

THE  
COMPLETE  
CANAL  
PRIESTS  
OF MARS

BY MARCUS L. ROWLAND

INTERIOR ART BY PAUL DALY

HELIOGRAPH, INC.  
SOMERVILLE, MA, USA

## Credits

### *The Complete Canal Priests of Mars*

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Originally published in an abbreviated version by GDW, Inc. in 1990 as *Canal Priests of Mars* and reprinted by Heliograph, Inc. in a double edition with *Beastment of Mars* in 2000. *The Complete Canal Priests Of Mars* contains a substantial amount of all-new text the previous edition does not contain, as well as all new art and graphics.

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## Author's Sources & Acknowledgements

This adventure was originally published by Game Designer's Workshop in 1990. Unfortunately it was edited to fit a standard format, with 15,000 words cut including most of the first section. This publication contains the full text of the original manuscript, with some minor grammatical and stylistic changes and afterthoughts.

Since the first publication several readers have commented on a minor point; Milton Keynes did not exist in the 19th century, it was founded as a new town after the Second World War. This village was originally used to avoid naming a real MP or constituency, and as an in-joke for British readers. Recently I learned of the bizarre origin of the town; it was built around a rural railway station, one of several originally constructed to meet the needs of Queen Victoria on the route from London to Balmoral. She had a weak bladder and was afraid to use the lavatories aboard trains...

The plot was influenced by countless romantic SF novels, spaghetti Westerns, pulp novels, TV serials, and many other sources. In particular

### Films

*A Fistful of Dynamite*

*Help*

*The Golden Child*

*Monty Python's Life of Brian*

### TV

*Gangsters* 1970s BBC TV serial

### Books

*A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!* By Harry Harrison

*The Space Machine* By Christopher Priest

*WG Grace's Last Case* By William Rushton

*Diamonds Are Forever* By Ian Fleming

*She* By H. Rider Haggard

*The Man Born To Be King* By Rudyard Kipling

*Deadly Litter* By James White

An article in an old issue of *New Scientist*, which I can no longer find, kindled my interest in perpetual motion machines and suggested this use for liftwood.

Special thanks to John Dallman and Roger Robinson for cricket information, to Bridget Wilkinson for thoughts on Martian physiology, to Brian Ameringen for recipes and puns, to Christopher Beiting for cleaning up the text files and helping to keep up interest in this adventure, and to many other friends for listening to the plot and laughing at the right places.

Finally, I would like to thank the players at GamesFair 89 who volunteered to run through an early version of this adventure at extremely short notice, and made many valuable suggestions.

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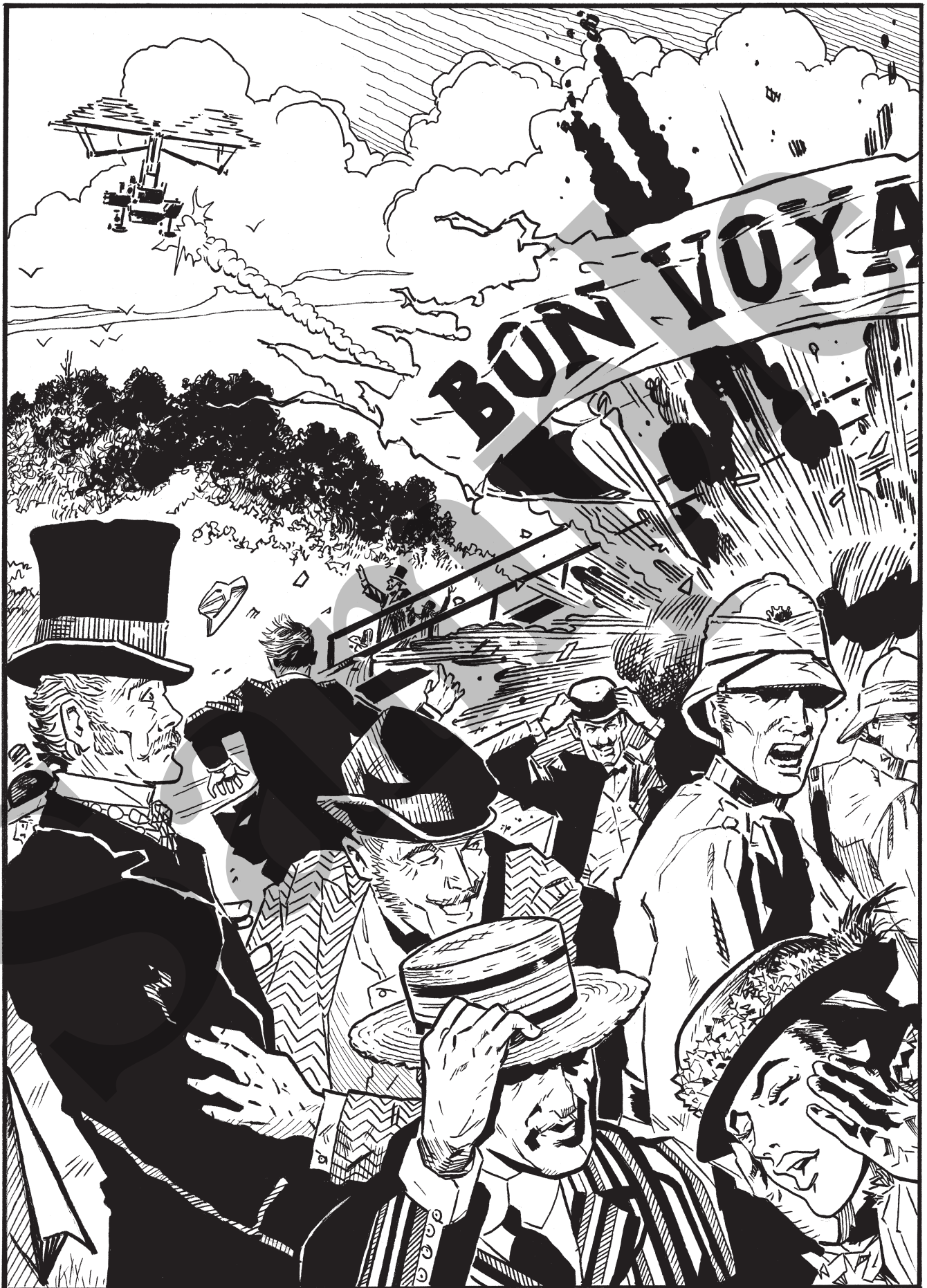
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# PART 2: A PASSAGE TO MARS



