

ETHERSCOPE

the GREAT METROPOLIS



A SETTING SOURCEBOOK

Created by
Nigel McClelland and Ben Redmond

The Great Metropolis

Industry, Oppression and Corruption

In a world of out-of-control technology where every city chokes on its own filth, one city showcases the extremes. Smokier than London, more corrupt than New York, more productive than Detroit and seedier than Amsterdam, this true megacity supports a population of over 100 million people. Welcome to The Great Metropolis.

Do you accept the challenge?

It is a city of smoke-charred brick, streets packed with wagons, and skies black with bloated cargo zeppelins. A city where corrupt officials grow rich as the workers suffer; a city bled dry by punishing taxes. This is a city on the edge of chaos – and a city of hope, where heroes are forged from the scraps of society. Revolutionaries threaten London's rule, tab-jammers and Scope riders flood Etherspace from ruined slums, and secret societies battle the ether demons. Can you rise to become a hero in the city that is quintessentially Etherscope?



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ETHERSCOPE

THE GREAT METROPOLIS

*This book is dedicated to the cities of Manchester and Liverpool.
Dirty, crazy and bad enough to inspire the creation of Etherscope.*

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CONTENTS

THE GREAT METROPOLIS	1	Tameside	31
CREDITS	1	Trafford	32
INTRODUCTION	7	Warrington	32
HARGREAVES	7	Wigan	32
WELCOME TO THE GREAT METROPOLIS	7	Makerfield	33
CHAPTER I: HISTORY	11	THE GREAT METROPOLIS SEWER KINGDOMS	33
LIVERPOOL	11	The Black Dot	34
MANCHESTER	12	The Kingdom of Drudgney	34
THE GREAT METROPOLIS	13	Georgetown	36
CHAPTER II: BOROUGHES	17	Hades' Gate	37
LIVERPOOL BOROUGHES	17	New Dresden	38
Liverpool	17	The Duchy of Raymond Faulk	38
Chinatown	18	CHAPTER III: FACTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS	41
Great Docklands	18	THE CORPORATION OF THE GREAT METROPOLITAN ESTATE	41
Pierhead	19	CRAFTSMEN'S GUILDS	43
Ellesmere Port	19	The Association of Licensed Scriveners	43
Neston	20	The Brotherhood of Liverpool Dockworkers	45
Halton	20	The Society of British Mechanics and Repairists	46
Knowsley	21	INDUSTRY	47
Huyton	22	The Metropolitan Venture Corporation	47
Saint Helens	22	PanoptiCorp	49
Newton-Haydock	22	Ironwheel Secure Transport	50
Sefton	23	METROPOLIS CONSTABULARY	54
The Wirral	23	THE GREAT METROPOLIS SEWER KINGDOMS	57
Hoylake	24	The Black Dot	57
MANCHESTER BOROUGHES	24	Bugsy Bob's Courier Service	59
Manchester	25	The Cerberus Society	60
Ancoats	25	The DKR	61
Castlefield	26	The Georgetown Industrial Guild	62
Ringway	27	Ratpacks	64
Bolton	27	THE NORTHUMBRIAN REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT	65
Farnworth	28	ORGANISED CRIME	67
Bury	28	The Koyekh Gang	69
Valleys	28	The Old Boys	70
Oldham	29	The United Sky Triad	70
Rochdale	29	STREET GANGS	72
Salford	29		
Charlestown	30		
Stockport	30		

