

Cthulhu Britannica

Avalon

The County of Somerset



A 1920s' Reference for Call of Cthulhu
by Paul 'Wiggy' Wade-Williams

CALL of
HORROR ROLEPLAYING
CTHULHU

-Credits-

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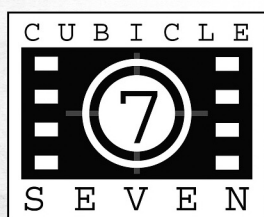
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- Introduction -

The county of Somerset lies in the English West Country. To its north lies Gloucestershire, in the east it borders Wiltshire and Dorset, and to the southwest it abuts Devon. A green and pleasant land steeped in millennia of history, folklore and superstition, it is often overlooked by investigators as being little more than a rural backwater, good for nothing except strong cider and tall tales passed down the generations.

It is true that the myths of Somerset concern themselves with dragons and giants, witches and the Devil, ghosts and goblins. But these tales are modern retellings of much older and far darker events, for Somerset boasts powerful, ancient and still very active ties to the Cthulhu Mythos. The witchcraft cults of Shub Niggurath have worshipped here since before the heavy tread of Roman sandals echoed through the hills and valleys. The blood of the deep ones has flowed through the vein of families dwelling on the boggy Somerset Levels since the thawing of the last ice sheets, the greatest scion of that accursed interbreeding being none other than King Arthur.

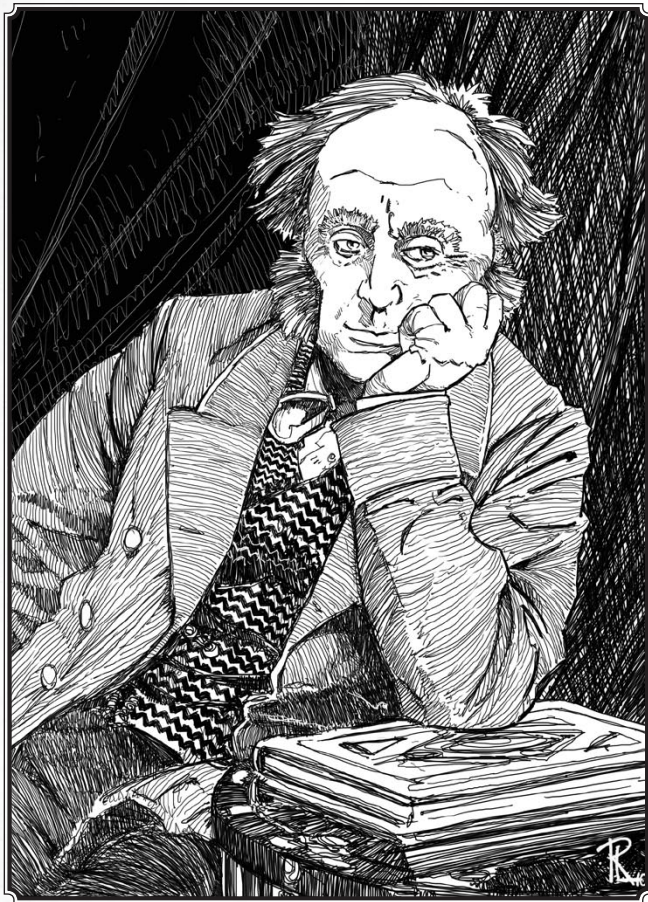
Ghouls haunt the stygian caves that run through limestone plateaus, having dined on human flesh for thousands of years. At night the flapping of wings, shadowy figures and peculiar buzzing signifies the appearance of dread beasts like shantaks and nightgaunts, called forth by sorcerers and warlocks to perform terrible deeds.

This sourcebook takes a look behind the green veil of Somerset's hills and forests, providing the keeper with the material he needs to run a game in Avalon, the legendary seat of King Arthur.

Though written by a Somerset-born author proud of his county and its rich folklore, this supplement is first and foremost a sourcebook for the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game and thus should be considered a work of fiction rather than an accurate study of the county. Where necessary certain details have been altered or added to provide stimulating game play.



Professor Noah Ainley-Chant



Two works, both penned by Professor Noah Ainley-Chant, were instrumental to the writing of this sourcebook. The first, *Legends and Myths of Avalon*, is a collection of three slim folios, while the second, *Beneath the Green Veil*, is little more than a collection of notes.

Ainley-Chant was a man who neither sought nor earned public recognition, and few details about his life have been uncovered. Born in Yorkshire around 1846, he studied at Oxford University before moving to Bath in 1876. It is known from surviving papers in the author's possession that he developed an interest in the occult during his Oxford days. Fragmentary scribbles in a diary make passing mention to Cthaat Aquadingen, the copy Ainley-Chant read likely being that held in the British Museum, and the Ponape Scripture.

Between 1879 and 1890 Ainley-Chant spent much of his time exploring Somerset, paying special interest in its many myths and legends and eventually publishing

several small folios on the subject. Toward the end of this period the scholar was noted as becoming more eccentric and withdrawn. In 1894 he used the small income from his books to purchase a cottage on the windswept cliffs overlooking the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary close to the town of Weston-Super-Mare.

Professor Ainley-Chant was reported missing on January 23, 1897. The last witness to see him alive reported seeing the professor an hour before dusk on January 20 heading toward the cliffs. It was well-known that Ainley-Chant regularly walked the coastal path at night in all weathers. The police found the cottage locked and in good order, prompting an exhaustive search of the cliffs and coast. A coat, later identified as that of the scholar, was found on the cliff top several miles from his cottage but there was no sign of the academic. A coroner's inquest determined that the scholar had either fallen or been swept into the sea, for a ferocious storm had risen suddenly and battered the coast that night.

In 1899 Ainley-Chant was officially pronounced dead. With no known family to collect his belongings, the meager contents of his cottage were sold at auction. Among his many papers was the incomplete manuscript of *Beneath the Green Veil*. It ends with the cryptic phrase, 'I have heard their call and shall answer them soon'.

The only copy of *Beneath the Green Veil* lay in Taunton Museum, where Mr. Wade-Williams first read it in 2003. It has since disappeared.



Avalon: The County of Somerset
History

-History-

Beneath the greens and blues of Somerset's verdant fields and burbling rivers there is a red stain. Over the millennia the Celts, Romans, Vikings, Saxons and English have all shed blood in this ancient county. Largely invisible to the naked eye, there is another stain, a more insidious one, which flows unseen across the landscape. This is the dark taint of pagan gods, witchcraft and devilry, and the cults of the Cthulhu Mythos.

In the text which follows, italicized paragraphs beginning 'NAC:' indicate entries from Professor Ainley-Chant's unfinished work, *Beneath the Green Veil*.

Talkin' Loik a Lo'al



The Somerset dialect owes much to the Late West Saxon Germanic tongue. While the dialect is more English in origin than that of Cornwall, it retains many peculiarities and idiosyncrasies no longer present in modern English.

When acting the role of a local, the keeper should pay particular attention to local patterns of speech and phrases. Doing so helps the players get more into their roles, as well as highlighting the linguistic barrier that separates locals from outsiders.

Here are a few simple rules – they do not cover every nuance but they are enough to get you started.

First, it is important to speak slowly, with lengthened words. West Country dialects have long been prejudiced against, with speakers considered uneducated and slightly retarded individuals. While the dialect is often parodied in the movies as being the way pirates speak, the Somerset accent is much softer. Do not be afraid to speak like a pirate if you must but do not turn all your NPCs into comical characters with exaggerated accents or any atmosphere that you have built up around the table will evaporate.

Second, use of the verb 'to be' should always be spoken incorrectly. A Somerset man says 'I/he/it be' not 'I am' or 'he/it is.' Typically 'be' should always replace 'is,' such as in, 'It be that way.'

Third, 's' is pronounced as 'z.' Thus one comes from Zummerzet, calls social betters 'zur,' and one 'zez' something was true rather than says it was true.

Local Words and Phrases

Below is a short list of sample words and phrases investigators are likely to encounter on their travels across the county.

Somerset	Translation/Notes
<i>A-went</i>	Gone, 'Oi'd never a-went dat way 'cross the moors.'
<i>Acker</i>	Friend, as in "ow's me old acker?"
<i>Alright my luvver</i>	Common greeting issued regardless of gender and implying no sexual connotations
<i>Anywhen</i>	At any time
<i>Arr</i>	Yes, often proceeded by 'Ooh'
<i>Back along</i>	Some undefined point in the recent past
<i>Bain't</i>	Is not, as in 'That bain't roit'
<i>Chinny reckon</i>	What a load of old codswallop/I do not believe a word of what you are saying
<i>Comical</i>	Strange or peculiar
<i>Coupie</i>	Crouch
<i>Cuggy pig, dandy granfer</i>	A woodlouse
<i>Drangway</i>	Unmetalled road or country lane
<i>Dun 'er</i>	Don't you, as in 'Ee be needin' a drink, dun 'er?'
<i>'Ee</i>	You, shortened from 'thee'
<i>Emmet, grockle</i>	Derogatory term for a visitor, such as an investigator
<i>Et</i>	That, referring to an object
<i>Gurt</i>	Adjective meaning 'very' and always used when referring to something large, such as 'Ar, 'twere a gurt big wurm, I sees.'
<i>Hark</i>	Listen, as in 'Hark a' 'ee'
<i>Hinkypunk</i>	A will-o'-the-wisp
<i>It be a tidy ways</i>	It is many miles from here
<i>Poached</i>	Churned, referring specifically to ground such as fields
<i>Proper job</i>	That was a fine piece of work
<i>Reckon so</i>	You're probably right
<i>Roit</i>	Right
<i>Scag</i>	To tear or catch, such as an item of clothing
<i>The other day</i>	Some point in the last few years
<i>Where's it to?</i>	Where is it?
<i>Where's 'ee going to?</i>	Where are you headed?
<i>Wooden</i>	Would not

-Prehistory-

Somerset is an ancient land. It has been inhabited for at least 500,000 years, although little is known from this ancient period beyond a few shards of bone and a small quantity of flints. Academics debate whether these flints are evidence for human working, perhaps the work of *Homo heidelbergensis*, or natural deposits. Concrete evidence proves that caves, such as those in Cheddar Gorge and at Burrington, were inhabited before and during the last Ice Age.

NAC: The evidence of human hands in the working of the antediluvian flints of Somerset is irrefutable if one knows the secret history of Earth! The deposits clearly date to after the fall of the great civilisations of Hyperborea and Lomar, whose ancient inhabitants descended to primitive barbarity. That the only remnants of civilisations that had once stood proud and strong is a handful of chipped flints is true testimony to the uncaring universe.

Deer Bones

Continued explorations of the Cheddar Caves (see page 27) have unveiled piles of bones. Cut and teeth marks indicate that the beasts were butchered. Although the cave in which the bones were found can only be reached by swimming through a flooded channel, archaeologists claim the chamber was easily accessible just after the last Ice Age. If, however, the tunnel later became flooded as the ice melted and waters rose, how did the more recent bones, some of which are only a few centuries old at most, end up here?

As the Ice Age gradually ended and the glaciers withdrew, Somerset became covered in forest, save for the higher ground of the Mendips, Exmoor and the Quantocks, where exposure to high winds largely prevented such growth. During this latter period the area was home to herds of reindeer, horses, bison and smaller mammals (such as rabbits) and birds and bones found in these caves show that early man was an adept hunter. Despite this apparent abundant stock of game, evidence exists of cannibalistic practices.

NAC: Here marks not the cannibalistic diet of our ancestors but of a terrible force. Ancient man did not live in caves in the fashion displayed in the popular imagination but used them solely as religious sites and places of burial. But what prompted him to place his dead in the dark recesses of the earth? The answer is survival! Beneath the rolling hills of this fair county lie countless labyrinthine tunnels and cyclopean chambers measureless to man, some carved by the passage of water and others marking the passage of creatures beyond imagination. Herein dwelt ghouls. In this distant age the ghouls, perhaps the last degenerate descendants of Hyperborea and Lomar driven to utter savagery, outnumbered early man and preyed upon the scattered families. What better way to appease the 'dark spirits of the earth' than to provide them with the flesh of the dead and so spare the living from deprivation!

The dry valley of the Somerset Levels began to slowly fill with water around 9,000 years ago, creating reed fens, mudflats and areas of salt marsh, forcing a change in lifestyle of the inhabitants. What were once low hills of little renown became isolated islands rising above the shallow bog. Man moved into a more nomadic lifestyle, living in small camps on the higher ground in the summer when hunting was good and retreating back to his caves during the winter months. The Levels were an abundant source of wild fowl, such as ducks and swans, as well as fish. In the forests that now covered the land ran herds of deer, wild cattle and wild pigs.

NAC: Antiquarians marvel at the primitive cave paintings and fragmentary rock etchings of game animals, yet close their eyes when one raises the matter of the strange, bulbous eyed humanoids shown inhabiting the marshes! What manner of men were these who inhabited the dank and flooded plains? And why do these crude images show cave women being offered to them? Academics would no doubt claim these symbolise a union between tribes of men but there is more to these mysterious beings than meets the eye. I have read of similar imagery on remote Pacific islands. What far-ranging civilisation these creatures must have held, that they were to be found at opposite ends of the world! For how else can one explain the widespread worship of Dagon, one of the great marine gods of distant Polynesia, the barbarous Philistines and whose image has been found scratched on stone tablets amid the dank marshes of Somerset?

Bog Bodies

Since the Iron Age peat bogs have been sources of fuel and iron. Since the mid 17th century peat cutters have been unearthing bodies from the bogs. Stained by the soil and in remarkable states of preservation thanks to the anaerobic environment, these unusual finds were first labelled as recent murders, the corpses dumped in the bog to conceal them. Since the 1840s the theory that these mummies may actually be ancient sacrifices has surfaced and grown in popularity. Many of the bodies have their hands and feet tied and show injuries, most commonly evidence of stabbing or strangulation.

Adventure Hook: A peat cutter on the Somerset Levels has unearthed a bog body. Rather than informing the police or alerting archaeologists, he took the body home, dumping it in the root cellar. He now charges friends a pint of cider to view the find, which he claims is a murder victim from the Victorian era.

Local police are currently investigating a string of murders, all with the same *modus operandi* – every victim was strangled. A further fact, something which has not yet made the newspapers, is that every victim was damp, as if their attacker was wearing wet clothes.



Camps from this period show that flint used for tools and weapons originated in North Devon, South Somerset and Wiltshire. Mankind was learning the art of trade and although the flints can still be considered local, pottery came from areas as far away as Cornwall and the Lake District. It is very unlikely that Somerset-dwelling man actually travelled to these areas but trade through neighbouring tribes made such transactions possible.

It was during this post Ice Age era that man began to seriously build permanent structures. The various hills especially show extensive traces of Neolithic man; South Cadbury was fortified for the first time with a simple ditch and earth rampart defence and the natural springs around Wells show signs of human habitation and primitive earthworks. Burials, especially in north east Somerset, were in long barrows and

stone monuments such as the stone circles at Stanton Drew and the henges known as the Priddy Circles show not only a co-operative spirit but also the development of religious beliefs.

NAC: What widespread cult existed in this ancient time that men across Britain would raise circles of standing stones and erect barrows contemporaneously? While the Egyptians raised pyramids and the Babylonians erected ziggurats, what led our ancestors to focus on circles within circles? These monuments of stone and earth, toiled on by generation after generation, are nothing less than man's vain attempt to represent the protoplasmic Yog-Sothoth, of whom I have read much.

As time passed man evolved from a hunter-gather into a static farmer, clearing land above the swampy centre and on the eastern high grounds to create suitable farmland. Cereals were cultivated for the first time and instead of hunting he now kept domesticated sheep, cattle, pigs and goats. To allow him to travel through the marshes between the low islands, wooden pathways were created, the most famous of which dates from the 4th millennia BC and is referred to as the Sweet Track.

The track consists of poles of wood, generally ash, oak or hazel, which were felled with stone axes, atop which were lain planks of hazel, holly or alder wood. These upper planks were pegged and lashed to the poles to create an elevated walkway. Reeds were often strewn along the pathways to provide a non-slippery surface upon which travellers could walk.

Around 3000 BC, the swamps became shallower through ecological and climatic changes and birch and alder began to dominate the terrain. As travel became easier so the hunters used less and less of the trackways, which gradually collapsed into the peat bogs that have protected them until the modern era. This was a short lived change, however, and an increase in rainfall raised the peat bogs and altered the landscape yet again.

During the early Bronze Age (roughly 2000 BC) new tribes migrated into the area, bringing with them better pottery and bronze tools and weapons. Although the vast majority of items were still flint, the use of bronze made a dramatic change and the new settlers made better use of hill forts and the natural caves of the area. A new era had arrived and social strata were forming, with the farmers living in the valleys and the nobles living in hill forts such as Cadbury Castle and Ham Hill.

During the 7th century BC the working of bronze slowly gave way to iron working, heralding yet another change. With iron tools making tree felling less difficult the settlers began to increase the farmland at the expense of the forest. Exploitation of the Levels in the form of primitive drainage ditches began in earnest as farmland became a necessity. It was during this period that the first lakeside villages at Glastonbury and Meare were founded, both of which had wharfs for fishing boats.