# CHAPTER IV: THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

## A DAY TO REMEMBER

**The vast bulk of the *Princess Alexandra* looms over the White Star Line terminal on the Sussex Downs. It's hard to believe that such a gigantic object can fly. Your luggage is aboard, and you will follow it after a final ceremony to mark the maiden flight.**

**A brass band picks up a jaunty air as the Prime Minister prepares to cut a ribbon across the main gangplank. You strain to hear his speech, but the background noise makes it completely inaudible.**

**Nearby some photographers are loading oxygen tanks and a long-lensed camera onto an aerial steam launch. You've heard that they intend to follow the liner to 24,000 feet, and record the moment when the ether screws are activated.**

**In the distance you hear a loud chuffing clattering noise, like a steam train mated to a huge pair of cymbals. Rising above some nearby trees is a strange-looking flying machine, hanging beneath two oscillating dishes. A gout of flame flashes from it, a rocket that explodes midway between the trees and the crowd.**

**Some soldiers start to fire, but it's obvious that they don't have a hope of hitting it from the ground.**

If the adventurers have previously seen (or heard) the *Fenian Spear*, they'll recognise it again now. They shouldn't have any weapons, apart from hand guns and other items in their pockets. However, there is an aerial steam launch nearby; the crew have taken cover (unless the team includes no-one able to fly it), and there are soldiers in easy reach. It should only

take a moment to commandeer the launch and prepare to try to attack the ornithopter.

The *Spear* is a fast flying machine fitted with downward-firing rockets similar to the Hale-type but with important differences. They attack targets at an angle of 45 degrees; for example, one hex forward and one below, two hexes forward and two below, to a maximum of four hexes forward and down. Missiles have a penetration value of 0 and damage value of 1. Because the captain must also trim the ship and fire the weapons, shots are at -2 to hit. It carries six rockets, one already used. Only one shot may be fired per round.

Since the launch has no heavy weapons, the only way to deal with the *Spear* is to fire small arms at close range. Alternatively, it is possible to drop heavy objects from above (at -2 to hit) if the launch is directly above the *Spear* at the end of any movement phase. There are two heavy cameras and six heavy oxygen bottles on the launch; all hits from above are automatically hull hits, since no other part of the *Spear* is visible from above.