Bartleby Collin's Boys	72	The Old Boys	96
The Merry Widows	72	The Sewer Kingdoms	96
The Red Mollies	73	US Agents	96
Other Street Gangs	76	GOVERNMENT	97
The Easies	76	The Corporation of the	
The Hatchets and Squabs	76	Great Metropolitan Estate	97
The Smiling Jacks	76	The Association of Licensed Scriveners	97
The Southside Sackmen	77	Industry	97
SCOPE GANGS	77	The Metropolis Constabulary	98
The Farradays	77	The Northumbrian Republican Movement	98
The Green Angels	79	The Old Boys	98
The Phantom Huntsmen	82	The Sewer Kingdoms	98
SECRET SOCIETIES	82	US Agents	99
The Ancoats Historical Society	82	INDUSTRY	99
The Brotherhood of the Worker	84	Industry	100
The Mass Heresy	85	The Metropolis Constabulary	100
Society for the Preservation and		The Northumbrian Republican Movement	101
Advancement of the Emerald Rose	86	The Old Boys	101
US AGENTS	87	The Sewer Kingdoms	101
		The Society of British Mechanics and Repairists	101
CHAPTER IV: POLITICS		CHAPTER V: CHARACTER	103
AND CURRENT EVENTS	91	COMBAT STYLES	103
CIVICS	91	Alley Wolf	103
The Corporation of the		Def Fu	104
Great Metropolitan Estate	91	NRM Guerrilla Combat	104
The Brotherhood of		Ratfighting	105
Liverpool Dockworkers (Shadow Guild)	91	Street Gunner	106
The Metropolis Constabulary	92	FEATS	107
The Northumbrian Republican Movement	92	Advanced Razor Fiend	107
The Sewer Kingdoms	92	Combat Bluff	107
COUNTERCULTURE	92	Extraordinary	107
Industry	92	Improved Razor Fiend	107
The Metropolis Constabulary	93	Nondescript	108
The Northumbrian Republican Movement	93	Razor Fiend	108
The Sewer Kingdoms	93	Scope Fighter	108
US Agents	94	Sewer Kingdoms Weapons Proficiency	108
CRIME	94	Sludgerunner	108
The Brotherhood of		Tunnel Runner	108
Liverpool Dockworkers (Shadow Guild)	94	Vermin's Voice	108
Industry	94	ADVANCED CLASSES	108
The Koyekh Gang	95	Agitator	109
The Metropolis Constabulary	95	Game Rule Information	109
The Northumbrian Republican Movement	95	Class Features	109

Cabbie	110
Game Rule Information	110
Class Features	111
Jacktar	111
Game Rule Information	112
Class Features	112
Scally	112
Game Rule Information	113
Class Features	113
PRESTIGE CLASS	114
Ancoats Historical Society Associate	114
Game Rule Information	114
Class Features	114
EQUIPMENT	115
New Armour	115
New Vehicles	116
NEW CYBERNAUGHTICS	117
Changeable Face	117
Drug Release System	117
Flexible Joints	118
Heat-Resistant Skin	118
Integrated Equipment	118
Upgrade: Integrated Equipment (Arm)	118
Upgrade: Integrated Equipment (Hand)	119
Keen Sight (upgrade for cybernaughtic eyes)	119
Protected Vitals	119
CHAPTER VI: ADVENTURES	121
TRIPLE CROSS	121
Adventure Background	121
Getting the Characters Involved	121
Scene 1: The Museum of Mystical History	122
Mr. Friendly	122
Scene 2: The Sewer Kingdoms	123
Crocodiles	123
Ratpacks	124
Patrols	124
Scene 3: Georgetown	125
Georgetown Industrial Guild	126
The Bowler Hats	127
The Mass Heresy	127
Scene 4: Etherspace	128
The Neon Flamingo	128
Scene 5: Bringing It All Together	129
Branson and the	
Georgetown Industrial Guild	129
Serena Townsend and the Mass Heresy	130
The Bowler Hat Collective	131

