. Our group has participated at Sheffield Triples for something like 15 years now. We have also played Warmaster since its inception and consider ourselves fairly experienced players? We call our informal group 'The Copmanthorpe Conscript' and we play most Tuesday evenings and the occasional weekend.

For the basic terrain we used Hexon from Kallistra. The hexagons make for easy demarcation between one terrain type and another. Each Hex is 10cm across. One tree placed in a hex is a passable wood. Two or more trees are impassable forest. The buildings and barricades count as defended. The river you see on the maps is shallow and fordable to all troops without penalty. We also used Kallistra Hexon hills and we find the "green baize" they supply, stuck to the bottom of troop bases solved any figure slippage problems. The trees were from Games Workshop and the castle was from Forge World. All figures, bar a few raise dead (which were Kallistra for recognition purposes), were Games Workshop.

We played the 'official' version one army list rules. As this was a demonstration game we didn't want any controversy over the V2 lists on the Warmaster website. We've tried the V2 army lists but as group we have differing views on them so we felt that all this was best left to play testing at home.

Rob; "I was hoping to use my own 'experimental' V2.3 Dark Elf rules (as used at Euro GT 2005) as they are more fun in my opinion, but it didn't seem fair if none of the other armies were allowed to 'experiment'.

We set up on the Friday evening the day before the doors opened. The troops were crammed into their deployment zones and to use that well-worn White Dwarf cliché it looked "awesome". If you think of 5 armies of 5000 points you are talking about some 281 units on the table. We all went to our Friday night meal pleased with the result and, each of us, quietly confident of victory.

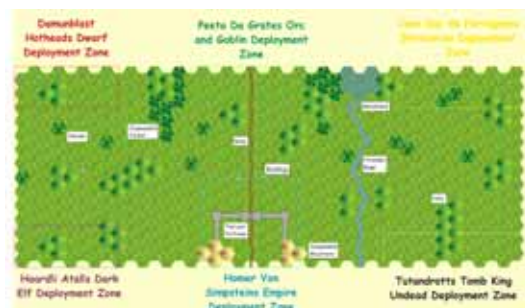
### The Scenario

We had decided to try out a siege game this year. Here was our scenario;

A mighty Orc Waagh had erupted into the lands of the Empire under the command of Peeta da Grate the Goblin King. Apparently upset over something the Empire commander, a certain Homer von Simpstein had said about his mother, Peeta swore vengeance! It is rumoured that these two are somehow related but this is usually dismissed as pure fantasy by those in the know! There were a string of terrible battles and things went badly for Homer. The Orcs pursued his beleaguered army back to the last and mightiest of his fortresses for a last stand. "I want 'is 'ead on a plate," cried Peeta. A desperate Homer sent out please to his allies for support. As luck would have it he was relieved to find the largest Dwarf Legion for millennia and his old Bretonnian pal Jean Duc du Fartagnon coming to his aid. Unfortunately for Homer the Dark Elves and the Undead had also got wind of events and turned up with equally large armies, The Dark Elves in search of slaves and the Undead in search of new recruits.

The stage was set for the mightiest battle any of them had ever seen!

### Objectives & Special Rules



The Deployment Battle-map

The objective was simple. Whoever holds the 'The Last Fortress' at the end of the day wins.

The Orcs & Empire had no breakpoint. Each side was allowed 500 points of siege equipment.

The Players, the Armies, the initial Deployment and Cunning Plans

The Alliance of Good consisting of;

Homer Von Simpstein AKA Chris Goodhall commanding the Empire.

His 3,450 point army consisted of the following;



Homer inspects his battle-plans (or is that a pizza?)

4 Towers, 1 Gateway, 1 Forge, 1 Stable, 4 12cm wall sections, boiling oil & numerous outlying earthworks.

8 Halberdiers 415 points (1 unit with skirmishers and Banner of Steadfastness)

8 Crossbowmen 440 points

2 Flagellants 190 points (both with Skirmishers)

3 Handgunners 195 points

7 Knights 770 points

4 Cannons 340 points

2 Steam Tanks 240 points

4 Wizards 270 points (Wand of Power, Dispel, Ring and Spellbind)

3 Heroes 420 points (2 on Griffons and Swords of Might and Cleaving)

General with the Helm of Dominion. 170 points

No breakpoint.