The pilot of the *Spear* aims to destroy the *Princess Alexandra*; in fact he can only delay the flight by a day if one missile hits, by a week if two or three missiles hit, and by two weeks if four or five missiles hit. Any shot which misses may strike the crowd or one of the buildings; roll 1D6 for direction (as for wind direction), then 1D6 for the number of hexes by which the missile misses its target; they are home made, and any rocket which misses may go wildly off course. Roll 1D6-1 for the number of casualties if there is a hit on a lightly crowded area, 2D6-2 if there is a hit on a heavily crowded area, and 1D6-1 if a building is hit. See the map for initial positions of the *Spear*

(at Low altitude), the *Princess Alexandra*, and the steam launch (landed). The other ether flyers shown are tugs used to service the Orbital Heliograph Station (see *Tales From The Ether*); they aren't capable of reaching Mars, and aren't ready to fly.

For the purposes of this scenario, any small arms shot hitting the *Spear* counts as a hull hit. Any shot hitting the Captain is **NOT** fatal; however, the *Spear* immediately breaks off combat and crash-lands in the nearest woods. By the time anyone reaches the wreck the pilot has escaped, and will not be found during this adventure.

## COMBAT USING SKY GALLEONS OF MARS

For this battle, the map hexes represented are 100 feet across rather than the standard 200 yards.

The *Spear* mounts a battery of Hale Rockets but fires them singly, not in salvos. Each shot must be aimed and fired, and is at -2 to hit. The pilot can only fire one shot per round. The ornithopter has trained crew, any NPC crew on the launch are also trained. If the ornithopter is used against any normally armed vessel all crew hits are hits to the captain, all other hits are hull hits. See above for other special rules relating to this aircraft.

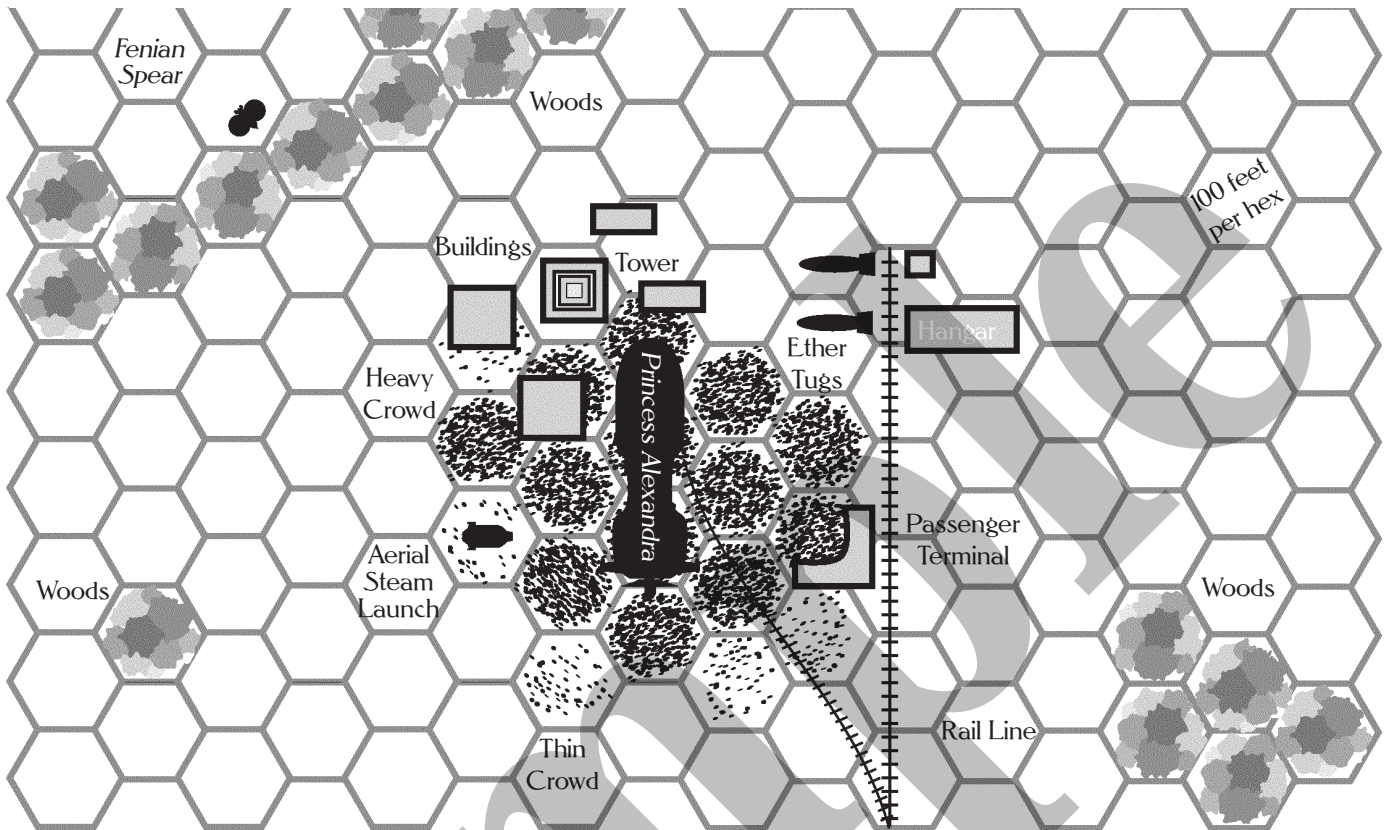
The ornithopter is designed and rated on the assumption that all components cost and weigh 25% of those for a normal aerial flyer, and have 25% of normal capacity or power. Lift is calculated by