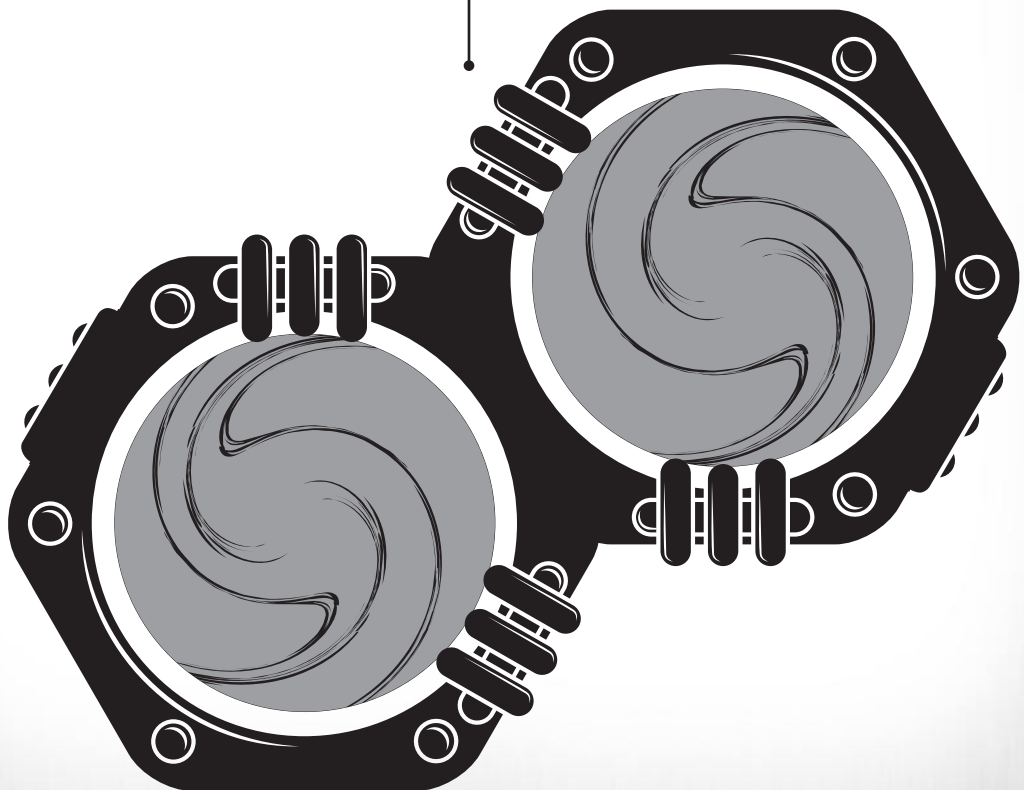
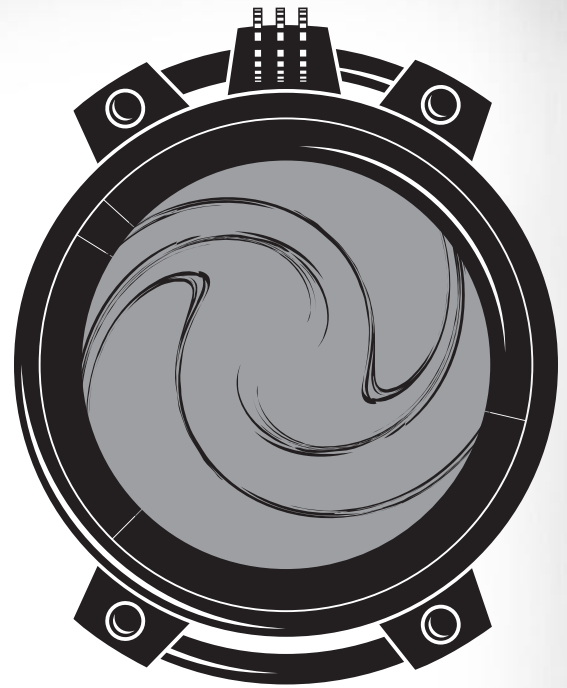
Brian Rice and the Location of the Etherfold Synthesiser	131
Conclusion	131
SIN	132
Adventure Background	132
Getting the Characters Involved	133
Key Factions	133
Scene 1: Police Station	134
What the Police Know	134
Scene 2: The Morgue	135
Scene 3: Jonathan Wilson's Flat	135
Scenario 4: Other Flats and Murder Scenes	136
Scene 5: Warehouse (EL 5)	137
Rodger Freeland	138
Mooks	138
Scene 6: Abandoned Mansion (EL 7) (Scenario A Conclusion)	138
Scene 7: Diana's Den (EL 6) (Scenario B Conclusion)	140
Diana Jones	140
Conclusion	140

APPENDIX ONE: LEGAL INFORMATION	141
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TABLES