His plan was to defend the ring of earthworks around the castle in the hope of slowing down the besiegers so that his Dwarf & Bretonnian allies could come to his rescue. Homer had split his army between the castle and the outer defences using his siege points allowance to buy as much outer defences as he could field. He had 5 knights inside the castle and two outside

as support for the outer defences. These were to be used in 'spoiling' attacks on the Orcs.

Jean Duc de Fartagnon AKA John Bennison commanding the Bretonnians.

His 5000-point army consisted of the following;



Jean prepares to deliver another unbearable speech.

10 Peasants 300 points

6 Archers 330 points

6 Men at Arms 270 points

10 Squires 900 points

14 Knights 1540 points

5 Grail Knights 650 points (1 with banner of shielding)

4 Heroes 495 points (2 on Pegasus and Swords of Might and Fate)

5 Sorceress 350 points (All with unicorn and I each with ring of Magic and Dispel Scroll)

General with the Orb of Majesty 155 points

Breakpoint 10.

John; "The sheer size of the army was something special. I was Jean, the Bretonnian commander, and had feverishly painted extra units to create the necessary five thousand points. I'd designed the army around one thousand-point dukedom, each with a different livery. I had four of these along with extras provided by other Bretonnian fiefdoms. Nineteen units of knights gave me quite a nice feeling. My intention was to screen the Undead

with most of the commoners and try and catch the Orcs in the flank with my knights. In my eagerness to use every unit painted, I only fielded four Heroes and five Sorceresses. For an army of this size 6 would probably be better, but what the heck, I wanted to field them all. At the end of the day my job, along with Damunblast, was to keep Homer alive. Facing me was the formidable Tutahndrot. I noticed his core was 4 brigades of 3 chariots abreast with a cavalry unit as breakwater in front. He hadn't tried this before against me. It looked a useful tactic against my cavalry and I realised that some thought had gone into this. My plan was to protect the knights with the commoners who I would move forward against the Undead, leaving the knights to charge off towards the castle and, hopefully, take on the Orcs vulnerable flank as well as any Undead assaulting the castle.

Damunblast Hothead AKA Damian Bowden commanding the Dwarves  
His 5000-point army consisted of the following;



Damunblast sporting his favorite axe

20 Warriors	2200
6 Rangers	660
9 Troll Slayers	720
5 Cannon	450
5 Flame Cannon	250
1 Gyrocopter	75
General with Orb of Majesty	185
3 Heros	240

2 Runesmiths with Anvils & Swords of Might and Cleaving 220  
Breakpoint 23

His plan was to dig in his massed artillery on a small hill and blast the Dark Elves to smithereens while his Troll Slayers moved to crush the Orcs flank in a relentless flurry of axes. He had spent many hours plotting firing arcs and calculating moves to bring about the destruction of the evil army. He was particularly excited about the deployment of his Cannons and Flame Cannons on the hill, expecting to wipe out any Dark Elf attacks in that area. He knew Hardlii had a reputation for being reckless and fully expected him to charge to his doom with his Cold One Knights. Of his 9 Troll Slayers 8 were massed ready for an assault on the Orcs while one was kept back to help protect the rear of his cannons with the support of some Rangers. He thought this was a sensible precaution against the four units of marauding Harpies that Haardli had deployed.

The Alliance of Evil consisting of;

Peeta da Grate AKA Peter Goodhall commanding the Orcs & Goblins  
His army 5000-point army consisted of the following;



Peeta dreams!

10 Orc Warriors	600 points
4 Black Orcs	440 points
10 Goblins	300 points
2 Ogres	210 points
2 Trolls	220 points
4 Boar Riders	440 points
8 Wolf Riders	480 points
4 Wolf Chariots	320 points
2 Giants	300 points

5 Rock Lobbers 375 points (1 represented by the Goblin Fanatic Cannon)  
 4 Orc Shaman 180 points  
 5 Goblin Shaman 200 points (1 each of Dispel and Spellbind)  
 1 Goblin Hero on Wyvern 135 points (Sword of Might)  
 7 Orc Heroes 605 points (3 on Chariots, Swords of Fate and Cleaving)  
 General with the Crown of Command 195 points  
 4 Siege towers, 1 Battering and numerous log rams & scaling ladders.  
 No breakpoint.

