

The Shambler

A Horticulturist's dream scenario

By Paul Gibbon

Hi, I'm Paul from Otley in West Yorkshire, and I'm a fanatical player of most GW games, having an Undead army for Warhammer and an Eldar army for Warhammer 40,000. In Necromunda I have two gangs, the 'Manic Street Preachers' who are Redemptionists and the 'Night Stalkers' which is a Spyrer hunting party.

This scenario is loosely based on that classic so-bad-it's-good monster flick 'From Hell it Came'. Through playtesting I decided that this scenario was balanced for moderately experienced gangs. If you

were thinking of using tougher, more experienced gangs then maybe you should consider having the Shambler awake from the start, or giving it a toughened skin armour save. One idea that I was toying with for the continuation of the story is for strange mutated plants to begin emerging in the territories the Shambler has visited. Then we could have an army of little Shamblers (get out those Dryad models!) on the loose!

Get your green fingers ready and commence gardening...

HIVE BOTTOM.

The two Ratskins crept through the sludge-tunnel, autoguns held at the ready. Slime coated every surface and there was smoke drifting up through grates and fissures in the walls and floor.

They emerged onto a small island which must have be on the very edge of the Great Sump lake. The island was barely more than a lump of slime-coated rubble with the only access from the pipe they had just clambered out of. It looked as though nobody had been in this part of the Hive for millennia. A noxious, stinking sludge sea extended in every direction, with mist rising up and curling over and around the pipes and vents.

'Brakar preserve us,' whispered Swooping Bat, glancing over to his comrade. Running Rat nodded. This place stank of bad spirits. But the fungi here must be worth a fortune.

They left the pipe mouth and advanced cautiously through the slime when Swooping Bat snagged his foot. He looked down. Strangler vines growing over their feet even as they watched. With a startled gasp of disgust,

Swooping Bat started kicking and stamping. 'The hive spirits!' gasped Running Rat, tearing the vines from his legs.

Running Rat looked around, the mist seemed to be thickening. He also noticed that although there was an abundance of strange plants down here, there seemed to be a lack of any other creatures, even sump-flies.

Suddenly there was a scream from behind him. Running Rat span round and his face paled in terror at the sight of Swooping Bat engulfed in Wireweed. As he watched helplessly, the flesh was ripped off of his tribal brother in seconds, leaving a macabre, grinning skeleton.

He ran. The pipe was no longer in sight, but he ran at where he thought it was. Then a figure loomed. Running Rat slipped and fell heavily. As the thing advanced, he could make it out more clearly than he would have wanted to. He screamed, and loosed off a burst of gunfire...

The Gigantic Spider heard the faint echoes of screams as it nosed around the pipe entrance. Then it heard clunking sounds, as if something was trying to drag a vast bulk into a small pipe, and was succeeding. The noises came closer...



The Manic Street Preachers before their next gig

If you go down to the Sump today...

A horrific, mutated, semi-sentient form of plantlife, the Shambler has emerged from the Sump after being disturbed. Since encountering some tasty morsels the Shambler is now on the move, looking for a place to set root where the food source is good. Unfortunately this food source happens to be the player's gangs!

Roll a D66 on either terrain chart to find out what kind of territory the Shambler has picked to put down roots in.

Then draw up a list of every gang in your group or campaign that has one or

more of that particular type of territory. Select one of these at random – this is the territory to be attacked by the Shambler. The gang in question whose territory is about to acquire a most unpleasant squatter must fight the Shambler to prevent it taking over the territory. If they succeed, then they manage to keep it. If, of course, they fail then the Shambler has put down roots and will set about draining the soil and depriving anyone in the local vicinity of their flesh! The gang will be pushed out, and lose the territory.

TERRAIN

Set up the standard terrain

between the two players in the normal manner. The Shambler is then set up in the middle of the table, and each gang deploys as per the scenario: *Gang Fight* (page 153 main rulebook). When this is done, the the Arbitrator may place up to 150 points worth of vegetation. This includes *Rubber Moss*, *Spine Crystals*, *Wire Weed*, *Gas Fungus* and *Brain Leaves* (the seriously twisted could deploy 150 points of Rubber Moss – boing!). The Shambler may ignore this fellow plant life when moving.

The plants can be represented with squares of paper, and must be at least 8" away from gang members.



The Night Stalkers are caught posing again...

From the Sump it Came... 'The Shambler'

The Shambler is a gigantic vegetative organism, which began life as a harmless tree, but sucked up some very dubious chemicals from the Sump and mutated developing a malign form of intelligence. It has emerged from the Sump driven by the need for nutrition.

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
3+D3	6	-	6	-	7	1	3	-

WEAPONS: Huge branch-like claws and vines

SKILLS: *None.*

PSYCHOLOGY: Immune to all Psychology.

BOUNTY: D6 for each ganger taken Out of Action and D3x5 for each territory destroyed.

SPECIAL RULES:

Combat: The Shambler is armed with massive branch-like claws that cause D3 damage. In addition, it is impossible to *Parry* against the attacks of the Shambler.