Accursed Ground

At the northern end of the limestone plateau on which Ham Hill sits is a tapering, four-sided, flat-topped obelisk mounted on a plinth reached by four steps. Erected in 1923, the monument, clearly visible from across the nearby Levels, marks the memory of those who fell in the Great War.

What is less known is that the site on which it stands was not chosen because it allows the monument to be widely seen. Hamstone, a golden sandstone, was quarried from the hill until 1910, when the last site closed down. While the use of Hamstone had greatly declined, the quarries were also considered to be unlucky places and many workers had been injured or killed in freak accidents.

In 1909, workers at the northern end uncovered two skeletons, each 8 feet in height and described by local archaeologists as 'of gross deformity of the head and limbs.' The skeletons were in fact of deep one hybrids, former rulers who were buried here so as to be able to gaze upon the Levels for eternity.

After three attempts to excavate the bodies resulted in unexplained deaths, it was decided to leave them *in situ*. In order to ensure they were not accidentally disturbed, the war memorial was erected over the site.

Major construction projects resulted in the creation of Cadbury Castle (as we know it today), Brean Down, Little Sodbury and Norton Fitzwarren hill forts.

In the late Celtic Age Somerset was home to the Dobunni (in the north), the Durotriges (in the south) and the Dumnonii (in the west). From their mighty hill forts the Celts watched and waited, for news was spreading of a new power from across the sea.

In 1892, Arthur Bulleid, founder of the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, unearthed evidence of habitation in the bogs of the Somerset Levels close to Glastonbury and nearby Meare.

Atop a crannog, Bulleid found shards of pottery and charcoal, while along the waterline were found sunken wooden piles, evidence of a primitive wharf. These artefacts were dated to around 300 BC, the antiquarian concluding that while many Celts had chosen to live in and around the hill forts, some preferred the isolation and relative safety of the marshy Levels. By all accounts, these communities survived until around 100 AD, into the Roman Era, when rising water levels forced their abandonment.

NAC: Bulleid has turned his back on the evidence in favour of the consensual view of history! These marsh dwellers were not Celts but the descendants of those poor women given to the true marsh people, whose bulbous eyes haunt our cave

paintings and torture my dreams, centuries ago. Alone in the bogs, these unearthly hybrids were lepers among the other tribes, greatly despised yet also feared and thus immune to persecution. The end of these foul settlements of men who were not men was ended not by Mother Nature but by the cold steel of the Roman armies, who held no fear of the abominations.

The abandonment of the bog villages at Glastonbury was not down to rising water, but the steel of Roman legionaries. Now fully in control of the region, the Romans wisely sought to cleanse the marshes of the accursed creatures who called them home.

Hill Forts of Somerset

Somerset boasts the second-highest number of hill forts in England; only the neighbouring county of Devon has more.

The following hill forts may be found in Somerset:

Bat's Castle, Bathampton Down, Black Ball Camp, Blacker's Hill, Brean Down, Brent Knoll, Burledge Hill, Bury Castle, Cadbury Camp, Cadbury Castle, Cadbury Hill, Cannington Camp, Castle Neroche, Clatworthy Camp, Cleeve Toot, Compton Dundon, Cow Castle, Daw's Castle, Dolebury Warren, Dowsborough, Dunster, Elworthy Barrows, Ham Hill, Kenwalch's Castle, Kingsdown Camp, Maes Knoll, Maesbury Castle, Norton Camp, Plainsfield Camp, Ruborough Camp, Small Down Knoll, Salisbury Hill, Sweetworthy and Trendle Ring.



-Roman Era-

In 43AD the eagle of Rome reared its gilded head above the Somerset skyline and here it would remain for close to four centuries. The invasion of Somerset, which occurred shortly after the landing, did not occur purely because it was the next area in the line of the armies' advance. The Romans had traded with the Britons for centuries and had many allies among the people. It was not military necessity that saw the eagle fly for Somerset but the desire to procure the county's wealth and navigable rivers.

NAC: Are those of my time who profess to follow the ways of Neo-Druidism merely fools, ignorant of the dark truth, or has a cult once thought destroyed emerged to spread its insidious tendrils into the heart of our great society? Have they not the eyes to see that the Druids worshipped in sacred groves so as to be closer to their dark goddess, who was no other than the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young! For while the Druidic cults held power the dreaded chant of Iä! Iä! Shub-Niggurath! echoed across this green and pleasant land and blood was spilled in her name! Nay, it was not lust for wealth that caused the eagle of Rome to sink her talons into England but the holy fervour of destroying the cult of Shub-Niggurath!

A Lost Friend

A close friend of the investigators has been spending less and less time in their presence. When questioned, he reveals only that he has found new friends who share a common interest in the past. The friend has been drawn into what he believes is a Neo-Druidic group but which is in fact a cult of Shub Niggurath. Although the friend thinks the religion is hokum, a bit of fun, he is finding it harder and harder to break away from their insidious grip. The cult, fearing he may betray them, intends to sacrifice him at the next gathering.

Led by Vespasian, future emperor of Rome, who headed the Legio II *Augusta*, the Roman armies marched into Somerset from the southwest, having already conquered the Celtic tribes in what is now the neighbouring county of Dorset.

Resistance was stiff but ultimately futile – one-by-one the great hill forts were stormed by the indomitable Roman military machine, their inhabitants subdued or put to the sword. With the change not only in government but also culture, the hill forts would stand empty, testaments to olden times, until the decades after the Roman withdrawal.

Roman settlement of Somerset was swift and thorough, for the land had much to offer the new rulers. The Mendip Hills were a rich source of lead and silver, which the Romans were quick to exploit. On the Somerset Levels salt production was implemented, while the hills around Bath were transformed into quarries. In the course of barely a century, the agricultural landscape had given way to Roman industrialisation.

A major Roman road, the Fosse Way, was established to link the port at distant Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum, the early headquarters for the victorious Legio II *Augusta*) with the city of Lincoln (Lindum Colonia), a route of some 180 miles. Along its path through Somerset two major population centres sprang up. The first was sited at Ilchester, which grew prosperous as a mercantile centre after the road from Dorchester (in Dorset) was extended to meet the Fosse Way at the market town. Further north, the Celtic religious centre at Bath (Aquae Sulis) was greatly expanded by the conquerors (see page 33). Somerset's fertile land was quickly adorned with villas, home to native rulers who had vowed loyalty to their Roman masters.

NAC: It is no mere coincidence that the Romans pushed north through Somerset with great fervour toward the lands around Bristol, Gloucestershire, southeast Wales, for Somerset's northwest coast comprises the lower part of the Severn Estuary, where the dread cults of Eihort, Glaaki and Y'golonac held sway. Though it falls outside my current work, I pray others will dare to tread the same path and show that the proliferation of military forts around Bristol and the foundation of the legionary city of Caerleon in Wales are intricately tied to the extermination of these fell cults.

-The Dark Ages-

The withdrawal of the Roman legions from Britain in 410 AD was not a major cultural loss for the citizens of Somerset. Roman culture had thoroughly infiltrated that of the native Celts, yet it had not consumed the native way of life. Rather, like much of the country, Somerset's inhabitants had transformed into Romano-British citizens, at ease with their Celtic and Roman heritages. Life seems to have continued more or less unabated until the late 5th century, when the Saxons, the latest conquerors to lay claim to Britain, began to expand westward.

It is during this 'dark age' that a legendary figure first emerges – King Arthur. Much speculation has been made about Arthur but, ignoring the later, romanticised works of Malory for now,

it would seem he was a powerful Romano-British chieftain whose powerbase lay in or close to northern Somerset. Two thousand years have passed since Arthur first trod the land of Somerset, yet his name is still linked with the landscape.

Arthur's greatest victory over the marauding Saxons occurred at Mons Badonicus, a site linked through folklore to the hills surrounding Bath (among other places in the country), during the late 5th century. Around this time the citizens of Somerset began to abandon the Roman towns, prime targets for Saxon raiders, seeking refuge once more in the hill forts that littered the landscape. Until the Saxon conquest of Somerset in the 7th century, the land was ruled by independent petty kings and tyrants. Flying in the face of the commonly held academic view of barbarian chieftains lacking much in the way of civility, these rulers continued to import goods from across Europe and minted their own coins.

The Saxon Dead

Pagan or Christian, the Saxons buried grave goods with their dead. While commoners might venture to the afterlife with perhaps a knife, brooch, or ceramic bowl and warriors with their arms and armour, the burial mounds of the nobility were festooned with mundane objects and treasures.

Objects of gold and silver, symbols of wealth, were buried alongside arms and armour, signifying the noble's military power in life and status as a warrior. Also present were items relating to daily life, such as bowls and buckets, game boards, musical instruments and stools. Wealthy rulers displayed their financial status even in death, with imported objects laid with them. On rare occasions, a king might be accompanied to the grave by a horse or slave to serve him in the hereafter.

For peasants and warriors, their body was either cremated or placed curled in the grave, the latter as if the dead were merely sleeping. Nobles were often bedecked in their finest clothes and laid out on funeral biers.

Adventure Hook: A rare Saxon burial has been unearthed in the Mendips. Rather than finding fragments of bone or a cremation urn, the archaeologists discovered a sealed iron coffin inscribed with unusual glyphs.

Most unusual is a total lack of grave goods. Someone went to great lengths to ensure the deceased was well protected in death but for what purpose?



-Saxon Age-

The Saxon conquest of Somerset, unlike that of the Romans four centuries earlier, was a prolonged affair. The city of Bath fell in 577, yet it would take until the mid 7th century for the Saxons to push through Somerset and into Devon to the west. King Ine of Wessex (r. 688-726) established royal palaces at Somerton and South Petherton and established a fort in Taunton – Saxon dominance of Somerset was now firmly established.

In the 670s, King Osric of the Hwicce, a Saxon tribe living primarily in Warwickshire and Gloucestershire but whose lands extend to encompass Bath in northern Somerset, erected a monastic house in Bath a stone's throw from the pagan Roman baths. A century later, this structure, which would later form the foundations for Bath Abbey, was consecrated to St. Peter.

NAC: What fools are men who seek to conceal truth behind a thin veil of lies and deceit, a veil swept aside with but a casual gesture! The root of the word Hwicce is wicce, an Anglo-Saxon term meaning sorceress or witch! Men may have claimed kingship over the Saxon Hwicce but it was the women, the witches of Saxony, who held the true power. Since time immemorial the Church has built its holy houses over the pagan temples of old and here is yet another example. This so-called monastic house, attributed to Osric a century later, was nothing more than a temple to the goddess of European witches since the dawn of time – Shub Niggurath!

During the 9th century yet another set of invaders sought to rule Britain – the Danes. This tumultuous time saw the rise of another hero-king, Alfred of Wessex, later awarded the accolade 'the Great.' Alfred's eventual triumph came only after the near total loss of his kingdom to the invading Vikings. Driven from his palace, Alfred and the ragtag remnants of his army hid in the marshes near Athelney, the site of the fabled 'burning of the cakes' incident.

NAC: A weathered inscription in the churchyard at Athelney, reliably dated to a century or so after Alfred's obfuscation in the marshes, depicts the king being scolded

by the woman whose cakes he burnt. Her eyes are strangely bulbous in the manner of the ancient carvings. This woman was nothing less than a remnant of the hybrid race that survived the Roman cull and re-established themselves in their ancient homes amid the reeds and bogs. Alfred, no doubt aware of the legends surrounding the dank landscape, sought shelter here, in this specific spot, because he knew the superstitious, pagan Vikings were afraid to enter their territory.



Although Alfred eventually defeated the Danes, his success freed only part of his realm and little of the country as a whole. To ward against further insurgency, Alfred erected a network of forts linked by wide roads and established a sizeable naval force. Peaceful at last, Somerset witnessed the rise of many churches and monasteries and agriculture flourished once more.

NAC: The treaty signed between Alfred and the Danish king, Guthrum, survives till this day. One passage relating to Guthrum's enforced conversion to Christianity is oft

translated as saying the Danish ruler must give up his 'pagan ways.' More lies to conceal what man cannot dare to face, for the exact translation means, 'perverse practices,' an indication that the Vikings trafficked with unseen and unholy powers far beyond the normal pagan gods.

-The Middle Ages-

The end of Saxon Britain came in 1066. The Norman overlords shunned the existing hill forts and erected new fortifications close to the major habitation centres. New religious, cultural and economic centres sprang up in the wake of the conquest. Farming once more became the predominant activity, though the ravages of the Black Death in the late 1340s changed the face of the county forever, ending the feudal system.

Filling this void was the might and majesty of the Church. Under the guidance of the monasteries, the waters of the Somerset Levels were drained, new crafts and industries were established, coal mining began on the Mendips, while the ancient Roman quarries near Bath were re-established. The legend of King Arthur reared its head again during this period, when the monks of Glastonbury Abbey, then one of the richest and most powerful religious sites in England, 'discovered' the tomb of King Arthur and his queen, Guinevere. That this wondrous discovery, one which drew pilgrims from across Europe, was miraculously made after the church had been razed by fire has not gone unnoticed by history.

NAC: The draining of the Somerset Levels by order of the monasteries was no act of greed for more agricultural land but rather a deliberate attempt to exterminate the last of the hybrids whose continued habitation of the marsh was an affront to God. William of Gloucester, a monk and chronicler of the age, writes in his Letters to the Abbot of Glastonbury, 'What accursed men are these who inhabit the bogs of Summerset (sic), whose skin is sallow and pale and whose eyes stare like globes of glass yet unseeing of the Lord? I list them not under God's creatures like other men but of abominations who have trafficked with the unclean spirit of Dagon, for they are like unto Dagon, of whom Samuel says had the face and hands of a fish. If you have not the

stomach for righteous war against the Devil's spawn, drain their lands, I beseech, so they may have no shelter from the wrath of God.'

Exmoor, whose swathes of upland had been largely ignored by the Romans, Saxons and Vikings became a centre of sheep farming. This in turn led to the growth and prosperity of nearby towns such as Dunster and Watchet.

A Medieval Love Story

Muchelney, which stands on an island in the Somerset Levels, housed a religious building from the late 7th century until 1538, when the Abbey, the ruins of which still stand today, was surrendered to King Henry VIII.

According to a local tale the Abbey was the centre of a tragic love story. A young man, low of birth, fell in love with a comely lass, the daughter of a powerful knight. The knight forbade his daughter to marry below her status. Heartbroken, the young man became a monk. During his wanderings he came to Muchelney Abbey where, lo and behold, he discovered his love serving as a nun. Breaking both the rules of her father and the Church, they had an affair. Their plans to elope were cut short when they were betrayed. The monk was exiled to a remote part of the British Isles for his sin, while the nun was walled up within the monastery, left to die a slow death. Or so the story goes.

The girl has not rested easily, for while the story tells of love it does not delve into the betrayal. The 'monk' was in fact a charlatan, begging charity and using his supposed standing to steal from monasteries in which he sought shelter. He seduced the nun, having long forgotten her as the love of his life, and then betrayed her to the prior when she spoke of running away with him, accusing her of bewitching him. Her spirit has been reborn time and time again. Vengeful and spiteful, she seduces young, innocent men and then buries them alive.

The only way to lay her to rest is to unearth her bones (buried on a spit of land in the Somerset Levels near the Abbey) and bury them in consecrated ground.

-Early Modern Era-

By the 1530s the great monasteries of England had been torn down and their lands purchased from the crown by wealthy landowners. Glastonbury Abbey held a tenuous grip on its survival until 1539, when the last abbot, Richard Whiting, was arrested, summarily tried and sentenced to death. On November 15, Whiting and two of his monks were hauled to the top of Glastonbury Tor, where they were hung, drawn and quartered.



As farming technology improved, so the rural, sparsely populated landscape of Somerset was settled by new families keen to share in the natural bounty. The landowners grew wealthier as the size of their estates and rent revenues grew, with many investing in fine stately homes.

On January 20, 1607, the entire Severn Estuary, including the Somerset coastline, was ravaged by a mysterious flood. Waters raced inland as far as Glastonbury, 14 miles from the

coast, flooding the Somerset Levels to a depth of some eight feet. Entire villages were swept away, fishing fleets were smashed to kindling and fertile fields were saturated with salt and silt.

NAC: That the Severn Estuary, with its profusion of dark gods, should suffer such a catastrophic flood cannot be attributed to the works of God or Nature, but must be appointed solely to the very presence of the dark gods from beyond time and space. Memories are invoked of the loss of Lemuria and Mu, and the later sinking of the Thurian continent. Could it be, that in his house at R'lyeh great Cthulhu stirred, sweeping away the coastline with a mere shudder in his dreamlike slumber? Perhaps, there is a local legend of a 'leper of scaled skin with glassy eyes' and who spoke 'with a croaking voice' who was seen by many witnesses on the days before the Great Flood, a stranger known to have entered the Somerset Levels on the night of January 19 and who was never seen again. Could this Great Flood have been an attempt to flood the Somerset Levels again and allow its earliest inhabitants to reclaim the land?

In the decade of 1641-1652 civil war wracked England. Parliamentarians held power in Somerset save at Dunster, where the Royalists occupied the castle. In 1643, on the outskirts of Bath, the Battle of Lansdowne proved a bloody draw. Although the Parliamentarian army was shattered, Royalist casualties and lack of ammunition were so great that their army was forced to withdraw. Two years later, the last remaining Royalist army was smashed at the Battle of Langport, giving the Parliamentarians full control of Southwest England and signalling the death knell of the Royalist cause.