His plans were simple, get over the castle walls, kill all the defenders and get Homer. The castle was famed for its Pizza ovens and Peeta wanted Homer roasted in one! He knew his flanks were vulnerable and was relying on his evil allies for support in that direction. Most of his infantry had ladders or log rams. He had not lumped his units into large brigades knowing the legendary Orc command failures would suit small 2 unit brigades better.

Tutandrott AKA Andy Pollintine commanding the Undead Tomb Kings.  
 His 5000-point army consisted of the following;



The formidable Tutandrott `persuades' another recruit to join his army!

10 Skeleton Spearmen 300  
 10 Skeleton Bowmen 350  
 12 Skeleton Chariots 1320  
 8 Skeleton Cavalry 480  
 3 Sphinxes 450  
 2 Bone Giants 250  
 1 Scorpion (Bone Giant stats) 125  
 3 Carrion 195  
 4 Skull Chuckers 340  
 1 General with Orb of Majesty on Chariot 170  
 7 Liche Priests 630  
 2 Liche Priests on Zombie Dragons 380  
 Breakpoint 27

His plan was to draw the bulk of the Bretonnians into combat with his main army while making a feint attack on the castle. If the Bretonnian Knights could be drawn into combat with his massed chariots then the Orcs would be left free to put their full might on the castle. He had devised a cunning plan involving his Chariots. Each Chariot brigade consisted of 3 units in line with a Skeleton Cavalry unit placed in front. The cavalry unit was a lure for the Bretonnian knights.

Haardli Atall AKA Rob Hardy commanding the Dark Elves.  
 Haardli Atall's 5000 point army consisted of the following;



A well-oiled Haardli with his favourite pet.

10 Spearmen 600 points  
 6 Crossbowmen 450 points  
 3 Witches 210 points  
 8 Dark Riders 800 points  
 8 Cold One Knights 880 points  
 4 Bolt Throwers 260 points  
 3 War Hydra 405 points  
 4 Harpies 260 points  
 1 General 125 points  
 2 Heroes on Manticores 320 Points  
 2 Heroes on Chariots 180 points

1 Hero 80 points  
 1 Sorceress & Ring of Magic 110 points  
 4 Sorceress 320 points  
 1 siege tower, 1 mangonel and 1 set of mantlets  
 (consisting of live prisoners)  
 Breakpoint 23

Rob; "I wanted plenty of cavalry and monsters to put against the Dwarves as I know they hate them. With three War Hydra and two Manticores I hoped they would do the trick. I also wanted to have plenty of shooty units to take on the 'soft' empire troops. I also took a full brigade of Harpies in the hope of dropping them behind the Dwarf lines to sow confusion. My plans were to use the numerous Cold Ones & Dark Riders to screen the main Dwarf army. Any attempts by the Dwarves to attack the Orcs were to be pounced on by the cavalry & War Hydra. The Bolt throwers & Crossbowmen were to weaken the castle defenders by shooting. This would then buy time for the Mangonel to breach the castle wall allowing the assault force of Spearmen to enter the castle and enslave its defenders."

## The Battle

Most battle reports go into a fair bit of detail. However due to the size of this battle it would have meant a very long and deeply involved report. This, therefore, is an overview of what happened. It is designed to give a flavour of the game rather than a very detailed blow-by-blow account.



The troops are massed into the deployment zones

## Day 1: Move 1



Since they were attacking the forces of Evil moved first. Each side attempted to spread out as far as possible as the troops were crammed into their initial deployment zones. The Orcs left failed to move but the Dark Elves got first blood by damaging a tower. Homer launched a lightening raid with his Knights catching and destroying the leading units of Goblins in Peetas army.

Rob; "We spotted that the Bretonnians had deployed too many knights, too far from the Orc flank. If the Undead could draw them into combat they wouldn't be able to threaten the Orc flank. The Empires lightning Knight attack came as a great surprise as 'Homer' isn't known to be so rash! The Dwarf attack by the Trollslayers came as no surprise. 'Damunblast' is known for his rashness!"

John;" The wood in the right centre limited my cavalry placement. I also didn't want my knights without a screen of either mounted or foot commoners. Andy is a formidable commander and could have tried to draw them out with carrion and created mayhem."