$$LV = 25 Hs/T$$

with speed calculated normally.

It's likely that the team will be able to stop the *Spear*, or at least prevent serious damage to the *Princess Alexandra*. Such a feat of derring-do in front of the Prime Minister and the cream of Society

# WHITE STAR LINE TERMINAL, SUSSEX DOWNS



*Fenian Spear*

Ornithopter

Aerial Steam Launch

0

£ 2,600

Fires one rocket at a time at -2 to hit.

1

25 TONS

4

0

£ 4,840

Eight heavy things to drop on the ornithopter

1

50 TONS

5

BRIDGE  C

DECK

MANEUVER

HULL HITS

VH	
H	
M	
L	
VL	

MARINES/PASSENGERS


MAST

SCREW

4
3
2
1

BRIDGE  C  H  T

DECK

MANEUVER

HULL HITS

VH	
H	
M	
L	
VL	

MARINES/PASSENGERS


MAST

SCREW

5
4
3
2
1



will certainly enhance reputations, and should be well-rewarded. The launch lands to prolonged cheers and a triumphant tune from the brass band, unless there have been heavy casualties on the ground. If the adventurers don't try to save the *Princess Alexandra* you should penalise them in some way; for example, all their luggage may be destroyed by one of the missiles. Whatever happens, Zeenkeer should survive.

If the *Princess Alexandra* is delayed for more than a day you may wish to stage another encounter (on the lines of those in the last section) to remind the adventurers that they still have enemies. This should not be lethally dangerous.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

**As you finally board the *Princess Alexandra* you realise that you are ill-prepared for the magnificence of this great ether flyer. From the mosaics that**

**decorate the boarding airlock to the pine-scented freshness of the gigantic saloon, everything indicates that no expense has been spared. Even the cabins, though small compared to an ocean liner, are compact marvels of luxury and convenience. You recognise some famous faces, other passengers are strangers now but will doubtless be familiar by the end of the voyage. As you find your cabins and take your first look around the vessel, the last airlock thuds shut and warning bells ring. You brace yourself, then there's a gentle lurch as the ship rises into the air. Even through the steel hull you can hear the cheers of the crowd, diminishing as the liner gains altitude.**

**A half-hour later there's a brilliant glow around the stern of the ship, and the Earth slowly shrinks into the distance as the liner accelerates into the blackness of space.**

This section of the adventure describes the mighty ether flyer and its passengers and crew. It's a good idea to establish the routine of shipboard life, and give players an idea of the personalities involved, before things start happening. The details and NPCs in this section may also be useful in other adventures. The article "Ether Ship Etiquette" by Greg Novak may be of use in describing activities aboard ship, but some minor changes to its layout and operation are needed if all the recommendations of this article are followed. See page 104 in the Handouts section for a link to the article.

All information from the *Illustrated London News*, including the ship's plans, should be made available to players as requested. The "Welcome Aboard" newsletter is available as soon as passengers board the ship; a copy is left in every cabin. The ready-to-copy version is in the handouts section, page 94.



# WELCOME ABOARD THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

The White Star Line is pleased to welcome all passengers to the maiden flight of the *Princess Alexandra*.

## ITINERARY

Currently Mars is nearly in opposition to Earth, on the far side of the Sun, so we will follow a route that crosses the orbit of Venus. Venus is not close to our planned course, and no undue turbulence is anticipated. Our journey will span approximately two hundred million miles, and is expected to take ten to eleven weeks.

## MEALS

Tea is served in cabins as ordered from 07.00 to 08.30

Breakfast is served in the Saloon from 08.30 to 10.00

Luncheon is served in the Saloon from 13.00 to 14.00

Afternoon Tea is served in the Saloon from 16.30 to 18.00

Dinner is served in the Saloon from 20.30 to 21.30

Outside these hours the stewards will be pleased to serve sandwiches and light refreshments as requested. There are menus in every cabin and in the Smoking Lounge etc.