Brainless: The Shambler does not have a brain in the normal animal sense (being a plant!) it is however considered to possess a malign instinct. It will therefore automatically pass all Leadership or Initiative tests that it has to make. If it needs to roll to see if it is knocked off the edge of a platform/walkway, roll less than the Strength of the attacking weapon on 2D6 to do so successfully. In addition, it is unaffected by any Wyrd powers that work on the mind, such as *Mental Assault*, *Mind Control* and *Hallucinations*.



WAKEY WAKEY...

The Shambler begins the game in a dormant state. Roll 1D6 each time one of the following events occurs to see if it wakes up:

- A ganger is hit or takes a Flesh wound (Ow!) 6+ to awaken.
- A ganger goes man down or out (Aargh!) 4+ to awaken.
- A ganger runs or climbs a ladder. 6+ to awaken.
- A weapon is fired. 6+ to awaken (roll once per turn and not for each weapon that is fired).
- A heavy weapon is fired. 4+ to awaken (roll once per turn and not for each weapon that is fired).
- A weapon hits the Shambler. 2+ to awaken (roll each time this occurs).
- A plant is hit. 5+ to awaken.

The Arbitrator controls the Shambler. However, if it is reduced to 1 or 2 Wounds, it will head immediately for the nearest table edge and will try and leave the board. If it does this, it is considered to be driven off.

THE AFTERMATH

If the gang who owns the territory fails to destroy or drive off the Shambler, then the territory is drained, and counts as Wastes from now on. The original owners get it back (lucky them!) and the greedy great Triffid moves on in search of pastures new. Roll again to find where the Shambler attacks next. It will carry on until it is stopped.

If the Shambler is driven off,

the gang regains the territory which remains unchanged, but the Shambler will continue on the rampage as above.

If the gang destroys the Shambler they regain the territory and a bounty of D6 creds for every ganger taken *Out of Action* so far, and D3x5 creds for every territory the Shambler has destroyed so far. Compile this total after each fight, and round it up to the nearest 10. Outlaws will not receive this reward, but will be pardoned for their good work.

EXPERIENCE

- D6 **Survives.** If a fighter survives the battle then D6 points are earned. Even fighters who are wounded and taken *Out of Action* receive experience for taking part.
- D6 **Surviving close combat with the Shambler.**
- 5 **Per Wounding Hit.** (A fighter earns 5 points for each wounding hit he inflicts during the battle (either against a rival gang or against the Shambler). Although a fighter will earn only 5 points for wounding a ganger regardless of actually how many wounds he causes he will receive 5 points for each wound that he causes on the Shambler.
- +15 **Destroying the Shambler by shooting.**
- +30 **Destroying the Shambler in close combat.** After all this is a far more insane venture.

{The Shambler continued...}

Movement: Roll a D3 and add 3 before each movement phase. This is the Shamblers movement. It is doubled if it runs or charges, in the normal way.

Fear: Ratskins regard the Shambler as a fearsome manifestation of the Hive Spirits. For everyone else, the fact that it is big, mean and extremely dangerous does just as good a job. The Shambler therefore causes *Fear*.

Massive: If the Shambler is in contact with a man-sized model at the end of a close combat phase, it may move 2" in the same way as a follow-up move with no penalty to either side. The Shambler has used its bulk to simply push its opponent out the way.

In addition, the Shambler counts as a large target with +1 modifier to hit from shooting.

Plantlife: Owing to the unique way in which the Shambler is composed normal weaponry has very little effect on it.

- All hits from weapons need a 6' to wound regardless of the Strength, including damage from falling. Close combat hits from Chainswords, Massive swords or axes or Power weapons need 5+, any other close combat weapons need 6+ and heat-based hits such as Flamers, Meltaguns and Pyromaniac Wyrd powers need a 4+ Roll for damage as normal.
- If the Shambler catches fire, continued fire hits will need a 6+ to wound. In addition, the Shambler becomes subject to *Frenzy* all the time it is on fire.
- Do not roll for the effects of Wounds – the Shambler is killed outright if it is reduced to zero Wounds.
- The Shambler is never pinned. In addition, the Shambler is immune to *Scare*, *Hallucinogen*, *Tox* and *Choke grenades*, as it does not breathe as such.

MODELLING YOUR SHAMBLER

During playtesting I found it convenient to use a Treeman model from the Warhammer Wood Elf range of miniatures to represent the Shambler. I am, however working on a proper conversion for use in my campaign which sadly wasn't quite ready for this article (poo!).

I have based my Shambler on the Durthu Treeman special

character model from the same Wood Elf range. I will be modelling plenty of Underhive industrial waste on it to give it that 'Swamp Thing' 'From the Sump it Came' look. I intend to really go to work on it with modelling putty (green stuff is about the best) to create vines and branches and then litter the base with broken pipes, weapons and other 'tech-stuff'. When it's done you can be sure that I'll send it in...