

Dave Farquhar
1955 - 2004

Dave Farquhar died in June following a respiratory illness that baffled even the top doctors. These words, even a month on, still create a sense of unreality. For me, Dave played two roles, often interlinked: he was a best mate, and probably did far more for our hobby than any of us know. He also pretty much saved my life in 1997, and secured me my first professional game design work, so perhaps you can forgive the emotional and personal tone of what follows.

To be honest, I couldn't tell you exactly how I met Dave, though it was in 1991. He was just suddenly there, as a Sumo subscriber who wrote to ask if he could review a game – *Asterix*, as I recall. From that point on, I couldn't get rid of him. He wrote regularly, and well, for Sumo and later for Counter. He famously orchestrated the first Reiner Knizia interview in English, easily one of the most popular pieces in Sumo's history. He kept writing, and phoning. We met for lunches, or at Esdevium, we played Joe Balkoski's wargames, we would go (in awe) to playtest at Reiner's Windsor flat. We hit it off.

Inevitably, Dave became a regular at SumoCons – the 14 hour, multi player Sunday game sessions where more food and drink were consumed than strictly necessary, and where we played a seemingly endless

succession of new German games, American epics and, ultimately, CCGs. Dave invariably had an interesting viewpoint, and pulled no punches, which always affected my subsequent reviews. And it was Dave alone who would still be chatting long into the night, both of us too wired for sleep, enthused (or sometimes numbed) by the experiences of the day. Often we would not sleep at all, Dave driving carefully back to Hook and me making notes, and yet we'd still be discussing the games at our respective offices on Monday morning.

This decadence continued for almost ten years, tailing off as Dave's workload increased, Sumo folded and my enthusiasm for games wilted. While both our domestic situations have meant we have seen little of each other for a couple of years, I always worked on the basis Dave would be there when we both had the time to meet again. I reasonably assumed he would always be around, and for considerably longer than I would be. How wrong that was.

Then there is Dave's largely unseen work in the games field. He should receive most credit for his extensive playtesting and thematic enhancement of Reiner Knizia's designs over the last decade, which contribution cannot be underestimated. Progressively, Dave became a key member of the Windsor development team, and in Reiner's words was a 'trusted supporter'. Among many achievements, he

wrote the plot synopsis and fought for narrative fidelity in *Lord of the Rings*, and was responsible for the entire background setting of *Blue Moon*, testing its many card permutations daily for over a year.

Dave often confided in me that, as much as he loved his career in audit and IT, he would like to work full time as a game developer. That this came partially to fruition, and that he evidently had such a spread of talents, and commitment to them all, is largely unsurprising. Somehow he also managed to be a great family man, hillwalker, artist, and a devoted evangelist, running games evenings and lunches for anyone interested.

During his life, and in the last few weeks, many good things were said about Dave. And they are all true. He was a gentleman, kind, generous and always willing to help others. He had a fervent passion for the English landscape, which translated into his excellent watercolour paintings; I am very proud to own one. His enthusiasm for life, for prog rockers Camel, for games, football and matters Tolkien, knew no bounds. There was a sharp sense of humour behind that quiet, laconic exterior, and he easily made

many friends – 150 people turned out for his funeral, and Reiner delivered a fitting personal tribute.

I will remember Dave sitting opposite me, planning his next lay in *Middle Earth: The Wizards*, a game which probably came closest to gaming nirvana for the two of us. That this is never to be repeated leaves me sad, but remembering him brings me nothing but positive memories. Dave was a special man, he was my friend, and it was an honour to know him.

Mike Siggins