Rebellion reared its ugly head again in 1685, when the Duke of Monmouth, supported by the inhabitants of Somerset, led a revolution against James II. Although Wells Cathedral was ravaged by the Puritan forces, Monmouth's hopes of capturing Bath and Bristol were ended at the Battle of Sedgemoor. Thereafter occurred the Bloody Assizes, which, though held in Winchester, saw the execution or deportation of several prominent sons of Somerset for their part in the treasonous campaign.

The Industrial Revolution, which gave rise to the modern world, destroyed many of Somerset's cottage industries, leaving the county almost entirely devoted to agriculture. However, some benefits came out of the industrialisation of Britain's northern and central cities. Great quantities of coal were required, prompting the wide scale exploitation of coalfields in northern Somerset. To aid in transporting the coal, the Somerset Coal Canal was carved into the landscape.

Other canals included the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, which linked the navigable River Parrett to the county town of Taunton and its river, the Tone; the Westport Canal; the Grand Western Canal, whose waters linked Taunton with Tiverton in Devon, whose lime kilns would provide material for fertilisers and building projects; the Glastonbury Canal, which joined Glastonbury to the River Parrett and the Chard Canal, an extension of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal running to the town of Chard. Traffic has declined but the canals remain in use in the 1920s.

Beneath Still Waters

When the canals were cut the workers followed the line of the engineer's plans to the letter, cutting through whatever lay in their way. During dry spells, when the waters lower, the lower levels of demolished buildings emerge through the murky water. While some of these partial structures are quite recent houses, others are the foundations of Roman villas and temples. Among the many finds dredged up are Roman coins, pieces of ancient timber, fragment of statues and silver brooches in the shape of fish.

Adventure Hook: Dredgers on the Grand Western Canal haul a strange, stone statue to the surface. After cleaning off the muck and weeds they were horrified by the strange iconography of the statue, a creature which seemed more fish than man. Disgusted by the pagan imagery, they dumped the statue in a nearby wood. Now, weeks on, barges are being discovered drifting on the canals, their crews missing.

-The Modern Age-

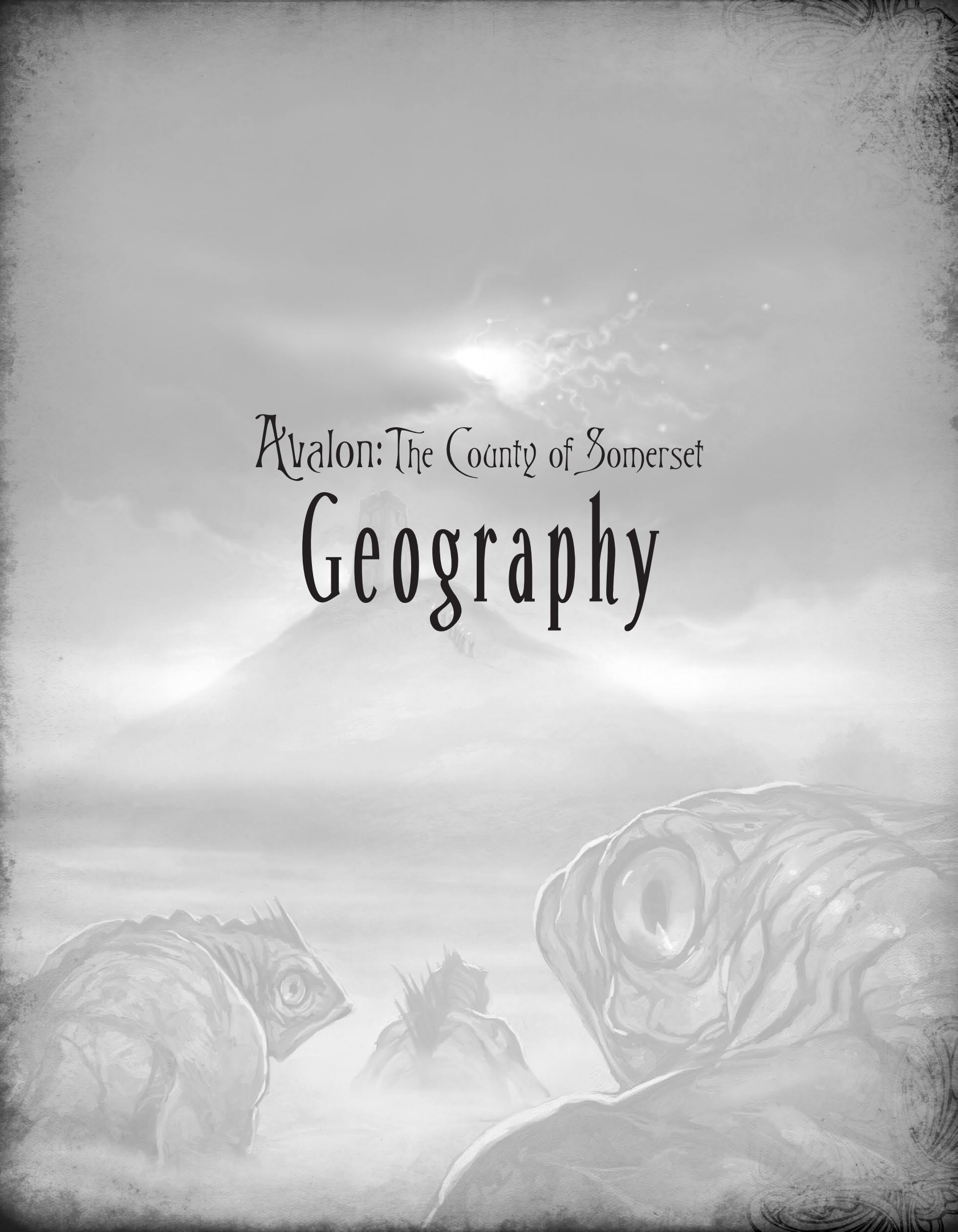
Although the canals brought prosperity to Somerset, they were quickly replaced by the expanding railway network, virtually every major village having a train station. The arrival of the trains brought not only material goods but also day trippers, giving rise to seaside towns such as Weston-Super-Mare, whose Grand Pier was opened in 1904 in a bid to bring tourists into the heart of the town rather than the more popular suburbs.

The Great War left as many scars across Somerset as it did other counties. In towns and villages across the county war memorials were erected to mark the loss of local men and boys who gave their lives on the muddy fields of northwest Europe or who were lost at sea. While the citizens of Somerset are grateful they did not suffer the terrible losses of the larger cities, only a handful of villages were left untouched by the hand of death.

Shell Shock

The Great War has ended but its legacy continues in the form of shell shocked survivors. Many soldiers witnessed unspeakable horrors on the battlefields of Flanders but, in the case of Somerset's rural Tommies, many had seen dark terrors long before reaching France.

Adventure Hook: Uncle Barnaby, a distant relative from Somerset, served his country with honour in the Great War. His wide eyes, mad mutterings and occasional screaming were diagnosed as shell shock. While visiting Barnaby in the convalescence hospital in Bath he begins rambling, revealing Things Man Was Not Meant To Know. Did Barnaby see something in Flanders that drove him insane, or does the true cause of his madness lie elsewhere?



Avalon: The County of Somerset
Geography

-Geography-

What's in a Name?

While the people of Somerset receive mention in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles entry of 845, the county is first referenced only in 1015. But where does the name Somerset originate? So far two suggestions have been put forward but there is a third, more sinister, interpretation.

The first possibility, *Somersæte*, is an Old English derivation of *Sumortūnsæte*, or 'the people living at or dependant upon Sumortūn.' Sumortūn undoubtedly refers to Somerton, for a short period a royal town of Wessex. This name dates from 845. This name appears in the county's motto, adopted in 1911, as *Somersæte ealle*, or 'all the people of Somerset.'

The second theory suggests the name comes from *Seo-mere-saetan*, or 'settlers by the sea lakes.' Few could doubt the name is a valid one, for the Somerset Levels were once flooded land.

Given Professor Ainley-Chant's exposure of the dread cult of Shub Niggurath in Somerset, a cult whose malign influence touched the land long before Romans first stepped first here, perhaps the true origin of the name stems from *Shūbmeresæte*, a name one could translate as 'the settlers by the lakes dependant on (or maybe, 'servile to') Shub Niggurath'?

The shire county of Somerset stretches from the southern banks of the River Avon in the north through 70 miles of varying landscape to the Blackdown Hills in the south. In the far west lie the Quantock hills; 50 miles away in the east the Mendip Hills and the foothills of Salisbury Plain.

Starting in the east we have the Exmoor Hills, an old formation of hard sandstone and slate topped by woods and heaths of Exmoor itself. The hills, at their farthest northwest edge, form the coastline with the Bristol Channel, with cliffs rising hundreds of feet above sea level. Following the line of the hills west Exmoor merges with the Brendons, formed of the same material but not rising so high above the landscape.

East of the Brendons, stretching from the coast almost to the River Tone, are the Quantock Hills, a great sandstone uplift that rises sharply from the lowlands to the east. South of the Quantocks and merging with the Brendons are the Blackdown Hills, which form part of the county's southern

border. The hills are younger than those of the western hills, formed from Cretaceous greensand, clay and gravel. Together the Exmoor and Blackdown Hills form the border with the county of Devon.

Much of northern, eastern, and southeast Somerset lies on the Mendip Hills. The hills start with Ham and Yeovil sandstone in the south, curving northwards to form the foothills of Salisbury Plain and finally merging with the Cotswolds in the north. The Mendips border with Dorset, Wiltshire and Avon.

In the centre of this semi-circular expanse of high ground lie the Polden Hills. In most counties these hills would warrant little attention but in Somerset they contrast against the low lying, water logged ground known as the Somerset Levels. Few of the hills rise above a few hundred feet above sea level but it was on these that the earliest settlers in Somerset made their homes.

The Levels themselves were formed over 6,000 years ago, when the rising sea levels pushed tendrils of salt water into the low-lying ground. In the salt water grew reeds and sedges, from where the largest area, Sedgemoor, takes its

name. As the waters settled to a fixed height willow and alder grew, alternately followed by oak, ash and elm. Rising soil acidity saw these trees die, to be replaced by heath lands and peat soil, a rich source of fuel for the local inhabitants.

Archaeological Sites

That our ancient ancestors may have worshipped unspeakable gods, performed vile sacrifices and been privy to forbidden knowledge is a strong aspect of the Cthulhu Mythos setting. Such aspects demonstrate not only the distant presence of the Great Old Ones but give rise to the existence of civilisations which predate our own by many millennia, perhaps even by eons.

Adventure Hook: Professor Maximillian Blake has been excavating on the Mendips, an area whose history stretches back to man's early ancestors. While he and his team have been digging a suspected Roman temple, they have also uncovered evidence that the site, near a small lake, was held sacred by Mesolithic man. In a recently discovered paper he makes reference to some unusual finds. The first is a fishing trident, a strange artefact given the site is inland, and the second a late Mesolithic 'Mother Goddess' figure. Tantalisingly, he mentions difficulties in keeping the latter object dry.

Prof. Maximillian Blake

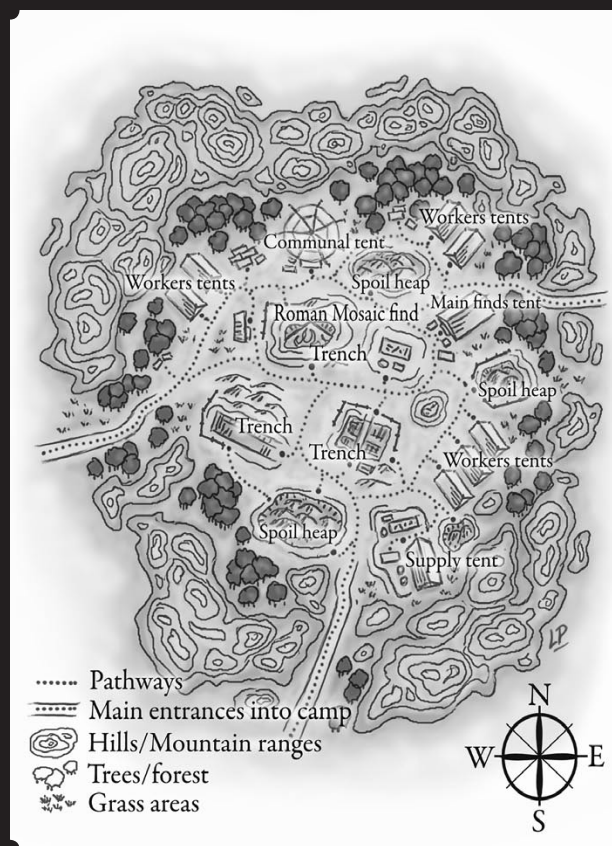
Standing 6' 4" in his socks but of average build, Blake is tall without being physically imposing. A young lieutenant serving in 1917, he fell victim to a mustard gas attack. While he survived, the gas left him physically ruined. Prone to violent fits of coughing and bouts of extreme fatigue, Blake has been warned that digging up the British countryside in all weathers will be the death of him. Despite his doctor's pleas for him to go to Egypt, a boom area for archaeologists, Blake has steadfastly refused.

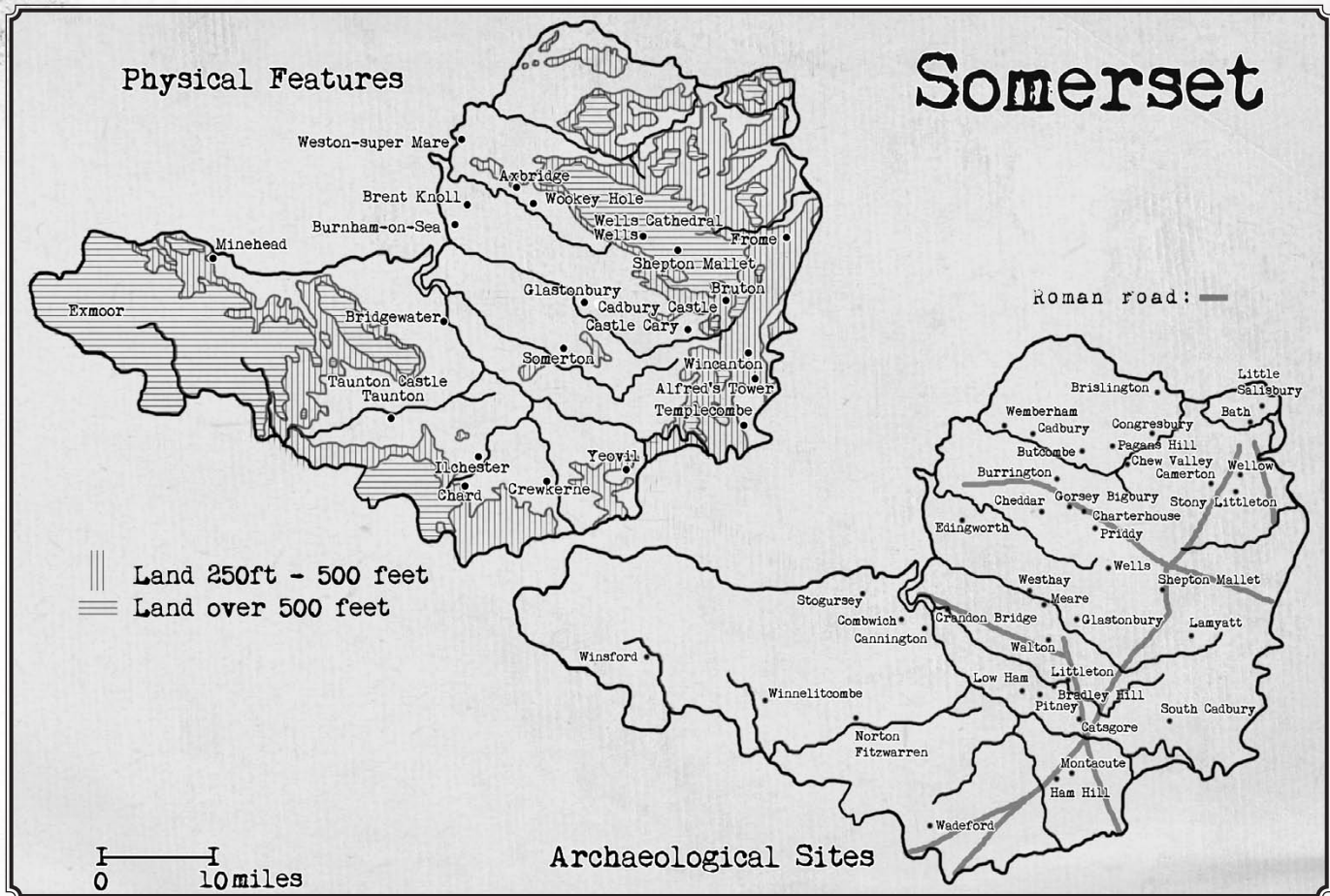
PROF. MAXIMILLIAN BLAKE, Archaeologist

STR 12 DEX 12 INT 13 CON 7
 SIZ 18 APP 13 POW 14 EDU 19
 SAN 70 Hit Points: 13
 Age: 41 Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Anthropology 35%, Archaeology 67%, Astronomy 17%, Bargain 32%, Credit Rating 27%, Dodge 30%, Drive Automobile 36%, Hide 29%, History 45%, Library Use 37%, Listen 40%, Other Language (German 21%, Greek 19%, Latin 52%), Photography 27%, Spot Hidden 41%

Weapons: .38 revolver 45% (damage 1D10)





The rivers that cut through the hills to flow into the Levels split Somerset into distinct geographical regions. The largest river, the Parrett, rises in the south of the county near Crewkerne but the rivers Southern Yeo, Tone, Isle and Cary strengthen its waters. After Bridgewater the river becomes navigable, allowing access to the Bristol Channel and forming a sea route to Bristol and Wales.