Homers knights attack the Orc horde



Damunblast's Dwarf Trollslayers advance

## Move 2



The Undead struggled with command this move but did manage to cause a breach in the other tower. The Bretonnians continued to spread out, moving some Squires to threaten the Orcs flank. `Peeta` counter attacked the Empire Knights with Wolf Riders. The combat was drawn and both sides had to fall back! The Orcs continued to move forward towards the castle. The Dwarves moved a mass of Trollslayers to threaten the Orcs flank. The Dark Elves moved their cavalry and War Hydras against the Dwarf Trollslayers. The War Hydra brigade got a blunder and went charging off towards the castle instead! 2 units of Dark Elf Witches advanced but were wiped out by `Damunblast`s` massed Cannon fire.

Rob;” We could see that the Bretonnians and Dwarves intended to squeeze the Orc flanks to stop their attack against the castle. We knew they must be stopped at all costs. I learnt my lesson with the Witches and decided not to move any more units in range of the Dwarf Cannon if possible.”

John; “My ordering was generally poor and that was to be the tone of the whole game.”



Jean moves his troops blindly?

## Move 3



This turn the conflict between the Dark Elves and Dwarves escalated dramatically. The Dark Elves deployed a brigade of Cold One Knights, Dark Riders and War Hydra to counterattack the Trollslayers. The War Hydras failed the order to charge but the Cold One Knights didn't! Dark Rider shooting put paid to 2 of the Troll Slayer stands and the Cold Ones destroyed several Dwarf units. In return the surviving Troll Slayers charged the Cold Ones & War Hydra. The Cold One Knights were either destroyed or repulsed. The War Hydra had more success and pursued right up to the Dwarf starting line! A unit of Dwarf Warriors and Rangers occupied the building and hill in front of the Dark Elf battleline. `Homer` used his knights to harass the Orc attack again. The Undead shambled forwards. The Bretonnian command failed this turn leaving most of the Knights still bottled up on the far corner of the battlefield. A lone unit of squires managed to get in and destroy a skeleton archer unit.

Rob; “This was a good turn for us. The Dwarves had been repulsed keeping the Orc flank safe. The Bretonnians had stalled keeping the other Orc flank safe. The Orcs were slowly grinding forward with their siege towers, but unfortunately their Rock Lobbers were lagging behind and these were crucial to get a breach in the castle walls.

John; “Most of my knights refused to move again.”



Jean tries to order his troops...and fails again!



The Trollslayers and Dark Elves clash

#### Move 4



The Undead attack was now coming into contact with the massed Bretonnian infantry and wiped out something in the order of 6 units with a Sphinx and one of the chariot brigades. In return the Bretonnians failed most of their orders but did manage to get 1 squire unit into the flank of a chariot unit using 'Lady's Favour'! They bounced off. In the centre the Orcs launched their first assault on the outer defences and made some inroads. The Dark Elves destroyed the isolated Dwarf Warriors that had taken the hill and building last turn. The surviving Ranger unit clung on in the buildings. 'Homer' launched a Steam Tank assault on the Dark Elves. The Steam tanks attacked and destroyed the Dark Elf siege tower but as they rumbled on to pursue both Tanks were destroyed by a single unit of Spearmen. The Dark Elves had by now wiped out the Dwarf Troll Slayers (apart from the one kept in reserve). 'Haardli' made a menacing move by sending a brigade of Harpies over to the hills behind the Dwarfs. A hero on a Manticore joined this. 'Damonblast' countered this with a Gyrocopter being placed behind them, which disordered a unit with shooting.

Rob; "This was a fun move with lots of combats. They went well for our side and our plan seemed to be working.

John; "I only got 1 unit to charge and that was using Lady's Favour! There are two morals here. One, in a game this size you are going to get magic through and for localised attacks it will be useful. I had one of these dispelled but

still got the unit in with another attempt. In return, with 9 Liche priests the Undead 'Doom and Despair' figured a lot against my knights. The second moral is that in Warmaster little is certain. You can reduce the odds but light cavalry (and flyers) attacking the flank of knights or shooty mediums does sometimes lose."



The Undead horde advances remorselessly.