Table 5–1: Alley Wolf Stance Feats	103
Table 5–2: Alley Wolf Manoeuvres	103
Table 5–3: Def Fu Stance Feats	104
Table 5–4: Def Fu Manoeuvres	104
Table 5–5: NRM Guerrilla Combat Stance Feats	105
Table 5–6: NRM Guerrilla Combat Manoeuvres	105
Table 5–7: Ratfighting Stance Feats	106
Table 5–8: Technique Name Manoeuvres	106
Table 5–9: Street Gunner Stance Feats	106
Table 5–10: Street Gunner Manoeuvres	106
Table 5–11: Vermin’s Voice DCs	109
Table 5–12: The Agitator	109
Table 5–13: The Cabbie	111
Table 5–14: The Jacktar	112
Table 5–15: The Scally	113
Table 5–16: Ancoats Historical Society Associate	114
Table 5–17: New Armour	116
Table 5–18: New Vehicles	116
Table 5–19: New Cybernaughtic Apps	118





INTRODUCTION

HARGREAVES

James William Hargreaves surveyed his empire.

Not literally, of course — an empire of five different companies, with a total of twenty-five factories, eighteen warehouses, over four hundred shops in locations around the world and over two million employees, that would be an impossible task. Yet here, in the Scope, he could survey the machinery that crunched the data for the entirety of his commercial interests. It was a vast warehouse, bigger than anything physically possible to build outside of the Scope. The huge room was filled with all apparatuses of industry, from gargantuan machinery of raw processing power to the simple filing and ordering systems. Paper — or what passed in the Scope for paper — whizzed through the air, flying in streams from cabinet to cabinet, file to file; sorting and ordering every document of his entire empire.

This was where Hargreaves belonged, the true hub of his business. He felt alive in the Scope, more powerful than his saggy, overweight frame could allow him back in the Prime Reality. Here in the Scope he was swift, resilient, and mighty. Subconsciously, he rubbed the back of his neck, his skin unbroken by the small brass ring of his Scope jack implant. It irritated him constantly in the Prime — he was always scratching at the skin around its rim, although he considered it a small price to pay.

As the slight disorientation of Scope entry cleared from his mind, he took in his surroundings in more detail. It was a familiar sight. Every time he jacked in from his office Scope point, he found himself here. An array of portals was displayed in front of him, linking to every factory and warehouse under his command. The office itself floated over the centre of the processing house, allowing him a clear view of every machine.

Having completed his first quick survey of his empire, Hargreaves sat back in his plush leather chair and his attention fell on the desk. The usual pile of internal memoranda and Scope letters awaited his attention. He skimmed through the first five or six, trifling irrelevancies. He merely logged the facts in his cast-iron memory and continued on. However, one document caught his eye. With a bellowed curse, his avatar flashed out of existence as he jacked out of the Scope.

The paper drifted gently to the floor of his office. The words on it were big and bold:

**SECURITY BREACH: ETHERSCOPE WEAPONS
DEPARTMENT, LABORATORY 17ALPHA**

WELCOME TO THE GREAT METROPOLIS

Welcome to the Great Metropolis, the largest, most populous, and most industrialised city on earth. The wonders and horrors of the etheric age are on display for all to see in the Great Metropolis, from the squalid, densely packed slums that house its vast workforce, human and transgenic alike, to the luxurious estates of the industrialists and aristocrats who govern the city. Industry dominates the Great Metropolis' life and its docks, warehouses and transportation systems ceaselessly operate, channelling the resources of the British Empire throughout the city, generating wealth faster than any other place on earth. Exploitation and corruption are rife in the city at all levels of society, and the profits of criminal organisations match those of the wealthiest industrialists. Inequality is another feature of life in the Great Metropolis; not surprisingly, rich and vibrant countercultures have grown up in the shadows of the streets and alleys in defiance of the social order, a process enhanced by the rich ethnic diversity of the city. For good or ill, no place in existence better captures the meaning and nature of the Etherscope world than the Great Metropolis.