North of the Parrett flows the Brue, Axe and Northern Yeo, all of which rise in the Mendip Hills and flow west to the sea. The River Chew, which also rises in the Mendips, splits from the Yeo to flow northwards to join with the River Avon at a point roughly halfway between Bath and Bristol. Likewise, the River Frome, which also begins in the highest part of the hills, flows into the Avon just south west of Bath.

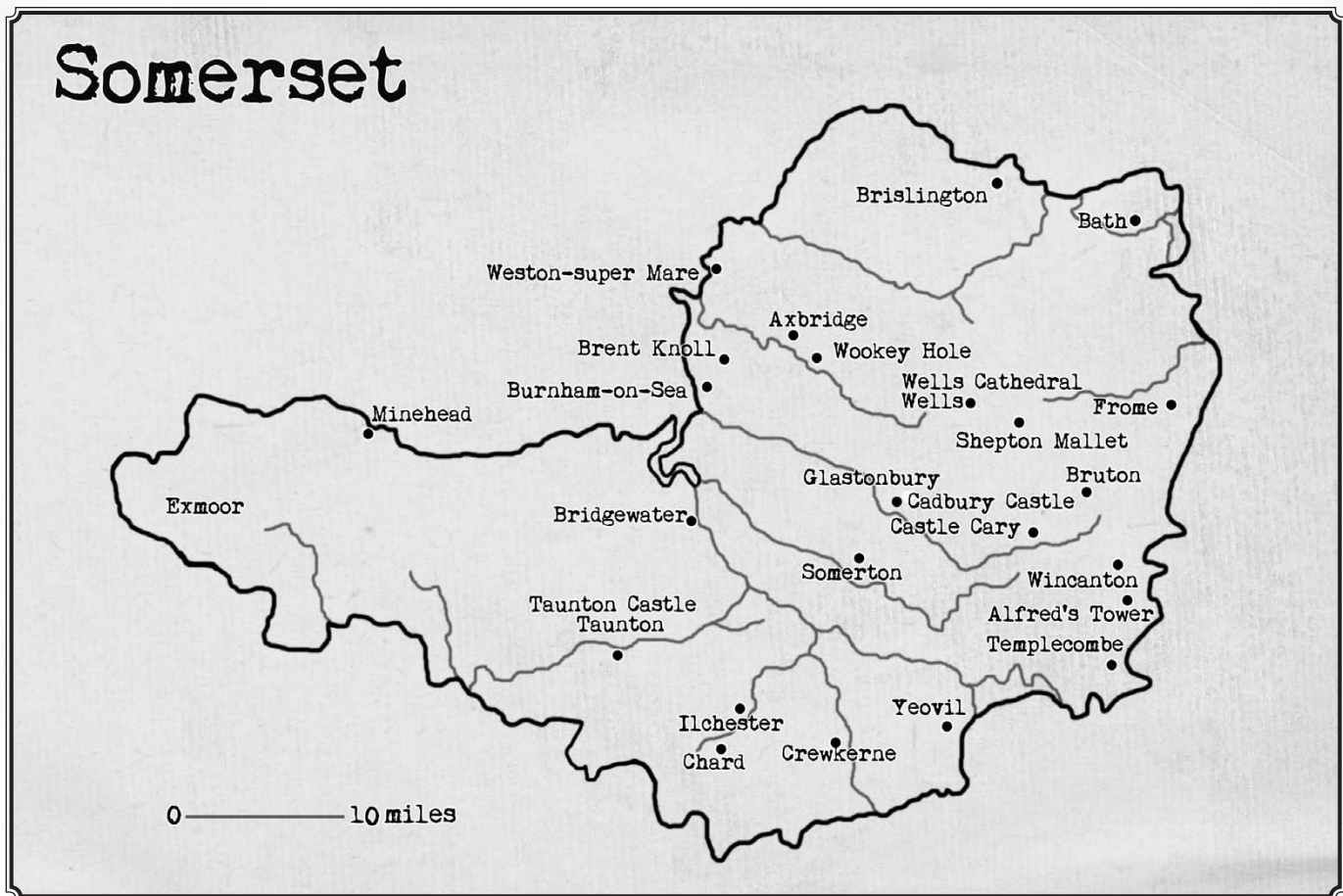
The only river of note in the west, the Exe, flows from Exmoor southwards to Exmouth on the Devon coast.

One thing Somerset does lack is any great expanse of forest, although the Exmoor, Neroche, Somerton, Mendip, North Petherton and Somerton Forests dot the higher ground. The largest forest, Selwood, which lies across the Somerset and Dorset borders, covers an area only slightly smaller than the other Somerset forests combined. Those forests that do exist within Somerset are tightly packed, with plenty of ground vegetation and are home to an abundance of wildlife.



Avalon: The County of Somerset
Locales

-Locales-



The county of Somerset boasts two cities, several major towns, many smaller towns and countless villages and hamlets, not to mention a plethora of ancient hill forts, ruined abbeys and monasteries, churches, standing stones, barrows, sacred glades, woodlands, hills and other areas associated with the supernatural and the past. This chapter is not intended to be a complete A to Z of Somerset but rather to introduce areas of interest keepers can work into Somerset-based adventures and places the investigators are likely to visit, either as idle tourists passing the time or in their hunt to uncover the deeper mysteries and terrors of the Mythos. Many of the areas are linked to local legends, details of which can be found in the next chapter.

Alfred's Tower: The landscape of Somerset is dotted with stone follies, testament to man's desire to invoke his wealth for his neighbours to admire. The grandest of these is King Alfred's Tower. The hollow, triangular structure rises 161 feet and stands on the edge of a high promontory in eastern Somerset, close to the border with Wiltshire. The core of the tower is hollow and open to the elements.

A tightly-wound spiral staircase, located in the corner opposite the entrance, ascends up 205 steps, leading to an open-air platform surrounded by a crenulated parapet. From the top one can gaze across much of Somerset. On a clear day, one can see as far as the Severn Estuary, some 50 miles distant. Glastonbury Tor, Cadbury Castle and many other Somerset landmarks are also visible from the summit.

The tower's construction was proposed by Henry Hoare II, a wealthy banker and Freemason. Although partly intended to commemorate King Alfred, it was also to serve as a monument to mark the end of the Seven Years' War and the ascension of King George III. Started in 1770, work was completed in 1772.

Axbridge: Quaint town in north central Somerset. Iron ore mining takes place in the neighbouring hills. Until 1915 the ore was shipped along the River Axe to its mouth on the Bristol Channel but during the 1920s it is transported by train. The mines close in the mid-1920s.

Bath: See page 32.

Digging the Mendips

Man has dwelt on the Mendip Hills since time immemorial. Here he raised villages, worked the land, honoured his gods and buried the dead. Bronze Age man mined here for lead and the Romans excavated silver, industries which continued unabated well into the medieval period. After that, man began to excavate stone, hewing great, ugly quarries in the landscape.

While the small ore mines of later years went largely unnoticed, the deeper quarrying and the advent of larger towns has caused consternation among a tiny colony of Mi-go dwelling beneath the Mendips. While other colonies chose wisely for their mines, selecting mountains far from the plains where men lived, those of the Mendips choose poorly.

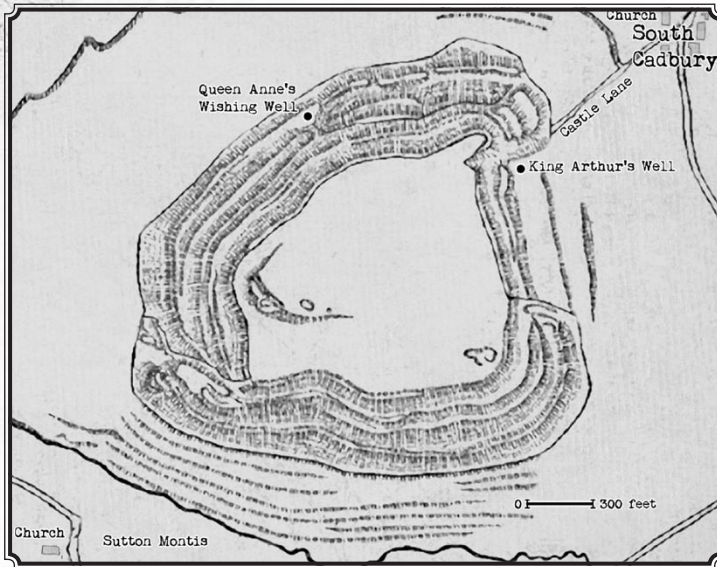
Unfortunately they are divided as best to proceed. One faction favours attempts to peacefully end the quarrying, while another believes only death and destruction can win the day. Both sides have begun to hire human agents to achieve their goal on the surface, whilst in their cavernous homes the Mi-go are on the verge of civil war.

Brent Knoll: Brent Knoll hill fort, located in northwest Somerset, rises 450 feet above the surrounding Somerset Levels, a lone high point in an otherwise flat landscape. Its name derives from the Old English for 'Beacon Hill.' The addition of 'hill fort' to the name is important to avoid confusion, for the village of Brent Knoll stands at the southwest base of the slope. The solitary upland of Brent Knoll hill fort is clearly visible from the top of Glastonbury Tor.

Bridgwater: Spanning the River Parrett, Bridgwater's trading history dates back to the Norman Conquest. Later, a bridge was erected across the river to prevent sailing ships from bypassing the town. Instead, cargoes would be unloaded at the town and shipped inland via barges. The expansion of the railway and canal networks led to a boom in trade, especially bricks and tiles, for which the town is still known in the 1920s.

Bruton: The small town of Bruton (population 2,500) lies in east Somerset and straddles the River Brue, from where it takes its name ('the enclosure on the Brue'). Evidence shows settlement since the Neolithic Age and the remains of a Roman villa lie several miles away but Bruton never seems to have risen to importance. The first reliable evidence for a settlement actually at Bruton dates back only to the Saxon period. During the Middle Ages it became a prosperous market town, linked to the wool and later the silk trade. The Brue is prone to flooding, the most famous flood dating to 1768, when the waters rose 20 feet in a matter of hours.

Burnham-on-Sea: Sited at the mouth of the River Parrett on the Bristol Channel coast, Burnham-on-Sea was founded shortly after the Roman occupation as a trading port making use of the Parrett's navigable waters. In those times the Levels were flooded and Burnham was an isolated island reached only via a narrow causeway. Ignored during the Saxon period, Burnham's next inhabitants arrived during the Middle Ages, when new wharves were constructed, the silt was dredged from the harbour and the Levels were drained. Following the arrival of the railway in the 1850s, Burnham enjoyed a brief growth of trade. In the 1920s it is developing its tourism industry.



Cadbury Castle: The hill fort of Cadbury Castle dominates Cadbury Hill, a sharp upland on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels. Its 500 foot summit is encircled by four terraces of ditch and rampart fortifications, though the line of the lower fortifications is now covered in woodland. Aside from the earthworks, no evidence remains on the surface of its millennia of occupation. Glastonbury Tor lies a mere 12 miles across the Levels and is clearly visible from the summit. On a clear day, Brent Knoll, a site associated with King Arthur, is visible on the northwest horizon.

Although called a castle, it was never dominated by lofty towers or high stone battlements. Inhabited almost continuously through the Neolithic era through to the Iron Age, the uppermost rampart was once surrounded with a wooden palisade and impressive gatehouse. Sacked during the Roman invasion, its defenders were brutally slaughtered and the buildings put to the torch as a warning to others who would dare to resist Rome's advance.

Cadbury was resettled at the end of the Roman era, likely as the administrative and military centre for one of the many warlords who seized power before and during the Saxon incursions. Although hill forts gradually fell out of favour with the ruling Saxons, Cadbury's fortified nature made it an ideal location for a royal mint, though this endeavour lasted a mere decade.

Castle Cary: Taking its name from the Celtic *creag*, or rocky hill, Castle Cary is a small market town in eastern Somerset. The earthworks of Cary Castle, a Norman motte-and-bailey, sit on Lodge Hill, overlooking the town.

Chard: The south Somerset town of Chard boasts a population of 6,000. The primary industries are agriculture and lace making, though the latter is in decline. The railway reached Chard in 1863, signalling the demise of the canal that runs through the town.

Mother's Milk

Bentley's Plum Cider, manufactured and sold by the Bentley family of Chard, uses a centuries old recipe handed down from father to son. The latest scion, Timothy, has seen sales skyrocket in recent months, having rebranded his drink as a health tonic.

Bentley has broken with tradition and altered the recipe, slipping in a few drops of a secret ingredient – Shub Niggurath milk! While the drink does boost health and stamina, it also mutates the imbiber's innards, slowly transforming the organs into a solid mass of black, slimy tissue. The final transformation takes place anywhere from three to 18 months, roopy tentacles ripping apart the flesh to reveal a small dark young. Within a few months, the abomination grows to full maturity.

Mother's Milk Plum Cider: The more you drink, the sooner your death. After drinking a pint, the drinker gains one point of CON for the next 24 hours. No more than one point can be gained in any 24 hour period.

Each time a number of pints equal to the imbiber's regular CON score are drunk he loses one point of POW. This can be recovered only by abstaining from the wicked brew for a number of days equal to his original CON. Unfortunately, resisting the lure of the bottle for more than 24 hours requires a POW x 3% roll. Once the victim's POW reaches zero, he is torn apart by the emerging dark young.

Cheddar Gorge: Cheddar Gorge slices through the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills like a jagged wound, reaching depths of 450 feet below the surrounding landscape. The southern edge is marked by sheer cliffs, while the northern slopes are slightly gentler. The limestone through which the gorge cuts is riddled with caves, eroded over eons by rivers whose icy waters now flow deep beneath the surface. Of these caves the best known are Gough's Cave (discovered 1903 and largely unexplored in the 1920s) and Cox's Cave (discovered in 1837). Human remains and worked flints discovered during the pioneering exploration of the caves are displayed in Taunton museum.

NAC: A recent newspaper carries the story of Richard Gough's delve into the caves that carry his name. I have already spoken of ancient man's encounters with the race of ghouls and while common sense dictates these creatures must now be long extinct, a gnawing feeling continues to devour me – what if these abominations are not dead but lurk beneath, waiting only to be discovered before carrying out their cannibalistic practices once more?

Author's Note: An unfinished letter to Gough was founded among Ainley-Chant's possessions. It was dated a mere two weeks before the scholar vanished. Cheddar had already become a tourist attraction by the 1920s and, to the best of my knowledge, no ghouls have been sighted. However, there are still parts of the cavernous system to be explored and what dark creatures may lurk in these stygian depths remains to be seen.

Crewkerne: A small market town in south Somerset, notable for its shirt and sail making industries. Crewkerne has a railway station and a hospital.

Exmoor: Exmoor dominates western Somerset, sprawling from the Bristol Channel south and west into neighbouring Devon. An ancient upwelling of Devonian and Carboniferous limestone, sandstones, slate and shale, the plateau was unscarred by the advancing glaciers. Its ancient rocks are concealed beneath wet, acidic soil making it poor agricultural land. The highest point of Exmoor, and indeed in the entirety of Somerset, is Dunkery Beacon, which stands 1,700 feet above sea level.

The River Exe rises close to the Bristol Channel coast, yet flows south through Devon to the English Channel. Two of its major tributaries, the Barle and Haddeo, also have headwaters on the moors.

A landscape of towering cliffs, rocky headlands, swathes of colourful heather, unexplored cave systems, steep ravines, plunging waterfalls and woodland, Exmoor is starkly beautiful, barely touched by the hand of man despite having been inhabited since the Neolithic Age. Today, the land is devoted to sheep farming.

Frome: Pronounced *froom*. A town in northeast Somerset heavily involved in the wool and printing trades. The brass foundry of J W Singer was responsible for the casting of the Lady Justice, which adorns the Old Bailey in London, and the statue of Boudicca in her chariot, which stands close to the House of Parliament and Westminster Bridge.

Glastonbury: Located on what was once an island on the Somerset Levels in central Somerset, Glastonbury is famous for its Abbey and Tor, both of which have tied to the legend of King Arthur. Though it boasts only a population of 5,000, Glastonbury's citizens are industrious, producing leather goods, rugs, gloves, and stockings, as well as working in the intensive agriculture on the now-drained Levels.