The Trollslayers are driven back and slain

#### Move 5



Haardli's Harpies failed an order as did many of the Orcs but the Undead continued their advance against the Bretonnians but struggled to get orders through to the besieging element of their army. The Bretonnian left flank failed to move again but the right, personally commanded by 'Jean', finally got in amongst the Orc army. One unit destroyed 2 Rock lobbbers and a unit of Trolls whilst the other bounced off a brigade Goblin Wolf riders. The Undead brigade that had taken out so much infantry last turn was counterattacked by

Knights Errant and mostly destroyed. `Homer' meanwhile, had managed to take back his outer defences. The highlight of this move and a dramatic finish to the day A Dwarf Gyrocopter was placed on the Manticore leading the Harpies. It had to move to a friendly unit or be destroyed. `Hardlii' was about to move it to the Harpies until `Damunblast' reminded him that Harpies cant be joined by characters. It was destroyed. One consolation was that the Dark Elf bolt Throwers and Crossbowmen were in range of the castle defenders and were quietly massacring them with a hail of bolts and all but one of the Dwarf Troll Slayer units was wiped out, leaving Peetas right flank safe.

Rob; "I will never forget the fact that characters can't join Harpies, blast my failed order! However, all of the Dwarf attacks toward the Orcs and the Castle had been thwarted. The terrible Dwarf artillery batteries had remained on the hill so that my Dark Elves were able to keep out of range for the most part. The outer defences had been bled white by the Bolt Throwers and Crossbowmen and the assault team was poised to attack, minus its siege tower however! The battle could still go either way though. If the Bretonnians & Dwarves could launch a co-ordinated attack against the Orcs tomorrow, it would not go well for us."

John; "Homer was still holding on in the castle. The Bretonnians were threatening the Orc flanks but Damunblast had run out of steam. He needed to regroup & advance. Ominously the Bretonnian left flank (half the knights) had failed 3 and 4 respectively out of 5 orders for both Heroes placed there. They were still virtually where they had started. Another day would maybe change that."



The Orcs assault Homers outer defences



A frustrated Jean surveys his stationary army

And so ended the first day.

During the evening a terrible omen occurred that severely shook the Good army commanders. Homers ability to eat (especially pizzas) is legendary among his troops but this night he was heard to utter "I don't fancy any pudding". The good commanders looked at each other in dismay, the evil commanders sniggered knowingly!

## Day 2: Move 6



The Undead mopped up the Knights Errant, bar one lucky unit, and then lost a Liche Priest on a Dragon mount in return. Tutahndrot was getting success where it mattered now. His frustration at not getting orders through to his besiegers had vanished. They managed to launch their first assault. The Dark Elves and Dwarfs had fought themselves to a standstill. Damunblast couldn't get his orders through while Haardli was happy to fire towards the castle and denude the walls of defenders! Jean's forces meanwhile had been pushed back from their assault on the Orcs and the reserves still refused to move. One of the Orc siege towers was destroyed by cannon fire.

Rob; "A quiet turn for my Dark Elves. The Undead were hitting the Bretonnians hard now and their Knights were far from the critical point of the battle."

John; "I had hoped my luck with command would alter for the second day. Alas it was not to be."



The evil forces close in on Homer



## Move 7



The Dwarfs failed a number of crucial orders. A frustrated Damunblast slumped into his chair with a look of despair. The Dark Elves continued firing at the castle defenders removing several stands! The Orcs got a battering ram manned by Ogress to the castle gates but it was destroyed and the gate was saved. The dramatic highlight of this turn was the rout of the Bretonnians. The Undead got all of their orders through. They unleashed a fierce attack on the Bretonnians aided by a Brigade of Orc Boar Riders that got 3 moves through. The Boars tipped the balance and destroyed a Bretonnian unit 'Jean' hoped would survive. Breakpoint was achieved with the destruction of 5 units and a sobbing 'Jean' led his humiliated army away berating the two dukes who had failed to do anything much at all.

Rob; "This was the turning point of the battle for us. The Dwarves were on the defensive, the castle outer defences were overrun & the Bretonnians had routed. Victory was near!"

John; "I thought I'd survive another turn. The final straw was a brigade of 2 Boar Riders getting 3 successive orders through to push me past my breakpoint. That was after the Undead got every one their crucial orders through to make contact with the damaged knights."