The Bar is open from 11.00 to 24.00 hours on weekdays and Saturdays, from 13.00 to 22.00 hours on Sundays.

## SHIP'S CLOCKS

All chronometers will remain synchronised to Greenwich Mean Time (24-hour clock) until the end of the voyage.

## CURRENCY

Bar bills etc. should be paid at the end of the voyage. The bar staff and stewards can only accept payment in Sterling; however, the Purser

can exchange US dollars and most European currency, and all Parhooni denominations. We regret that we are unable to exchange other Martian denominations.

## LUGGAGE

Trunks are stored in the Baggage Hold on level 3. The Purser will be happy to arrange access if required.

## PETS

Animals must be left with the Purser, and accommodation is provided in the kennels on level 2. Owners may visit their pets between 09.00 and 19.00 hours, but it is regretted that they **MUST NOT** be removed from this area.



## SWEEPSTAKE

Passengers often organise a sweepstake based on the distance travelled by the ship. The services of the Chief Steward are available to the organisers of such a sweepstake; however, it must be made clear that its conduct is solely the responsibility of passengers, and that employees of the White Star Line are absolutely barred from participation. It is customary to donate 10% of the prize money to charity.

## SMOKING

Gentlemen wishing to smoke are requested to use the Smoking Lounge, adjoining the Saloon. Barring unforeseen circumstances, smoking will be allowed throughout the flight.

## LEAK DETECTION

Shortly after takeoff crewmen will inspect all parts of the ship for air leaks, as required by Board of Trade regulations. There is no cause for alarm; it is a routine precaution taken at intervals during every flight.

## EMERGENCY DRILL

In an emergency alarm bells will ring **CONTINUOUSLY**. All armoured airtight doors must be closed. If there is a loss of air in your section of the ship, please move **QUICKLY** to a safe area. Emergency oxygen cylinders are provided in every cabin and in public areas; they contain approximately five minutes supply.

In case of **FIRE**, please make every effort to sound the alarm and to extinguish the blaze. Chemical extinguishers can be found throughout the ship. Emergency drill is held at noon every Sunday.

## OFFICERS & SENIOR CREW

Captain Nathaniel Bastable  
MC, RNVR

Lieutenant James Plowright  
(First Officer)

Dr Richard Garfield (Doctor)  
Mr William McIvar FRS  
(Chief Engineer)

Lieutenant Arthur Simms  
(Navigator)

Mr Gordon Campbell  
(Chief Steward)

Mr Arnold Vickers (Purser)

Mr Jacques Graticule  
(Senior Chef)

The officers and crew of the *Princess Alexandra* hope that you will enjoy your voyage, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that it is pleasant and memorable.

From the *Illustrated London News*:

By far the largest ether liner ever built, the *Princess Alexandra* is a triumphant symbol of the ingenuity of British engineers. Even the bare facts are impressive: the liner can accommodate forty-eight passengers in double cabins, another fourteen in luxurious staterooms, and forty-six more in steerage. There are five officers and twenty-five crew. It has the largest Edison-patent ether screw ever built, a Babbage Astrogation Engine, a billiards room and library, music room, and dozens of other luxurious features. It is expected to provide the fastest, most luxurious ether travel of any ship on the Earth-Mars route. All areas of the ship are fitted with the latest electric lights (Edison/Swan patent), and there is even a small telephone system linking important areas.

Our plan (reproduced by courtesy of the White Star Line) omits the lower holds, water tanks, and associated machinery below level 1. These areas are not normally accessible in flight. We begin at the prow of the ship, on level 1, thence to level 2 etcetera. Note that some of the features indicated are present on several decks.

**A: The Observatory.** Fitted with two powerful telescopes, field glasses, an orrery, and other astronomical equipment. It is anticipated that this part of the ship will be a "must" for every passenger. The special glass used here and in all other areas is estimated to be capable of withstanding the largest meteor; nevertheless, steel shutters are provided for any emergency.

**B: The oak-panelled Saloon** seats up to sixty. For social events, such as the ship's concert, it is possible to remove the forward partition and expand the Saloon to incorporate the Observatory.

**C: The Galley** has a staff of three chefs, all trained to the highest standards, plus stewards etc.

**D: The Bar** serves a full range of

wines, spirits, and ales.

**E: The luxuriously-appointed Smoking Lounge** has its own air filtration system, additional to that of the rest of the ship.