Ilchester: Known to the Romans as Lindum, Ilchester quickly grew to prominence thanks to its position on the Fosse Way, the main Roman road through Somerset. Its importance in the Saxon age is unquestioned, for it possessed a royal mint, though this was transferred to Cadbury Castle during the Viking incursions into the region. A friary and a nunnery once stood here but these fell to ruin during the Dissolution and were never rebuilt. Lacking a train station and with buses only just beginning to pass through, Ilchester has been isolated since the 1840s, when the stagecoaches were replaced by the railway. Its market and jail shut their doors in the mid 19th century and by the end of the century even the local fairs had ceased. The once prosperous town now boasts a population of just 600.

The Ilchester Pilum

Later Mediaeval construction and farming has concealed or destroyed much of Ilchester's Roman past, though farmers still sometimes plow up a coin, potsherd, or bent piece of metal. One such rare find, housed in the Church of St. Andrew, is a Roman pilum (throwing spear) head.

The Pilum: The spear head is in remarkably good condition given that it has spent nearly 2,000 years buried in the earth. Written in Latin along both sides of the blade is a prayer to Mithras, the favoured deity of Roman legionaries. If the head is attached to a shaft, the prayer read aloud and a Magic Point spent, the blunt edge becomes magically sharpened. When next thrown, the pilum ignores six points of armour. Once thrown, the edge blunts once more.

Treat the pilum as a throwing spear in all other regards.

Adventure Hook: Spinster Harriet Broadley, a prominent member of the Ilchester Choral Society, was arrested recently and charged with theft of the Ilchester pilum. She refused to give accurate reasons for her unusual behaviour, claiming only that she needed it to kill 'the beast' worrying her sheep. Local police commented that the sheep were being savaged by a wild dog and that Ms. Broadley's vigilante actions were not helping their investigations.

Minehead: A fishing town on the eastern fringe of Exmoor, Minehead once was a port handling trade with Wales. Its sandy beach, combined with the arrival of the railway, has led to a dramatic increase in tourism since the late Victorian age.

Shepton Mallet: Inhabited since Neolithic times, Shepton Mallet grew to prominence with the wool and cloth industries starting in the 17th century. Within a century the area boasted 50 mills, though many of these were abandoned in the 19th century when the industrialisation of northern England's cities stole the trade. A handful switched to silk

and crepe production but the industry did not survive beyond the end of Queen Victoria's reign. Brewing took the place of the heavier industry. The Anglo-Bavarian Brewery, founded in 1864, was a major producer of lager until 1921 when the factory closed. Most of the smaller breweries in the town now concentrate on producing cider.

Somerton: Located in central Somerset, Somerton came into being as a Saxon settlement. Largely insignificant today, it was a major commercial hub in the Middle Ages, being granted the rights to hold weekly markets and two annual fairs, a rare blessing for a town of just a few hundred inhabitants. Its current population is around 1,800.

Taunton: A bustling town of 56,000 inhabitants, Taunton has been the county town of Somerset since 1366 and seat of the County Council since its formation in 1889. The name is Anglo-Saxon and incorporates 'ton,' meaning an enclosure. The 'taun' prefix relates to the River Tone, upon the banks of which Taunton sits. Thus, the name means 'the enclosure by the Tone.'

The earliest settlement on the site, a Romano-British village, stood in what is now the suburb of Holway. During the Saxon kingdoms Taunton was a burh, or fortified settlement, complete with a mint. Later, around 903, a monastery was founded, cementing Taunton's importance. Initially the Roman town of Ilchester served as Somerset's county town but under the Saxons this was moved to Somerton. As Somerton declined, the county seat was moved again in 1366, this time to Taunton.

Taunton has been involved in many of England's civil wars, being the scene of a skirmish during the War of the Roses in 1451, witnessing the surrender of the Cornish forces during the Second Cornish Uprising of 1497 and changing hands multiple times during the Civil War. The Duke of Monmouth had himself crowned king at Taunton in 1685, though his 'reign' was short lived. During the Bloody Assizes that followed, the infamous Hanging Judge Jeffries held court in Somerset.

Taunton is the site of the Somerset County Court, Somerset County Council's county hall, the Somerset County Museum, the Somerset Cricket Club, the Masonic Lodge of Unanimity and Serenity No. 497 and several newspaper publishers.

Taunton Castle: Situated in what is now the centre of town, the site has been covered by fortified structures, some secular others ecclesiastical, since the late 7th century. The castle's use as a fortification ended after the Civil War and much of what can be seen today is a later Georgian building. Today, the castle houses the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society's museum and the Adam Library, the Society's collection of books and manuscripts, as well as the Castle Hotel.

The Mythos in Taunton

The Adam Library contains copies of the occult work *Sasucismus Triumphatus* (see page 116) and *Dwellers of the Deep* (see *Call of Cthulhu*). Among the Roman, Saxon, Mediaeval and more recent historical artefacts in the museum, all items uncovered in Somerset, is a rotting bone tentatively identified as that of a Neolithic man and a fossilised skull of a primitive fish from eons past. Any investigator studying these artefacts closely may make a Cthulhu Mythos roll to realise that they are both remains of deep ones.

Templecombe: Five miles to the south of Wincanton, Templecombe is a small agricultural village. Land was granted to the Knights Templar in 1185 and it's their presence that gave the village its name – *Combe Templariorum*. Following the suppression of the Templars the Preceptory and its lands passed to the Knights of St. John before being sold off after the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

NAC: The Knights Templars! Who knows what treasures they brought to this remote corner of Somerset from the Holy Land! Sources indicate they once possessed that most dreadful of books, the Al-Azif, and worshipped dark gods. Did any of their treasures lie in Somerset? Were they

destroyed on the orders of the Pope, or had the Templars the time and sense to conceal them first?

The Templar Head

Among the many accusations levelled against the Knights Templar was worship of a bearded head, sometimes given the name Baphomet. During their time in the Holy Land the Templars came across many strange, weird, wonderful and horrifying things, among them the Cthulhu Mythos. Some, perhaps the majority, of Templars were at one time corrupted into service of the Great Old Ones, though not all were necessarily aware of the true significance of the order's strange and secretive rituals.

Adventure Seed: When farmer Isaac Hughes renovated his old stone barn he did not expect to find a small ceramic beaded head. He also did not expect to slip into sleep that night and not awaken. The head, a Templar artefact hidden away after the order's dissolution, is in fact an image of Hypnos. While Hughes' body sleeps, his spirit has been transported to the Dreamlands.

The presence of the head has had a more serious side-effect – Hughes' new reality is leeching into the real world. Citizens have been suffering from traumatic nightmares and daydreams and in the most severe cases suffering what seem to be hallucinations. The walls of the Dreamlands are breeched and unless the head is destroyed soon they may well shatter, enveloping Templecombe as they do.

Wells: Wells of the 1920s and '30s is the smallest city in England, boasting only around 6,000 residents. As with many of the county's major towns, King Ine of Wessex built a church here in the late 6th century. From 1086 until 1589, when Queen Elizabeth granted Wells its city charter, the town was under church control.

At the start of the 10th century the minster was the seat of the local bishop, though shortly after the Norman Conquest the seat was transferred to Bath. After much political manoeuvring over the course of two centuries, during which time the diocese changed name to the Diocese of Glastonbury and then the Diocese of Bath and Glastonbury, it was eventually settled at the Diocese of Bath and Wells, the name it retains to this day, in 1245. Like most of Somerset's major settlements, Wells did not escape the civil wars that tore the country apart. The cathedral was used to house Parliamentary horses during the Civil War and again in Monmouth's rebellion.

Though located many miles inland, Wells was served by a port on the River Axe, Bleadney, during the Saxon period. With a port granting access to the Bristol Channel situated a mere three miles from the town, Wells became a prosperous trading centre. By the Middle Ages politics had moved the main port further to the northeast to the village of Rackley. The port remained in use until 1915, when the Axe was drained for irrigation by an Act of Parliament.

Forbidden Lore

It is not only the Vatican that maintains a library of proscribed works. At the southern end of the Well's Cathedral Library lies the Muniment Room, a room blocked by a heavy oak door, which is always kept locked. As far as the public are concerned, the Muniment Room is nothing more than a restoration room. In truth, this small chamber contains proscribed books on witchcraft, deviltry and the black arts.

Hidden away here are fragmentary copies of *De Vermiis Mysteriis*, *Monstres and their Kynde*, and *True Magick*. Keepers can find details of these partial copies on page 117.

Wells Cathedral: As with most religious centres in Britain, Wells Cathedral was a centre of scholastic study as well as religious devotion. Above the East Cloister are two libraries: the Old Library, which houses manuscripts published between 1600 and 1800; and the Library, for works published since 1800. The great mediaeval collection of illuminated manuscripts was lost during the Reformation, when the texts were heaped upon bonfires. The libraries contain works of history, medicine and science, though the greatest number relate to theology. The Library is accessible to the public on a daily basis except during services, though no books may be checked out. Access to the Old Library is restricted to antiquarians and scholars of good repute due to the fragility of many of the manuscripts. A written request must be sent to the Bishop's Palace at least two months before the intended visit.

NAC: History records that King Ine of Wessex erected a number of minsters in Somerset, yet it was not religious fervour that prompted him to erect so many houses of god as antiquarians would hold. Each and every minster Ine erected stood on what was once sacred ground to the ancient cults whose shadow haunts still the land of Somerset. Ine's missionary work was a crusade of sorts, an attempt to eradicate the darkness, yet like so many before and after his successes were limited. The Venerable Bede records that Ine departed these fair shores for Rome in 726, ostensibly to make room for younger men to rule. Yet letters in the Vatican archive indicate Ine fled to Rome, without leaving a clear line of succession, to seek sanctuary, for the dark powers he stirred sought revenge.

Frithugyth, the wife of Ine's successor, Æthelheard, travelled to Rome in 737 on pilgrimage. That scholars would wish to paint her as a virtuous and pious woman is understandable, for men fear that which they do not understand but I believe her visit was actually to the elderly Ine. No record exists of what transpired in Rome during her visit but on her return she promptly donated sizeable tracts of land to the Bishop of Winchester.

Weston-Super-Mare: The coastal town of Weston-Super-Mare, nestled in the valley between Worlebury Hill and Bleadon Hill, has recently enjoyed a revival as a tourist destination. Due to the unusually powerful tides in the Bristol Channel, low tide leaves the town a mile from the water, exposing a vast area of treacherous mud flats.

Wincanton: Located in east Somerset, Wincanton is another market town whose influence has declined over the centuries. Once a focal point for the wool and cloth trades, it slid into relative obscurity in the 18th century, when the wool industry moved to the north of England. Its current population is around 2,000.

Wookey Hole: Close to Wells like the village of Wookey, Wookey Hole is a limestone cave network whose wondrous caverns were carved by the waters of the River Axe. A paper mill makes use of the raging waters of the Axe. Artefacts in the caves as well as nearby caverns show the caves were inhabited as far back as the Neolithic Age. William Boyd Dawkins carried out the first archaeological investigations in the mid-19th century. Among his discoveries were hyena bones and worked flints. More recent excavations (1904-1914) uncovered Romano-British coins, pottery, weapons and tools. A second excavation takes place in 1926-27. Three caves are accessible to the public, though it is widely suspected that more chambers await discovery once a way is found to dive through the cold, fast-flowing waters of the River Axe.

NAC: Unlike the caves at Cheddar Gorge, the flooded passages of Wookey Hole provided no access for ghouls to reach the surface and thus it is possible the outer caverns were actually occupied. Artefacts found in the caves indicate a religious site rather than an occupational one – the Celtic affinity to water as a place for sacrificing objects has been irrefutably proven and it is widely accepted that the Romans adopted local religion wherever they went. Since the River Axe can easily be traced to the Bristol Channel, it is quite likely the waters are associated with the cult of Dagon, though the witchcraft cults of Shub Niggurath cannot be ruled out completely.

Yeovil: Unlike many Somerset towns, Yeovil is undergoing a period of growth and renewal. The glove industry, first introduced in the 17th century, remains vibrant. Over the course of the last century its population has swelled, rising from a mere 2,800 in 1801 to an impressive 11,000 in the census of 1900. Parts of this population boom was a result of the railway reaching the town in 1853, a lifeline that neglected many other towns in the region. Current industries include glove making, the St. Ivel cheese company and Petters, a company which began producing oil engines but switched to the manufacture of airplanes during the Great War. Large scale expansion of Yeovil's municipal buildings occurs in 1927.

-The City of Bath-

Taunton may be the beating political heart of Somerset but Bath, with its proximity to Bristol and the splendour of its Georgian architecture, is the social centre. Whether investigators come to enjoy the warm waters of the famous baths and rebuild their sanity after a harrowing encounter, are searching for an ancient tome concealed behind one of the many elegant facades, or just fancy a spot of socialising, Bath is the place to be seen in Somerset.

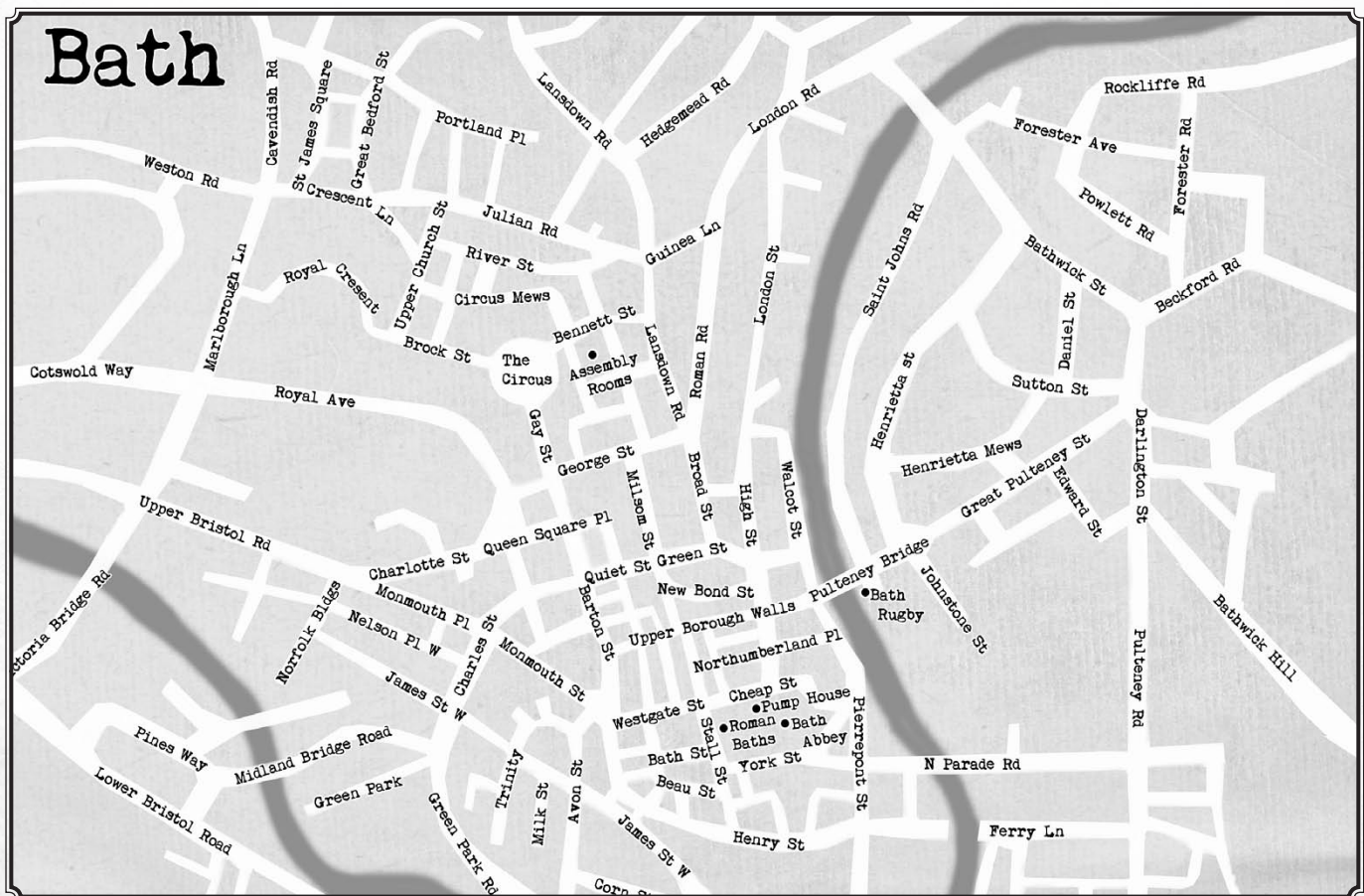
Geology

The city of Bath sits on the southern edge of the Cotswold Hills in an ancient landscape of limestone uplands marked by steep-sided river valleys. The high ground comprises flat-topped hills and downs, while cutting through the countryside along the broad, flat valley bottom is the serpentine River Avon. That Bath exists at all is due to what lies deep beneath the city centre, a thick deposit of clay. The Avon, unable

to penetrate the watertight layer, flows around the narrow peninsula on which the city was raised on three sides, while to the north the ground rises steeply. When people talk of the Bath springs they are commonly referring to the King's Bath spring, which forms part of the Roman temple. Two other springs, the Hot Bath and Cross Bath springs, also well to the surface within the city limits.