Jean under pressure

## Move 8



Things were very bad for the Good alliance now. 'Tutahndrott' could now send all of his shambling hordes to the castle whilst Homer's remaining ally, 'Damunblast and his Dwarves failed their orders again, they appeared rooted to the spot in despair. This was the move that saw the first assault on the walls themselves by ladder wielding Orcs. The Orc Rock lobbas destroyed the left hand tower (facing the Orcs). This was a good move for Peeta. Haardli's missile fire had cleared the earthworks and now left the castle walls open to direct assault. A look of desperation started to appear on Homer's face.

Rob; "With the Dwarves doing little, our side had a free hand to close up on the castle. The destruction of the castle tower was an added bonus."

John; "Who cares."



Homer under pressure

## Move 9



This saw the first Orc siege tower get to the castle wall and disgorge its accompanying

Black Orcs. The Undead got inside through the ruins of the tower. Homer's countermeasures included a cannon blast through the castle doors, which trashed some hungry Ogres hanging around on the other side. Orc Gerroffs caused all sorts of mayhem on the cavalry inside the castle. Meanwhile the Dwarves began a piecemeal advance against the Dark Elves. Dammunblast was now beginning to realise that a 10 general has less impact on a huge game! The Dark Elves abandoned their left flank and moved everything towards the castle. A unit of Spearmen assaulted the castle with ladders and several Harpy units landed inside the castle to feast on the dead.

Rob; "It all went pear shaped for the goodies!"

John; "At least I had time to make notes."



The evil ones mass for the coup de gras

## Move 10



More assaults from all the evil armies now made the end inevitable; The Undead siege tower reached the walls and attacked. The Dwarves advanced a brigade of Flame Cannon into range of the Dark Elf battle line. An evil cheer went up as the first one blew up! The other two scored below average attacks and rolled a measly 4 hits between them. Two hits were saved and not even a stand was destroyed. Despairing 'Dammunblast' promptly threw in the towel and marched his army away leaving Homer defenceless and surrounded. Watching the Orcs and Undead swarm over the castle reminded us of the battle in the Return of the King. All that remains to say is that Homers troops met a grizzly end fighting to the last!

Rob; "Victory to us. Revenge for Peeta, Slaves for Haardli and recruits galore for Tutandrott. What more is there to say!"

John; "The whole thing is horrible to watch, at least from the vantage of the retreating Bretonnians"



Dammunblasts Dwarves pack up and go home

## Aftermath

The Bretonnians & Dwarves fell back to the North leaving Homer and a handful of his remaining troops surrounded with their backs to the Pizza ovens. The evil troops swarmed into the battered castle stumbling over the dead who were lying in great heaps all around the courtyard. Homers men gave a great cheer "for Homer" and charged at the evil hoard. They went down fighting to the last. In the confusion Homer and his personal bodyguards had crawled into a Pizza oven and escaped via a secret tunnel known only to them. It was a close run thing getting his portly figure down the hole but after much pushing and pulling he popped out beyond the walls and fled to fight another day.

It is rumoured Homer is plotting revenge. Apparently he is leading an expedition to Lustria in search of gold to rebuild his shattered empire.

Is it true?

We shall see next year!

## Conclusion

We felt that this was our best showpiece to date. The armies looked good, the scenery looked good and the whole game looked very professional. The scenario was cunningly balanced. Each army had at least two fronts to consider. Balancing where to attack on these fronts was the whole crux of the game.

To win, the Good armies had to hold off the Dark Elves & Undead, and then attack the Orcs in the flank and reinforce the Empire around the castle. The Evil side had to hold off the

Dwarves and Bretonnians, protect the Orcs flanks and divide the Empires forces defending castle.

Lady Luck and a good plan favoured the Evil armies on the day! Unfortunately the Good side failed to get enough attacks in against the Orcs. A string of failed orders for both the Bretonnians and Dwarfs didn't allow either to develop their plans. That allowed them to be picked off piecemeal. The Dwarves relied too much on defence by having their cannon batteries stuck to the hill. That allowed the Dark Elves to keep out of harms way. The attacks the Dwarves did make were all piecemeal and wiping them out was relatively easy for the Dark Elves albeit at a high price in casualties. Had the Orcs been attacked more aggressively they would have struggled to get near the castle and the game would have swung the other way. Neither the Dark Elves nor the Undead had enough tough troops to storm the castle on their own.

We all had a great time (in victory and defeat) and can't wait for the return match next year.