**F: A compact Library** holds a selection of the latest novels, and all standard reference works. The ship's newspaper is printed daily throughout the flight; when in heliograph range of Earth or Mars it will incorporate a digest of system news, courtesy of Reuters.

**G: The main Air Lock** (on level 1) will be the passengers' first glimpse of the interior of the *Princess Alexandra*. It is decorated with a mosaic depicting the history of flight, from Daedalus and Icarus to the Montgolfiers and Edison. Air locks on other levels are more utilitarian.

**H: The leather-lined Music Room** is soundproofed, equipped with a piano and other instruments, sheet music, and the latest Edison phonograph plus a vast assortment of cylinders.

**I: The Billiards Room** is richly panelled with exotic woods from Mars.

**J: Chief Steward's Office.**

**K: The larger outer Staterooms** are luxuriously appointed. Standard fittings include a telephone (linked to a system serving the Galley, Bridge, Bar, etc.), and a repeater device showing the liner's current position against a model of the Solar System, as calculated by the navigator and updated every few hours. Each can accommodate up to four passengers.

**K1: The Owner's Stateroom.** On the maiden flight this suite is reserved for the Marquis of Queensberry.

**K2: The Royal Stateroom.** Reserved for Mr. Hirikaya Nakimatura.

**L: The inner Staterooms** are smaller; each can accommodate two or three passengers. All fittings etc. are to the same high standards as the outer staterooms.

**L1: Reserved for Snel Asnuun**, the Prelate of Gaaryaan, and entourage.

**L2: Reserved for Dr W.G. Grace** and son.

**M: The passengers' Bathrooms** are lavishly equipped; there are tiles on the walls and floors, fittings are gold-plated, and hot water is available at all times. A striking contrast to some previous ships, which offered nothing more than a hip-bath!

**N: The WCs** are almost as luxurious as the bathrooms. An elaborate pumping and chemical processing system substitutes for sewers.

**O1-12: The Promenade Deck Cabins**, though little larger than those of any other ether flyer, are compact marvels of convenience. They will accommodate two passengers in comfort, and can be re-arranged to give a single passenger more space.

**O14-25: The Upper Deck Cabins** are an economical choice; a little less comfortable than those of the lower level, but still the equal of any other ship.

**P: The Promenades** provide a breath-taking view of the stars.

**Q: Crew's Quarters.**

**R: Petty Officer's Quarters.**

**S: Crew's Mess.**

**T: The main Engine Compartment** features the latest steam turbine generators and **U: Edison patent ether screw.** Speeds in excess of three million miles per day are anticipated!

**V: The Greenhouses** are decorative as well as useful. All provide a vital source of air and a useful supplement of fruit and vegetables, and include a selection of flowers from Earth and Mars. Recent developments in hydroponics are incorporated, dramatically improving the yield per square foot.

**W: Officers Accommodation.**

**X: The Sick Bay** is equipped for routine medical treatment, dentistry, and even light surgery.

**Y: Purser's Office.**

**Z: Strongroom.**

**AA: Kennels** for pets and other animals. Outfitted to the highest

standards, with full quarantine facilities.

**BB: Steerage.** Cabins 1 to 17. Affordable interplanetary transport.

**CC: Atmospheric Manouvering Screws** (on pylons outside main hull).

**DD: Baggage Store.**

**EE: Captain's Night Cabin.**

**FF: The Bridge,** incorporating **(GG)** Babbage 80-3-86 series astrogation

engine, **(HH)** chart room, **(II)** signals office, and **(JJ)** Captain's day cabin.

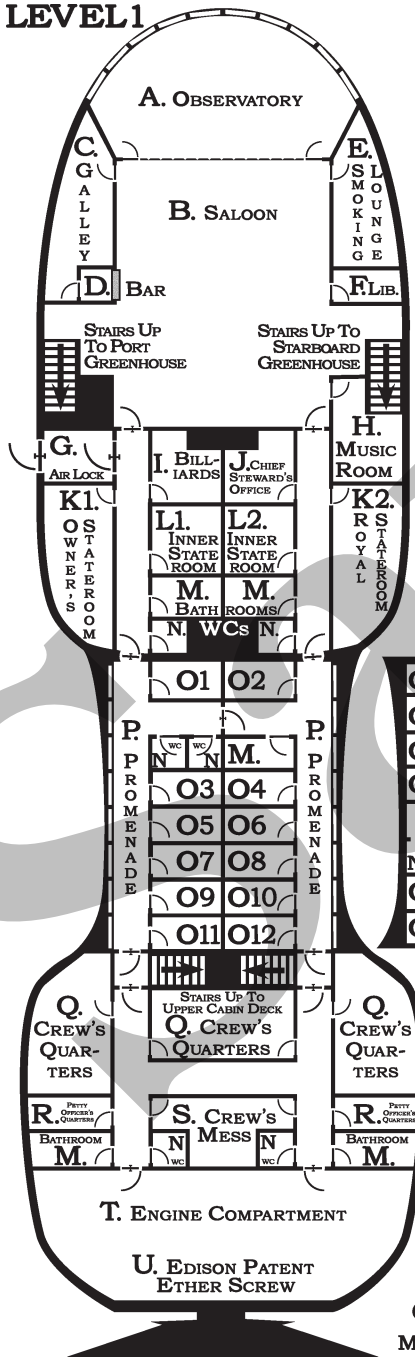
**KK: Solar Boiler Control Station.** The Solar Boiler uses an oval steel mirror, larger than that of any other craft outside military service. The main features are the hydraulic mirror azimuth control system, the mirror, with a surface area of 2010 square feet, the angled support pylon, with