History

Bath, like much of Somerset, has a history dating back many thousands of years. In the Neolithic Age, the Avon valley around what is now Bath was dominated by the wide, slow-flowing Avon, a landscape of bogs and marsh, with thick woods adorning the nearby hills. Early man, perhaps penetrating the forest in search of prey animals, could only have marvelled at the site that befell him, for here, among the black quicksand and dank vegetation surfaced a trio of bubbling, steaming springs. The boulders surrounding the springs would have been stained a deep red by iron salts oxidised in the water, with yellow sulphur streaks.



Prehistory

No evidence exists that early man ever settled in the area around the springs but the barrows on the surrounding regions of Lansdown, Charmy Down and Bathampton Down are hard evidence that the high ground was visited, if never actually inhabited by the living. Many of the barrows still stand in the 1920s and '30s, though most have been hastily excavated and plundered by treasure seekers.

By the advent of the Iron Age mankind had ceased to treat the landscape as a purely spiritual or sacred one. Solsbury Hill, which stands 2.5 miles northeast of Bath and provides a commanding view of the city, is a major hill fort. While the outline of its outer defences is still visible, the deep ditches are largely filled and the towering ramparts have been smoothed by erosion and the hand of man. At nearby Budbury and Bathampton, earthworks cut off narrow peninsulas from the rest of the upland, providing excellent fortifications. Yet still there is little evidence of actual habitation and it seems the hill forts and enclosures were places of refuge in the advent of attack or for housing livestock.

That such enclosures stand where they do is not necessarily due to the presence of the hot springs. Along much of its course around the north Somerset landscape the Avon valley is 400 to 1,300 feet across. While today it has been well drained, even in the Iron Age it was a quagmire, difficult and dangerous to traverse. Except at one point – just north of where Pulteney Bridge stands is a gravel hillock (now concealed beneath Henrietta Park). With a span of just 130 feet to cross, it makes for an ideal crossing point, a fact not lost on later colonisers, the Romans.

NAC: The earliest worshippers at the hot springs did not encompass them behind stone walls but left them in their natural environment – a wooded grove. Though often attributed to the veneration of Sulis, a water deity, it is not beyond the bounds of reason the Celts in fact honoured Shub Niggurath, whose faith was that of the Druids. Although the Romans burnt the grove and built baths over the springs, veneration of the Black Mother did not diminish but merely assumed a new guise.

Author's Note: Ainley-Chant is correct in that Shub Niggurath was once venerated in the dank grove but the same applies to countless other dank, wooded places across Britain. Her cult held little power here before the Roman occupation and certainly none during or afterward.

The Romans

The first Roman building erected in the vicinity of Bath was undoubtedly a Roman fort. The easiest route across the river lies here and it can be no coincidence that several major Roman roads eventually converged just north of the modern city. Where the fort may have stood is yet to be discovered, though it probably stood on one of the low hills somewhere close to the hot springs. That Bath became an important centre is evidenced by the slow expansion of the town to both banks of the Avon and the erection of a grand temple.

The earliest temple construction occurred during the years 60-70 AD, the decade immediately following the brutal uprising and equally brutal crushing of Boudicca and the Iceni tribe. The Celtic shrine, long cluttered with votive offerings and lack of maintenance, was extensively cleared, reorganised and subjected to major engineering works to contain and channel the hot springs. In place of a shrine to Sulis rose an elegant temple to Sulis Minerva, a place of worship adorned with public baths already highly regarded as a curative and a grand precinct. In the modern age the Great Bath lies exposed to the elements but in the Roman age it would have been roofed.

NAC: That the Romans continued to venerate the springs, even incorporating 'Sulis' into their pantheon is evidence of the continued worship of the true god to whom the waters were dedicated. Whether or not the majority of Romans understood the true monstrosity behind their faith is questionable. A number of lead tablets inscribed with curses were discovered in the silt at the bottom of the pools, possible prayers to Shub Niggurath to strike dead foes.

Author's Note: The lead tablets were not votive requests to Shub Niggurath, for the spring itself was not particularly sacred to her as mentioned. They were vengeful prayers to an entity known to the Celts and Romans as 'Sulis,' actually a Great Old One known as Shlithneth. See page 113 for ideas on how to use this deity in an adventure seed.

A second temple precinct was added during the reign of Hadrian but much of this lies forever concealed beneath the imposing Bath Abbey. That this occurred is not unsurprising, for a church has stood on the Abbey site since Saxon times and the early church fathers were apt to build atop pagan sites. Archaeological excavations in what would have been the southwest corner of the precinct, the only part not under the Abbey, were carried out during the 1880s. These revealed fragments of stone, evidence of a *tholos*, an ornately decorated circular temple.

Given the rarity of such structures in Western Europe, the *tholos* quite likely stood in pride of place at the centre of the precinct and would have been a grand structure. Archaeologists theorise that it was raised to honour Hadrian's visit to the province of Britannia in 122, for Hadrian was an admirer of Greek architecture, of which the *tholos* is an example. That it was raised in Bath (Roman *Aquae Sulis*, or 'the waters of Sulis') indicates the prestigious nature of the city and no doubt hammered home Roman dominance over the native peoples and their sacred sites.

A major reconstruction project of the entire temple area was carried out in 300 AD. What had begun life as a Celtic shrine had become a Roman temple and then finally evolved into a Romano-British temple, still dedicated to Sulis Minerva but incorporating Celtic architectural styles. The sacred spring, formerly open to the elements, was enclosed in a stone vault.

Of the other two springs, Cross Bath spring seems to have lacked any substantial structures in its vicinity. The area around Hot Bath spring shows evidence of a substantial bathing establishment, including a lead-lined pool.

Later on central Bath and its major monumental structures were enclosed behind a strong wall. While suburbs lay outside the fortifications, the walls limited the city centre's growth until the 18th century. It is unclear whether this was done because the entire city centre had effectively become a single sacred site to the Romano-British and thus needed to be clearly separated from the sprawling suburbs or because after the Roman withdrawal the inhabitants had a sudden need for sturdy defences.

The Saxons and Normans

Rome's death bell had already rung by the early 5th century BC. The British legions were withdrawn to defend the core of the empire or fight in wars for control of the imperial throne, leaving the country largely undefended. The economic, political and social infrastructure, now devoid of centralised leadership, fragmented and Celtic culture quickly re-established itself, sweeping aside the thin veneer of Romanisation it had hidden behind for nigh on four centuries.

Bath was already in decline before the legions abandoned Britannia to her fate; the central city was falling into decay and the outer settlement was largely deserted. Within 150 years much of the once great settlement was a ghost town, inhabited by a handful of shepherds and scavengers.

NAC: Did the fall of Rome really lead to the decline of Bath? Why should this prosperous city, this noble centre of pilgrimage, fail when lesser settlements thrived? Because with the Romans gone the citizens of Britannia, willingly or by coercion, reverted to their ancient practices, those dark faiths of human sacrifice the Romans had failed to stamp out during their long reign. Bath, with its great shrine to Shub Niggurath, became tainted once more by fell rites and unhallowed chants.

In 577, the region fell to the Germanic Saxon tribes sweeping inland from their holding on the eastern coast. Nothing much is said of Bath again until 675, when Osric of the Hwicce granted estates to Abbess Berta on which to found a convent. In 757 monks were given permission to erect an abbey to St. Peter in the city. Though no evidence of this early abbey remains, it is likely it once stood on or close to the site of the later mediaeval abbey.

Under the Saxons Bath was originally part of the Kingdom of Mercia, being transferred to the Kingdom of Wessex late in the 9th century. Whereas the Mercian Saxons seemed content to let the town remain a ruin, those of Wessex began to rebuild and strengthen the crumbling walls. Within 100 years the town boasted a mint, evidence enough that it was considered a defensible site and of economic importance. While the Saxons appear to have avoided the area around the Roman temple, they did reorganise much of the city layout.

NAC: Why did the Saxons, who had by now converted to Christianity, at least on the surface, choose to avoid the great temple and the sacred spring? That 500 years of neglect had left it ruined is unquestionable but evidence from monastic records indicates the Saxons feared the site, saying it was home to dark spirits.

In 1066 the governance of England changed hands again, the Saxons giving way to the Normans. In 1088, Bishop Odo led a rebellion against King William II. Records are vague but it is clear that Bath was sacked and plundered during the short-lived uprising. Yet within three years the king had been persuaded (with a large amount of silver, it is said) to give Bath the Somerset bishopric, in place of the town of Wells, transforming Bath into the most important settlement in the county overnight.

NAC: I was fortunate enough to be privy to a monastic record dating from this period, which claims William II had travelled to Bath at the request of the local priest. William, it is said, was shown a great and terrible secret 'that troubled not the still waters, unlike in days of old,' and that is this forbidden knowledge which caused him to transfer the bishopric so suddenly. Was William told of the dread cult which haunted the Roman ruins? Did he seek to crush it as silently as possible by bringing the power of the local Christian church to Bath, so starting a secret crusade against the powers of darkness?

The Middle Ages and Dissolution

Now the bishop's seat, Bath needed a new cathedral. Work began in 1091 but in 1137 the unfinished structure was razed to the ground during the civil war between Stephen and Matilda. Once the anarchy had ceased, building work continued, with the site now incorporating a monastery as well as the church. Although the Roman baths were long abandoned and ruined, parts of King's Bath was incorporated into the monastery as a healing spa; some 800 years after the baths were last used for this purpose. With the healing waters accessible again many almshouses and hospitals were opened within the city walls.

As the wool trade in Bath grew, so did its prosperity. It is accepted that by the early 1340s the town boasted a population of around 2,000, not large by today's standards but typical of the time. In the poll tax registry of 1379, however, the population had plummeted to around 1,200, a drop largely caused by deaths and migrations brought about by the Black Death epidemic of 1344.

By 1499 the cathedral church was in sore need of renovation. The decision was made to knock down and rebuild the structure on a grander scale but work was halted in 1535 when King Henry VIII began the Dissolution of the monasteries. The monks surrendered their home in 1539 without fuss; having sold most of their holdings to private citizens when the end seemed inevitable. The empty church carcass, picked clean of its valuable metals and glass, was sold off by the crown and transformed by the citizens into the parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul. In 1590, Queen Elizabeth granted Bath a charter of incorporation, turning local governance over to the people.

From the Georgians Onward

By the start of the 18th century Bath was a thriving town of some 2,000 souls again but one hemmed in by its now redundant mediaeval walls. Over the span of the next 100 years the city swelled dramatically, the census of 1801 recording a permanent population of 28,000 inhabitants. Like much of the country Bath had undergone an industrial revolution. Whereas northern cities swelled due to heavy industry, Bath's industry was tourism, primarily brought about by Queen Anne's visits to the spas in 1692, 1702 and 1703.

Throughout much of the 18th century Bath was a vast building site. Many grand and elegant buildings, such as the Assembly Rooms, the Pump Room, the Circus and the Royal Crescent, began life in this period. Open parks, landscaped and modelled on those of France's great palaces, were constructed, while the mediaeval walls and gates were demolished to allow for new growth. The baths were extensively remodelled in Neo-Classical Design, though the Roman heritage of the city lay concealed beneath the streets for another century.

Herschel's Telescope

When Herschel first turned his attention to the stars he sought out the finest lens maker in the world. At that time, Ibrahim ibn Abdullah, a Muslim living in Jerusalem, was widely regarded as the master of the craft. Astrologer, astronomer, philosopher and student of the arcane arts, Ibrahim was paid well and in return he ground a unique lens incorporating beads of pure glass discovered in the Arabian desert long ago. When peered through, Herschel's telescope allows the user to see invisible creatures.

Adventure Hook: Herschel's telescope remains in Bath, having surfaced at an auction several decades ago. No one knows its true origins, believing it to be only an old telescope of fine quality. In the last 20 years a total of six amateur astronomers have possessed the telescope. All have gone stark-raving insane after viewing things man was not meant to see.

In 1781 Sir William Herschel, then living at 19 New King Street, observed the planet Uranus. Herschel, widely credited with the planet's discovery, originally recorded it as a nebulous star or comet but was surprised to discover while attempting to sight it four days later that it had moved position. Within two years, the object was agreed to be a planet by astronomers across the world. Herschel, given the honour naming the star *Georgium Sidus* (George's Star), but this proved unpopular outside Britain. The name Uranus was proposed by Johann Elert Bode, a German astronomer, though it was not until 1850, when HM Nautical Almanac Office adopted the name, that it became universally used.

NAC: What light through yonder window breaks? What light indeed, for the entry in Herschel's wife's diary for 17 March makes it abundantly clear that her husband's sighting of that night was not of the same object as sighted on the 13th March. The first was most definitely 'a nebulous object of wavering luminosity and size,' whereas the second was 'more akin to a star.'

Widely ignored by astronomers at the time as the writing of an unskilled woman, the entry has never been fully explained. Herschel, whose name is forever linked with Uranus, did nothing less than witness first hand a summoning of Azathoth, whose vast form had been called to Earth by his insane worshippers. Only a blind fool would label it coincidence that Herschel later devoted a great deal of his time creating a catalogue of nebulae.

Despite setbacks caused by bankruptcy, the Seven Years War and market crashes, Bath was, for a short time, the place to be seen. Ironically, it was this appeal that led to a swift and brutal decline. The aristocracy, following in Queen Anne's footsteps, had made Bath prosperous and famous, yet that same fame attracted the gentry who, like the aristocrats toward the nobility, desired to be seen in the company of their betters. New hospitals sprang up, as did yet more almshouses. With Bath no longer an exclusive resort, the aristocracy looked elsewhere for their pleasures. As Bath's growth had begun so it declined – the gentry followed the aristocracy, the middle classes followed the gentry and so on.

By the early Victorian age Bath's decline had reached its lowest ebb. Its notorious slums, situated on the Avon's flood plain, were dank hellholes of abject poverty, rampant disease and unstoppable crime. Average life expectancy in the city ranged from 27 for a labourer to 55 for the gentry and professionals.

NAC: What foul cults found willing converts in the dross of humanity? While few prosecutions were ever brought against the inhabitants of the overcrowded slums, commentators of the time make frequent references to 'unnatural practices' and 'affronts to the Lord.' With no hope of bettering their position, did the poorest of the poor turn their eyes heavenward, not to implore God for mercy and salvation but to the stars, wherein dwell the unfathomable gods of elder times?

Economic growth elsewhere gave rise to the canals and railways, both of which passed through Bath, yet they did little to rekindle its fortunes beyond turning southern Bath into an industrial zone. Finally, the Bath Corporation took

action, reinvigorating the baths and spas with an influx of cash and building work, for health spas were in vogue across Europe and if Bath has anything to offer tourists, it was health services. In 1869 the Grand Pump Room Hotel was finished, offering elegance and a range of health treatments found only in Europe. At last the tourists returned in their droves.

The 1880s saw not just growth in the spa industry but in general tourism, for the major building work delved deep beneath the streets, breaking through into the ancient Roman layer. Though the spring which supplied the King's Bath was still in use, the true extent of the Roman bathhouse and temple was only just being discovered. As labourers raised Bath higher, so archaeologists dug down deeper.

Bath of the 1920s remains a grimy city, its Georgian buildings caked in soot from Bath's industrial present, their facades plastered with unsightly decorations added by overzealous Victorians. While the opulence of the Georgian heyday has given way to mass tourism, it is also the place to be seen for those unable or unwilling to travel to the continent.

Places to Visit

Hospitals

Bath and Wessex Orthopedic Hospital: Founded in 1924 on the same site as the Bath War Hospital.

Bath War Hospital: Cares for soldiers injured in the Great War. Changes name to the Bath Ministry of Pensions Hospital in 1922 and closes its doors in 1929.

Mineral Water Hospital: Rheumatic disease hospital opened in 1738. Known locally as 'The Min.'

Royal United Hospital: Formed by a merger of the Bather Casualty Hospital and Bath City Dispensary and Infirmary in 1826. Awarded Royal title in 1864 by Queen Victoria after the opening of the Albert Wing, named after the deceased Prince Consort. Moves location to take over the site of the Bath War Hospital in 1932.

Hotels

As a tourist destination, Bath has plentiful hotels. Those presented here are the grandest and thus the ones most likely to be used by middle and upper class investigators.

Empire Hotel: Opened in 1901. Located northeast of the Abbey and Baths, adjacent to the Guildhall, and overlooking the River Avon. The hotel is widely considered an architectural monstrosity by local residents.

Grand Pump Room Hotel: Situated just across from the eastern end of the Pump Room and Roman Baths. Known more commonly as the Grand Hotel.

Local Nobility

In 1789 Thomas Thynne, 3rd Viscount Weymouth, was granted the title Marquess of Bath. The current titleholder is Thomas Henry Thynne, 5th Marquess of Bath KG, CB, PC. Former Member of Parliament for Frome, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry and Honorary Colonel of both the Royal Wiltshires and the 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, he was made a Privy Counsellor in 1921 and he served as Master of Horse to King George V between 1922-23.

Despite the title giving an association with Bath, the family seat is at Longleat House, Wiltshire.

Newspapers

Bath Chronicle: Weekly newspaper first published in 1760.

Parks and Gardens

Bath boasts several large parks, gardens and open venues, including Alexandra Park (overlooks the city from the top of a hill), Alice Park, Cleveland Pools (boasts an open air, semi-circular lido), Henrietta Park, Parade Gardens (situated near the Abbey along the riverfront) and Sydney Gardens.