The Great Metropolis is a city of contrasts. The ruling elite industrialists, aristocrats, and governors of the city live within isolated, secure compounds enjoying the extravagant luxuries and technological wonders their wealth affords them. The middle classes provide the administration and bureaucracy that keeps the city operating. Whilst these classes enjoy the security and protection of the authorities, they lack the opportunities for wealth and luxury available to the elite. The middle classes must be content with the relative security, wealth, services, and responsibility their dedication to work and support of the status quo brings them. The metropolis' working classes form the majority of its population and receive the least benefit from the role they play in making the city function. Without their labour, industry would grind to a halt. However, transgenics provide a willing, undemanding workforce for the city's industry, and beta humans must accept the same conditions or be without even a meagre means of survival. Little is available to the working classes in terms of wealth, services or technology, other than what they can make for themselves.

The northern industrialists, in spite of their wealth and their role in the city's great prosperity, possess little real power or social standing. They resent the rule of London over their city and the exorbitant taxes that are levied against them. As a result, Republicanism and revolution hang in the air and many

businessmen secretly support the Northumbrian Republican Movement's quest for independence, always aware of the severe penalties such actions would bring if discovered. All levels of society find themselves caught up in the shadowy war between the CIA and its attempts to foster another revolt in the Great Metropolis and MI5's ruthless quest to eliminate this threat. Violence and tension are daily facts of life among the working classes. As huge areas of the city are left without law enforcement, a street culture has evolved where the fittest survive. Disaffected youths abandon all social norms and form gangs that viciously fight for prestige and territory, while terrorising those who simply crave a semblance of normality. Criminal organisations seek to control the lucrative smuggling, Scope tab, and black market technology markets that flourish in the city's lower districts. A whole class of specialist operatives, such

as street mercenaries and Scope riders, with a street culture of their own have flourished in this environment and can earn a healthy, if risky, living serving government, industrial, or criminal factions in covert operations. Racial and ethnic tensions also divide many groups within the Great Metropolis and lead to hostilities. Caught in-between many of the city's factions are the middle classes, who most feel the pressure to preserve the degree of stability the city needs to function.

Counterculture is the Great Metropolis' truly vibrant characteristic. Tab tripping is prevalent among the lower classes as a means to escape their harsh existence, despite its illegality. Youth music, art, and fashion have grown to symbolise the dissatisfaction of youth against society, and much of this culture is positive and empowering, offering an alternative to the nihilistic futility of gang membership and culture,

although the two areas frequently overlap. Likewise, not all the city's street culture is mercenary. Many street mercs and Scope riders seek a better future and use their skills to fight and counter the plans of criminals or the authorities and create a more egalitarian future. The blending of ethnic groups and human strains has led to new forms of expression and identity that make the Great Metropolis truly unique. Combined with the constant activity of the city, these factors create a sense of energy and activity unmatched by any other city on Earth.

This supplement enables players and GMs alike to understand, use, and enjoy the wonders and horrors of the Great Metropolis. The book is organised as follows.

Chapter 1: History: This chapter explains the history of the original cities of Liverpool and Manchester that form the heart of the Great Metropolis



and the history of the Great Metropolis from its inception to the present. This background provides an understanding of how the Great Metropolis has reached its prominent position at the heart of the British Empire and the unique attitudes and ideas of its people.

Chapter 2: Boroughs: This chapter provides a detailed breakdown of the physical structure of the Great Metropolis, descriptions of the peoples and cultures that make up the city and insight into how the city functions as a whole. Throughout this chapter, GM character sidebars are provided, giving examples of typical citizens.

Chapter 3: Factions and Organizations: This chapter details a history of the major groups affecting life in the Great Metropolis, their resources, agendas, and areas of influence. GM character sidebars provide details of some of the Great Metropolis' signifi-

cant citizens and the role they play in the city.

Chapter 4: Politics and Current Events: This chapter explores the distribution of power and control within the Great Metropolis, the major events taking place within the city, and their effect on day-to-day life.

Chapter 5: Character: This chapter offers new rules materials particularly appropriate to the Great Metropolis setting for use in an **Etherscope** game. This section offers new advanced and prestige classes, cybernaughtics, feats, occult powers, fighting techniques, and vehicles.

Chapter 6: Adventure: This chapter equips GMs with adventure material set in the Great Metropolis. The first section, "Triple Cross," is a fully detailed adventure. The second

section, "Sin," provides an adventure toolkit equipping GMs with guidance on how to create adventures suited to the Great Metropolis setting.