steam and water lines, the hydraulic turntable, with coaxial pipe glands and the boiler pressure chamber.

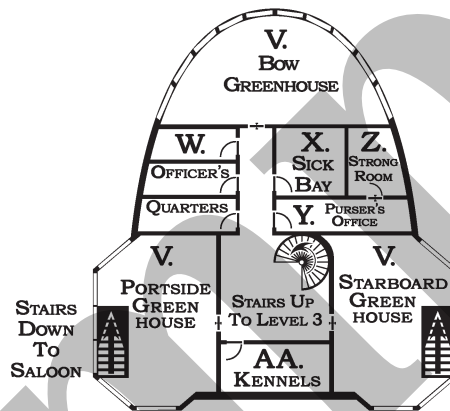
Under the command of Captain Nathaniel Bastable RNVR, the first flight of the *Princess Alexandra* will be an important landmark in the history of commercial ether flight. We wish all passengers, officers, and crew a happy and safe journey.

# THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

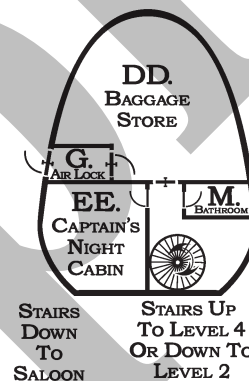
LEVEL 1



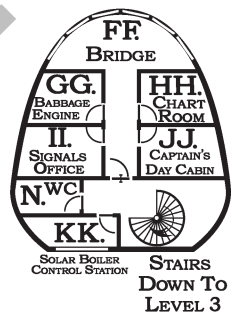
LEVEL 2



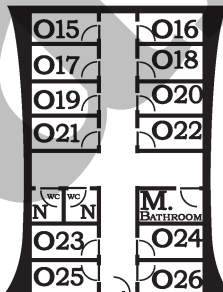
LEVEL 3



LEVEL 4



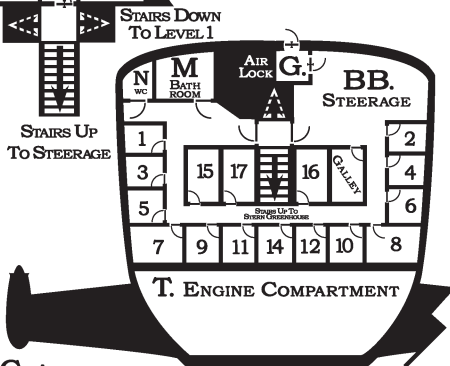
## UPPER CABIN DECK



- Spiral Staircase Down
- Spiral Staircase Up or Down
- Spiral Staircase Up
- Staircase Up
- Staircase Down
- Partition Door
- Airtight Door
- Glass Portals

Note that bulkhead areas are separated by airtight doors, and within that area all walls are partitions.

LEVEL 2



LEVEL 3



SCALE 1/32

Each segment equals 6 feet. One inch equals 32 feet.

### PASSENGER LIST

A few passengers are described. Several cabins have been left empty, enough for any reasonably-sized group of adventurers. However, the GM should try to give the impression that the ship is full to capacity. NPC (or player character) servants will probably be travelling in the upper passenger deck, or in stowage if they are real social outcasts. Unless otherwise indicated, all passengers are stock NPCs with the following characteristics:

**NPC Type:** Civilian

**Experience:** Trained/Experienced

**Marksman:** 2

**Attributes:** Mental

**Arms:** —

#### **K1: JOHN SHOLTO DOUGLAS, 8TH MARQUIS OF QUEENSBERRY**

Queensberry is most famous for formulating rules for legalized boxing. He has a fiery temper, and will not tolerate any real or imagined insult. He is taking his son on a trip to Mars, hoping that it will somehow "toughen the young idler."