Prior Park: Designed by Alexander Pope (poet) and renowned landscape gardener Capability Brown, the 28 acres (113,000 square metres) of Prior Park sits on the hills to the south of Bath and provides a grand view of the historic city. Its lakes and serpentine river are now heavily silted but the Palladian bridge and Gothic temple still stand.

Royal Victoria Park: Bath's largest park covers 57 acres (231,000 square metres), was opened in 1830 by the then-Princess Victoria and is the first park to carry her name. The park is overlooked by the Royal Crescent. Among its many features are the Botanical Gardens covering 9 acres (26,000 square metres), the Victoria Majority Monument (an obelisk erected to commemorate Queen Victoria's coming of age; in 1857 Russian cannons captured during the Crimean War were placed nearby), the Temple of Minerva (taken away in 1924 and rebuilt at the British Empire Exhibition, returned to Bath 1926).

Public and Private Buildings

Assembly Rooms: Once the social hub of Georgian Bath, the Assembly Rooms have lost much of their importance and splendour by the 1920s. Among the many rooms are a ball room (illuminated by five crystal chandeliers and capable of holding 1,000 dancers) and two card rooms.

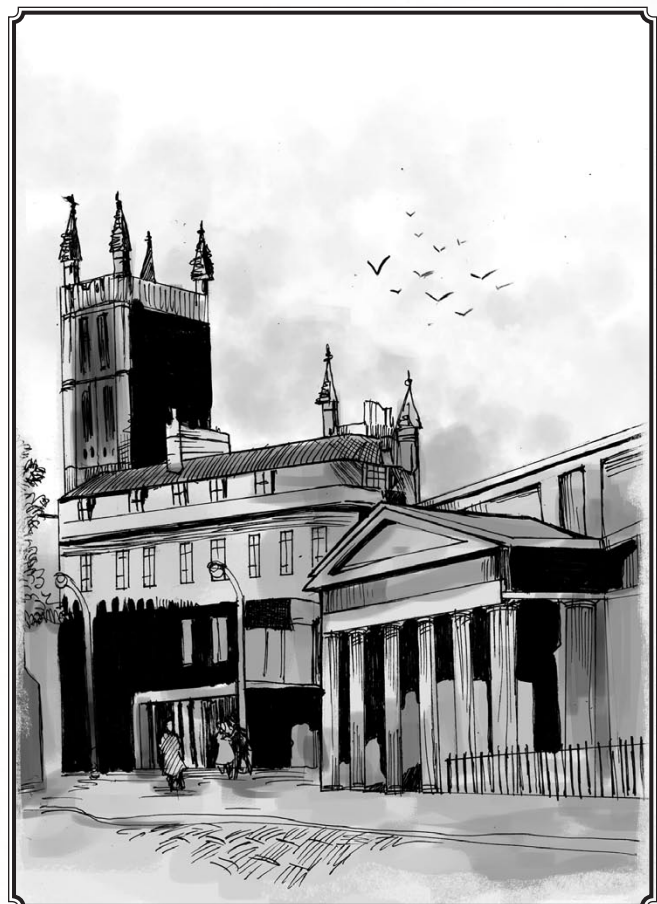
Bath Abbey: More fully the Abbey Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Bath, the Abbey is the best-known and most easily seen landmark in Bath. A religious building has stood on this site since the Roman era.

Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution: Founded 1824. The Institute has an impressive antiquarian and natural history library, a botanic garden, a museum of natural history containing collections of minerals and fossils, cabinets of antiquities, coins and medals, a lecture hall and an art gallery. Scientific lectures are held regularly and are open to all members of the appropriate academic community. In 1925 the building is considered to be in a poor state of repair, leading to the creation of a fund to raise money for restoration.

A Base of Operations

The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution can be a perfect base of operations for characters visiting or exploring Somerset and the West Country. In addition to local scientists and academics, dignitaries regularly visit the Institution from all over the country, and even from as far afield as Europe and the United States.

With its current fundraising efforts, even those outside the academic community are regular visitors here. Having at least one player-character with a plausible reason to be associated with the BRLSI can provide the whole party with a ready-made network of contacts, base of operations, and resources for all manner of exploratory investigations – including some doubtless very special tomes in its well-stocked library!



Bath Theatre Royal: The city's oldest operating theatre.

Beckford's Tower: Created for wealthy resident William Beckford, the tower stands 120 feet high, though Beckford regretted it had not been another 40 feet higher. He prosaically remarked, 'such as it is, it is a famous landmark for drunken farmers on their way home from market.' Once Beckford's library and a private retreat, the tower is a tourist attraction. A Victorian cemetery, a later addition to the site, stands a stone's throw away.

Circus, The: Circular parkland surrounded on three sides by equal length, curved rows of private houses. The houses, of Georgian origin, are adorned in Neo-Classical design, with Doric, Ionic and Corinthian pillars, triglyphs and pictorial emblems. Viewed from above, the Circus, Queen's Square, Gay Street and the nearby Royal Crescent form the shape of a giant key, a Masonic symbol deliberately worked in the street pattern of Bath.

Grand Pump Room: Perhaps the place to be seen in Bath. Visitors can enjoy fine cuisine and drink the spa water pumped from the adjacent Roman baths. The Pump Room is located at ground level with windows overlooking King's Bath, part of the Roman bathhouse, which is below street level.

From the Sun Terrace visitors can enjoy light refreshments while gazing down at the Great Bath. Adjoining the Grand Pump Room is the Pump Room Concert Hall.

Guildhall: The centre of commercial bureaucracy in Bath. The Victoria Art Gallery and an indoor market form part of the same building.

Holburne Museum of Art: Standing in Sydney Gardens, the original building was designed as a hotel and converted to a museum between 1913-16. The Holburne houses an impressive collection of silverware, Old Master paintings, porcelains, glass, furniture, portraits, miniature portraits and landscapes.

Roman Baths: Bath's most famous tourist attraction, the Roman baths are below street level. Much of the subterranean complex was excavated when the baths were renovated in the late 19th century but archaeological work continues. Main features are the Sacred Spring, the Roman Temple to Sulis-Minerva and the Bathhouse, which comprises the centrally-located Great Bath (now opened to the air), changing rooms and saunas to the east and circular plunge pool and hot bath to the west. The spring water surfaces at a temperature of 46° C. Only the Great Bath is open for bathing.

Taking the Waters

Investigators visiting Bath may wish to take the waters, either internally or as a relaxing bath.

Grand Pump Room

Open weekdays from 8.30 am 'til 6 pm, Sunday after morning service 'til 2 pm.

Service	1890s	1920s
Single glass of mineral water	2d	4d
Book of 20 coupons	1s 6d	3s

King's & Queen's Bath: All tickets must be purchased from the office adjoining the Grand Hotel and paid for at time of booking.

Ladies may use the baths on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Gentlemen may use the bath Tuesday

morning until 2 pm. General male access Thursdays and Saturdays and Sunday morning until 9.30 am. Unless otherwise stated the same hours as the Grand Pump Room apply.

Service	1890s	1920s
First class deep bath	2s 6d	3s 6d
Ditto with shower or douche	3s	4s
First class reclining bath	2s	3s
Ditto with shower or douche	2s 6d	3s 6d
Needle douche	2s 6d	3s 6d
Ditto with deep bath	3s	4s
Vertebral douche	1s	1s 6d
Ditto with deep bath	3s 6d	4s 6d
<i>Attendant's fee for any of above</i>	3d	6d
First class bath with massage	3s	4s 6d
<i>Attendant's fee for above</i>	6d	9d
Public bath	6d	1s
<i>Attendant's fee for above</i>	1d	3d

Royal Crescent: An elegant semi-circle of Georgian houses overlooking Royal Victoria Park. These are the most fashionable, and thus expensive, houses in Bath.

Subterranean Passages: The basements of Georgian Bath's terraced houses sink two stories beneath the ground. Running between the lowest levels are a myriad of dark, dank passages, which allowed servants to move about between houses and local shops unseen. These passages cut down through the Norman and Saxon layers as low as the Roman foundations of the city.

Victoria Art Gallery: Despite its Georgian appearance, the gallery was constructed in 1897 (opened 1900) to celebrate Queen Victoria's 60th year on the throne. The exhibits date from the 15th century through to the current era.

Sport

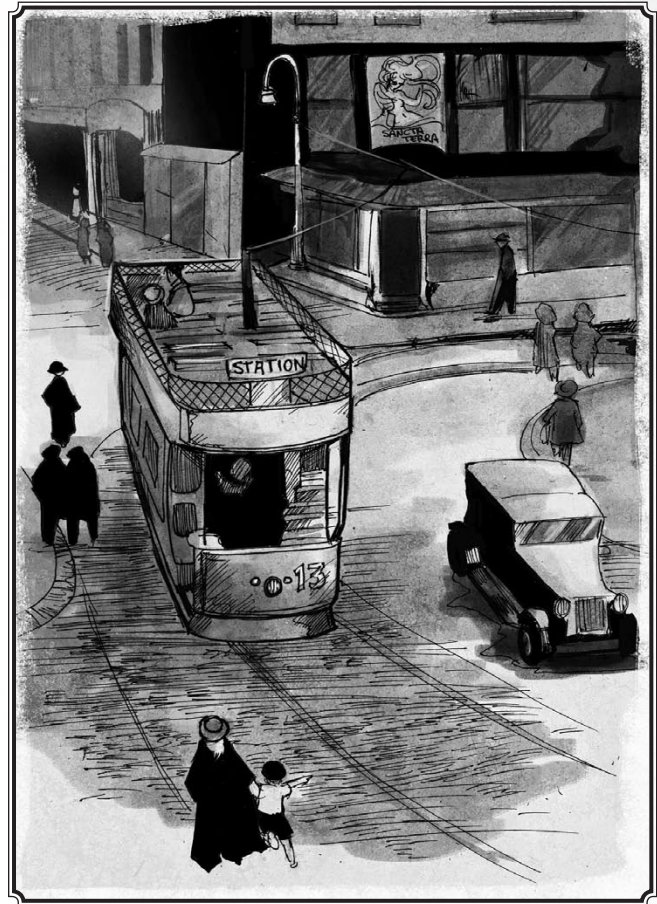
Bath Cricket Club: Amateur club founded 1859. The cricket ground is on the opposite side of the road from Bath Rugby's ground.

Bath Railway: Amateur football club founded in 1889 as Bath A.F.C. The current name dates to 1902. Having won promotion the year before, they play in the Southern League from 1921 until World War II.

Bath Rugby: Founded 1858. Home ground is Pulteney Meadow, a short distance from the city centre.

Transportation

Bath's earliest public transport system, horse-drawn trams, opened in 1880 and ran along a single route. In the early 1900s these were replaced with electric trams carrying passengers through Bath's streets. Of the 40 trams in service, 34 were double decked, the remainder having single decks (and were known as 'whippets'). The service ends in May 1939.





Avalon: The County of Somerset
Legends and Customs

-Legends and Customs-

Myths and legends, no matter where or by whom they are told, all begin with a kernel of truth, the original story which spawned the modern tale. Passed down from generation to generation, the tales take on new meaning, being altered to appease new audiences and sensibilities, changed by the misremembering of facts, or transformed by the simple corruption inevitable when oral knowledge is passed on. This chapter contains a number of Somerset legends, as would be known to modern inhabitants of the county. Thanks to the tireless and detailed work of Professor Noah Ainley-Chant, the actual truth behind these tales may be understood for the first time.

-Alfred's Tower-

Local legends claim that it was on this promontory that King Alfred rallied his army before the great Battle of Ethandun, where King Guthrum, scourge of Somerset, was defeated.

NAC: That King Alfred might have camped upon the land close to the tower that bears his name is debatable and of little interest to my research. As the most famous folly in Somerset, it serves to highlight a more sinister activity than the honouring of kings. The Ethiopes have an old saying; the best place to hide a tree is in a forest. In this instance I refer to the stone towers vital to the summoning of Yog-Sothoth, the patron of sorcerers who dwells in the cracks within our universe. For those who know of the cult's need for stone towers, searching Somerset for one connected to his activities is an endless endeavour, for such follies litter the landscape like leaves in autumn.

Little is made of the ritual blessing that accompanied the construction of King Alfred's Tower. Supposedly carried out by Freemasons to honour the architect, I have no compunction in declaring the strange ceremonies were in fact to honour Yog-Sothoth, whose cult is as widespread in Somerset as that of Shub-Niggurath. What fell rites are invoked on that lofty platform when the sightseers, ignorant of the true purpose of the tower at which they marvel by the warmth of the sun, have packed up their picnics and departed?



-The Dragon of Aller-

The village of Aller was plagued by a terrible dragon, a creature whose breath was both fiery and poisonous and whose scales were so thick that swords and arrows bounced off harmlessly. While like all dragons it had a taste for human flesh, the beast also had a fondness for milk, swooping down on milkmaids carrying full pails or attacking cattle and draining them so dry of milk the animals were left barren, unable to produce milk ever again.

A local knight, Sir John of Aller (a mere peasant in other versions), smothered his body in pitch and donned a thick leather mask to ward himself against the dragon's terrible breath. After bidding the village blacksmith to forge him a long spear of hardened iron, Sir John made the long walk to the dragon's den, a cave in the nearby hills, and snuck up on the beast while it slept off a particularly bountiful feast of human flesh and milk.

The encounter was long and bitterly fought. The enraged dragon torched the land for many miles in an attempt to incinerate its foe, but Sir John was too nimble and too well protected to suffer serious harm. Exhausted by the constant battle, Sir John took leave and leaned on his spear. Sensing victory, the dragon reared up, preparing to strike down and devour its nemesis. Leaping into action, for his fatigue was a ruse to lull the dragon into making a fatal mistake, Sir John thrust his spear into the soft underbelly of the beast, piercing its heart.

Gouts of fiery blood sprayed out of the wound, adding further devastation to the scorched and blackened land. As for Sir John, the legends take one of two forms. In one, he survived the dragon's death throes and entered the creature's lair, where he discovered three baby dragons, each as vicious and deadly as its sire. Too weak to best three fiends, Sir John rallied the villagers of Aller, who sealed up the cave, leaving the infant drakes to die of starvation. The second version claims Sir John met his demise as he inflicted the fatal wound, succumbing to his own injuries and burns.

Not many miles from Aller lies the small village of Low Ham. One of its church's ornaments is a nine feet long spear, rusted with age yet still capable of inflicting grievous injury. This, it is claimed, is the very spear Sir John of Aller used to slay the dragon.

NAC: Many Somerset legends involve dragons. On one level, some of these are perhaps folk memories of Viking raiders and their dragon-prowed long ships given more life by transforming rampaging Norsemen into fantastical beasts. Such transformation also suited the needs of the Church with its imagery of St. George, patron of our fair land and also St. Michael, who slew the dragon that was Satan.

And yet these stories often have an earlier origin, one totally lost in the mists of time and whose existence must be painstakingly researched and pieced together, like a vast puzzle with no picture to guide the inquiring mind. In the case of the dragon of Aller, we must descend deeper into history than the Middle Ages, back to the age of the Roman occupation. Our villain is not, as the later myths claim, a dragon and its offspring but a Celtic cult devoted to the worship of fiery Cthugha. Sir John, the famous knight, was not an individual but a cohort of Roman legionaries dispatched to end the privations of the cultists, who summoned forth demons of fire to ravage the land and cow the peasants into submission. That the land was widely ravaged I have no doubt, for in their dying breaths the fire worshippers would no doubt have tried to invoke their deity, that vast ball of living fire from beyond time and space.

-The Doones-

Were it not for the emotive novel, *Lorna Doone*, the exploits of the infamous Doone family of Exmoor may have passed unnoticed by the wider world. While the novel is a work of fiction, the Doone family, around which the narrative is based, were very much flesh and blood.

The Doones were once aristocrats but fell upon hard times, losing their ancestral lands and holdings and sliding rapidly down the social ladder into abject deprivation and decadence. Their lives turned from opulent living to base crimes, including cannibalism. Sadistic, merciless, rapine and cruel, the Doones plagued the counties of Somerset and Devon, nimbly avoiding the local militia by hopping across the county borders as the need arose to avoid prosecution. Such was their reputation that the mere mention of the family induced terror across a wide part of the West Country.

Eventually the Somerset and Devon militias pooled resources and hunted down the renegade clan. Most of the foul clan were killed during a pitched battle, riddled with musket fire or hacked apart by swords, axes, and billhooks. Those who survived the massacre were duly tried and executed by hanging, drawing and quartering.

NAC: The Doones, made infamous by, and immortalised in, R. D. Blackmore's novel were, if anything, perpetrators of worse crimes than the narrative claims. No crime, no sin, was beyond their reckoning, and so grisly were their acts that I hesitate to put them to paper, lest others of black heart draw inspiration and unleash a new wave of sickening pillage of flesh and spirit. At first the Doones were mere humans, evil to the core, yet capable of redemption should they have striven for such. But their ongoing villainy, particularly the eating of human flesh, warped their bodies and minds, debasing them, transforming from humans into creatures more akin to the ghouls of the Arabian Nights.

The novel refers to the Doone's stronghold, yet history lists this as no building raised upon the land but a cave, dark and dank, where the Doones huddled in the hours of daylight, awaiting the rise of the pale moon by whose soft light they hunted. The historical case may be closed, the Doones succumbing to death through lawful murder or execution but those caves the clan called home extend deep into the earth, merging with caverns unknown to man.