**NPC Type:** Experienced Officer

#### **LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS**

Lord Alfred is an effeminate young man, an aesthete and friend of Oscar Wilde, and has no intention of being toughened.

They are accompanied by two servants.

#### **K2: MR. HIRAKAYA NAKIMATURA**

Nakimatura is a Japanese art collector, a wealthy businessman whose interests take him all over the world. He specialises in the Impressionists, but has interests in many other areas, and has recently decided to visit Mars and study the native arts. If he is shown the Amulet of Seldon, he won't be particularly interested; however, he will be very impressed by the "ephemeral art" of its liftwood box, and other fine carving and sculptures. He is always willing to

talk about the arts.

Because Nakimatura has legitimate reasons to travel almost anywhere, he occasionally acts as a courier for the Japanese Diplomatic Corps. On this journey he is carrying a cipher book for the Japanese legation in Parhoon. It is concealed in a locked trunk containing several dozen other books, all of them in Japanese, and there is nothing too obvious to distinguish it from the other volumes. At least half the books have no title on the cover, and even a Japanese speaker will take some time to find the code book. There is one easier way to find the book. All code books are weighted to allow easy disposal at sea, and this one is no exception. Although it is a small slim volume, with eighty edible rice paper pages, it weighs nearly a pound.

The code book is printed in tiny Japanese letters. Copying will take at least a hundred hours by hand, or four to six hours photographically; remember that almost all cameras currently use glass plates which require long exposures and must be changed after every shot, or extremely slow roll films.

Mr. Nakimatura speaks reasonable English and French, and dresses in Western clothing. He should be played as an experienced Merchant NPC.

#### **MRS MITSU NAKIMATURA**

Mrs. Nakimatura is a plump matron in her early forties. She speaks no languages apart from Japanese, and will rarely be seen outside the stateroom. Her presence poses an additional obstacle to anyone attempting to copy the code book. She wears traditional Japanese clothing.

#### **MISS MAI NAKIMATURA**

Their daughter Mai is seven years old, a pleasant child who speaks a little English and French, and will frequently be seen in the saloon and other public areas. She

also wears traditional Japanese clothing. Mai has a pet puppy, which is confined to the kennels. She will concoct an elaborate scheme to smuggle it back to her cabin, recruiting the help of any adult who seems sympathetic.

The family are accompanied by a maid, described below; she is also frequently in the stateroom, and poses an additional problem to anyone attempting to gain access to the book.

#### **L1: SNEEL ASNUUN, PRELATE OF GAARYAAN VOLAACE ZEENKEER**

This suite is still booked in Asnuun's name, though Zeenkeer is the only occupant. It will probably become the team's headquarters. There's room for several people to meet in comparative privacy, something that's lacking elsewhere aboard the ship.

#### **L2: DR W.G. GRACE W.G. GRACE JR.**

Many Britons think of Doctor William Gilbert Grace as a god-like figure. He is the greatest cricketer that ever lived. Grace is a bearded giant of a man, an eccentric who regards most forms of education with contempt, but is nevertheless a doctor with a thriving country practice. He has represented England in every cricket-playing country on Earth, and is now about to inaugurate cricket on Mars, by defending the wicket when the first ball is bowled at the newly-opened grounds in Parhoon. He and his son (also a gifted cricketer, though hardly in the Doctor's league) are travelling as guests of the White Star Line, which hopes to carry teams between planets once the game is established on Mars. Grace's skills aren't limited to cricket; he is also All-England Croquet Champion, and will wipe the floor with anyone stupid enough to take him on at darts, billiards, or any other



LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS & JOHN SHOLTO DOUGLAS - 8th MARQUIS of QUEENSBERRY

MR. HIRAKAYA NAKIMATURA

DR. W.G. GRACE & W.G. GRACE JR.

MISS MATILDA VAN CLEEF

PATRICK WENDLE MP

SIR ERIC THWAITE

CAPT. HUGH CRAMMOND VC, MC

PROF. OTTO STRABISMAS

FATHER A. J. MORIARTY

MR. HIRAM PRESSBURGER

HERR CARL HOFFMAN

CAPT. GORDON CARSTAIRS

LT. FRITZ KEMPF

LADY JANE EVANS

MISS CHARLOTTE GREEN

MR. GUSTAV PLANT  
MRS. RITA PLANT