One who has read the novel cannot fail to be stirred when standing upon the bleak moor, gazing across the landscape once plagued by the Doones. Yet one versed in the truth

cannot fail to shudder at the thought that beneath one's feet the descendants of the Doones continue to dwell, far from the burning sun, far from the gaze of man.

-Faeries-

Somerset folklore is sprinkled with tales of faeries. One such tale involves Castle Neroche, a Neolithic hill fort in southern Somerset. Local legends claim that beneath the hill lies a vast store of faerie gold, kept hidden from greedy humans. Around 1750 a group of local men from the village of Staple Fitzpaine, perhaps worse the wear for cider, laid into the hill with mattocks and picks. Having dug through scant inches the men were seized by sudden and overwhelming terror, abandoning their excavations and fleeing to their homes, whereupon they renounced all claims to the gold beneath Castle Neroche. Within a month, every man who partook of the attempted robbery met his death. Some died suddenly, dropping stone cold dead where they stood without obvious cause, while others succumbed to a terrible fever that wracked their body for days. Witnesses to the ghastly deaths reported hearing a buzzing sound in the moments before; a sound often attributed to the appearance of faeries.

NAC: No faeries dwell beneath Castle Neroche, for the inhabitants of the limestone caverns concealed deep in the bowels of the landscape are home to more malevolent creatures, visitors from a world known to those possessed of the terrible lore as Yuggoth. That the men of Staple Fitzpaine paid dearly for their transgression is perhaps unsurprising, for the Creatures from Yuggoth guard their secrets zealously.

Reports of faerie sightings plague the Black Down Hills. A schoolmaster once reported seeing winged faeries dancing at sundown and many locals happily accept that the faeries regularly hold fairs on the hills after sunset.

NAC: By similar reckoning the Black Down Hills host a colony of these alien visitors. At night, when man sleeps, they perform their strange rituals by light of the starry firmament to honour their strange gods. The site, I am

convinced, is an important one, for talk of faerie fairs alludes to large gatherings of these winged visitors.

Mysterious disappearances were sometimes attributed to faeries. Children were warned to avoid certain areas at specific times, usually at night, or risk being taken away to the land of faeries, from where there was no escape. Typical areas associated with faeries were forests, lakes, rivers and bogs, all places where an unfortunate wanderer could meet a sticky end, and ancient monuments viewed with intense superstition, such as barrows, standing stones, stone rings and earth works.

NAC: In certain locations the boundary between our world and the Dreamlands is weak, easily penetrated even by the waking. Glastonbury Tor is an especially localised and exceptionally weak fracture and claims that the Tor leads to the Celtic Underworld are, though misrepresented to fit current occult and spiritual ideas, quite accurate. That these weak boundaries exist close to prehistoric monuments or natural features is to be expected, for it was here our ancestors worshipped their strange gods, imbuing the land with a magical resonance. Many of the tales of folk snatched by the faeries carry a kernel of truth, though in actuality it is more seeming the hapless victim stumbled physically into the Dreamlands. Perhaps some remain trapped to this day, centuries after they left the realm of the wakeful, desperately seeking an escape from the nightmarish reality.

Some folklorists divide the realm of England in twain, with faeries dwelling to the north and the pixies of Cornwall to the south. The demarcation line is the River Parrett, which cuts cleanly through Somerset.

NAC: I put little faith in the existence of faeries as indicated by artists of my age, and certainly place no emphasis on the River Parrett as some sort of magical boundary. The waters of the Parrett flow through the Somerset Levels, an area linked strongly to the deep ones. It may be that the myth relates to rival deep one tribes but my research has given no indication of such conflict or antagonism.

Pixies

As mentioned in the text, some folklorists use the Parrett as a boundary between Cornish pixies (known as *piskies*) and other faeries. That the Parrett was a boundary is true, though it refers to two distinct points in time. Pixies are also an amalgam of two unique entities.

Phase One: The earliest use of the Parrett as a boundary dates from 10,500 BC (the end of the last Ice Age) to around 700 BC.

Ignoring recent legends, which attribute the pixies as being helpful household spirits, many older stories attribute pixies as being naked, sometimes hideously ugly, fond of kidnapping children and, according to the 1867 work *Once A Week*, as 'great explorers familiar with the caves of the ocean, the hidden sources of the streams and the recesses of the land.'

If one accepts that the 'blue' skin of some pixies could in fact be grayish green, then the attributes of pixies very easily apply to deep ones. Thus, as Professor Ainley-Chant suggests, the Parrett did serve as a border between two disparate tribes of deep ones.

Phase Two: The earliest draining of the Somerset Levels, which occurred around 700 BC, marked the beginning of the end of deep one dominance of the region and paved the way for expansion of a rival faith.

Some pixies are described as having the features of goats. This is a gross misinterpretation of the cult of Shub-Niggurath, whose worshipper's headdresses sometimes take the form of goats. The reference to pixies in *Once A Week* merges aspects of the earlier deep ones and their watery habitats with the Black Goat's cult, whose 'hidden recesses of the land' were their temples and sacred places. In this regard, the Parrett boundary is a folk memory of a time when the cult of Shub Niggurath was confined further south than it is today.

-Gorm-

In the days after Arthur, a giant by the name of Gorm (sometimes Goram) haunted the lands just south of Bristol, on the Somerset side of the River Avon. Such was his monstrous size and prestigious strength that Gorm created the Avon gorge by pulling the earth asunder. Fierce and belligerent, Gorm was also extremely clumsy and scores of innocents were crushed beneath his huge feet. His nearest rival was a younger giant by the name of Ghyston.

Both were suitors to Avona, a woman of exceptional beauty. Unable to decide between the two giants, she set them a challenge – whoever first drained a distant lake into the Bristol Channel would win her hand. Gorm chose to dig a canal to the north of Bristol, where Avona lived, while Ghyston opted for a southerly channel. Gorm worked himself hard and eventually grew tired. Slaking his thirst with a barrel or 10 of ale, the lumbering oaf fell asleep having excavated only a narrow trench. Ghyston, younger and more energetic, won the day. The channel excavated is now the Avon gorge.

Gorm awoke to find he had lost the challenge and flew into a rage. Enraged at being defeated, Gorm stamped his feet in fury, causing the waters of the Bristol Channel to churn and toppling distant buildings as the earth kicked and buckled, such was his rage. Unable to control his anger, Gorm attacked his rival. The two giants clashed, wrestling all day. Gorm had strength and experience on his side but his rival was younger, fitter, and more agile. Gorm's advancing years eventually caught up with him and the exhausted giant paused for breath. Young Ghyston sensed victory and charged Gorm, shouldering him off the cliff and into the Bristol Channel. Gorm landed with such force that a tidal wave washed the shores of Somerset and Wales before travelling up the estuary and wreaking havoc in Gloucestershire.

Time passed and Gorm's enormous body rotted away, leaving only his bones. Weathered and battered by wind and rain, these too wore down, until all that remains today are the islands of Flat Holm and Steep Holm, on the Welsh side of the Bristol Channel.

NAC: The legend of Gorm is unusual, for it combines two folklores in a single tale. On one level, the story of the Avon gorge and the islands is merely a fanciful attempt to explain prominent geographical features. Avona is quite obviously the River Avon, afon being the Celtic for river, but is personalised to give the story greater audience appreciation. But peel back the skin of the 16th century myth and one reaches the ancient core around which the tale grew.

The name Gorm is a corruption of Dagon, whose monstrous image has blighted Somerset since the last Ice Age. Ghyston, the younger giant who dwelt north of the river, is none other than the monstrous Eihort, whose cult held power in those lands. Thus, the legend of two giants battling to drain a lake takes on new meaning as a struggle between two rival cults for dominance of the lands on either side of the River Avon, a natural barrier to expansion. Gorm's death in the story is not a literal death but symbolic of the end of deep one expansion beyond the Somerset Levels.

-King Arthur in Somerset-

Arthur, King of the Britons, wise ruler of Camelot, leader of the Knights of the Round Table and defender of England, has had a long association with Somerset.

NAC: Attempts have been made to link King Arthur to Wales, specifically Caerleon, whose name bears passing resemblance to Camelot, yet it is in Somerset the legend has its home. Noble, pious, valorous and wise he may have been, yet Arthur was not of pure human stock. Arthur was sired through deception in Tintagel Castle in Cornwall, a castle whose origins lie far back in time, in an age when the survivors of Atlantis walked our shores. Arthur's true heritage lies in his father's name, Uther Pendragon.

Pendragon is oft translated as meaning 'head dragon', an allusion to Uther's status as a warlord and to a comet Uther witnessed, which blazed across the sky like a dragon. Lazy scholastic endeavours perpetuate this myth, ignoring the facts that clearly indicate that the name is a corruption of Pen Dagon, which more directly translates as 'Dagon's head'.

A more fitting epitaph is 'Dagon's chieftain', for Uther was indeed a powerful chieftain, whose holdings were those of the Somerset Levels, where he and his deep one hybrid kinfolk had ruled for many centuries. Arthur, King of the Britons, a paragon of chivalry, carried in his veins the bloodline of unholy and damnable union!

Geoffrey of Monmouth states in his History of the Kings of Britain, that when Uther became king he had made two golden dragons, one of which he used as his standard. Evidence exists that the standard was composed of both dragons, though neither of the creatures borne aloft by Uther's standard bearer were dragons at all – they were actually fishes, one representing Father Dagon and the other Mother Hydra.

Arthur's death must also be reviewed in the raw light of truth rather than fanciful speculation. As the mortally wounded king lay on the field of battle he bade Sir Bedivere cast the sword Excalibur into the lake, or so the popular story goes. Herein lies another twisted truth, for Excalibur was not a sword but rather an enchanted stone. The very name Excalibur stems from the Latin 'ex calce liberatus', or 'out of the stone'. For centuries scholars have assumed the sword Arthur carried was the one he drew from the stone to prove his rightful claim to the throne, yet it is evident from the stories that Arthur's actual sword, the one he carried in battle, was gifted him by the Lady of the Lake, herself a reference to Mother Hydra.

When Arthur died he was insistent to the point of mania that Excalibur should be thrown into the lake. In Arthur's age, the lake to which he referred was part of the Somerset Levels and was therefore a body of brackish water.

Whatever enchantment was cast upon the stone, it was shortly afterward that a barge arrived to carry Arthur to his grave. Popular imagery shows Arthur accompanied on his final voyage by fair maidens, yet the servants who answered his summons were undoubtedly of his bloodline, deep one hybrids sent to take Arthur back to his rightful people where his injuries could be tended!

And what of the claim put forth by Geoffrey of Monmouth that Arthur is the once and future king, a monarch who shall rise in England's hour of greatest need to lead her to victory? Such notions stir maddening thoughts among those who know that most famous of couplets from the dread Necronomicon: That is not dead which can eternal lie and with strange aeons even death may die.

Brent Knoll

In the time of King Arthur, Brent Knoll carried the name the Mount of Frogs, though this unusual name has never been satisfactorily explained. Legends hold that Arthur, who was holding court in the old Roman legionary town of Caerleon in southwest Wales at the time, knighted a young man by the name of Ider. Like all knights, Ider would have to prove his virtue and valour by undertaking a quest. On learning of three giants, wicked beasts who refused to accept Christ and carried out pagan practices, Arthur made plans to assail their fortress home and put them to the sword. Ider would accompany Arthur into battle to earn his spurs. Alas, Ider's youthful exuberance got the better of him as they approached the Mount of Frogs and he charged ahead without support to deal with the gigantic inhabitants. Valiant to the core, Ider slew each giant in turn, though he was mortally wounded by the last of them and met his death.

A later legend claims that the hill came into being when the Devil, who was excavating Cheddar Gorge, threw down a shovel of earth on the nearest flat spot of land.

In the 1920s, the occultist Dion Fortune (1890-1946) wrote of Brent Knoll in her novel *The Sea Priestess*. Calling it Bell Knowle, she described it as being constructed by colonists from Atlantis. Given the only other reference linking Brent Knoll to Atlantis stems from Noah Ainley-Chant's *Beneath the Green Veil*, it is very probable she read his unfinished manuscript.

NAC: That the hill of Brent Knoll carried the name the Mount of Frogs was not a fanciful label appointed by ancient chroniclers, but rather a true description of its

inhabitants at the time. Although the earth ramparts were carved by survivors of the doom that swallowed Atlantis and the hill served as a colony for many ages, it fell to the deep one hybrids sired in the Somerset Levels after the last Ice Age. Dwelling in isolation, these people were like frogs unto other men, for they were said to have slimy skin, bulbous eyes, and croaking voices.

Protected by the ramparts of Atlantean origin, the hybrids lit great bonfires when the stars were right to summon the true deep ones to mate and engage in sinful rituals. That the mount was inhabited and used for these purposes in Arthur's reign is evident by his attack upon them.

Ider, the young and reckless knight, who sallied forth to his doom did not slay three giants as commonly known to folklore, for the legend of the three giants of Arthurian myth derives from confusion with three gigantic statues, craven images of Father Dagon, Mother Hydra, and another as yet unknown deity of the deep ones. Similarly, Ide did not ride with Arthur, for Arthur's bloodline was that of Father Dagon. Rather, Arthur set out to stop Ider from desecrating the site.

Cadbury Castle

Cadbury Castle has been associated with King Arthur since 1532, when John Leland, an antiquarian appointed by Henry VIII to record England's ancient monuments, visited the site. Leland wrote of the site, *'At the very south end of the church of South-Cadbyri standeth Camallate, sometime a famous town or castle... The people can tell nothing there but that they have heard Arthur much resorted to Camalat.'*

While the site is imposing and its fortifications more than adequate, Cadbury is a far cry from the splendid, fairytale imagery conjured by mediaeval poets, Tennyson's Idylls of the King, and in Malory's widely read Morte d'Arthur. It is impossible to verify Leland's claims and it may be that the antiquarian linked the site with Arthur based on the names of the nearby settlements of Queen Camel and West Camel and the River Cam, a tributary of the River Yeo.

One legend claims the hill is hollow and that King Arthur and his knights sleep inside, neither dead nor living and ready to awaken when England needs them again. Related stories hold that the king and his retinue awaken every seven years to ride the land by night, searching for brigands and ne'er-do-wells who threaten the stability of the kingdom. Like many folktales the exact timing of this ghostly event varies, with Christmas Eve, Midsummer's Eve, Midwinter's Eve and All Saints' Eve being other candidates.

Arthur's Well, located on the lowest rampart, is reputed to have magical powers. Any true-hearted soul who bathes his eyes in the cold waters on St. John's Eve (the evening of June 23) is rewarded with a glimpse of Arthur and his knights resting within the hill.

NAC: Given Arthur's heritage and Cadbury Castle's location on the southern edge of the flooded Levels, it is entirely likely he occupied the site, though whether or not this is fabled Camelot remains to be seen.

Of Arthur's Well little is said in legend, save in one little known tale that attributes its flow to Merlin, who like Moses struck a rock with his staff and water gushed forth. Antiquarians claim that the well is nothing more than a water source for the defenders, though surely any fool can see that a water source would need to be inside the fortress, not on its lower slopes, if it were to serve in a siege! The well and its legendary power clearly serve two purposes specific to Arthur.

First, they are a ritual source of water where Arthur, whose ancestors swam freely in the seas, could bathe his skin and thus renew his ties to the past.

Second, I have read of the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, which unveils hidden things. Could this water have been enchanted by Merlin to work in a similar manner yet with different mechanics? Did Arthur and his knights bathe their eyes in the sacred water so as to be able to penetrate the veil of reality and witness those Things which Man was not meant to See? Yes, yes, a hundred times yes!

Author's Note: A later marginal scribble by Ainley-Chant gives indication that he bathed his eyes in the water of Arthur's Well in 1893, shortly before his erratic behaviour became noticeable. Alas, the exact timing of this incident is not recorded clearly and it seems a specific set of circumstances beyond the eve of June 23 must be required, for countless tourists have washed their eyes with the waters and reported nothing untoward.

Glastonbury Abbey

In the year 1184, a great fire tore through Glastonbury Abbey, destroying many of the buildings. During the renovation work monks began to excavate the grounds. At a depth of 16 feet they struck a solid object, a vast oak trunk containing two skeletons. Laid between them was a lead cross inscribed *Hic jacet sepultus inclitus rex Arthurus in insula Avalonia* ('Here lies interred the illustrious King Arthur on the Isle of Avalon').



According to Gerald of Wales, a chronicler employed to document the rebuilding of the abbey, the thigh bone of King Arthur was placed standing upright and measured against the legs of the tallest monk they could find. Gerald records that the bone stretched from the ground to above the monk's knee, giving the man an estimated height of some seven feet! Lying beside the smaller skeleton, quickly deemed to be that of Queen Guinevere, was a lock of golden hair. When one of the monks grasped the lock it crumbled to dust.

After being displayed for a century, during which time the Abbey grew extremely wealthy on the donations of pilgrims keen to view Arthur's earthly remains, the bones were reinterred in a black marble tomb. The bones and the inscribed cross vanished during the Abbey's destruction at the hands of Henry VIII.

NAC: Arthur's death as recorded elsewhere (author's note: see page 47) matches the legend that the king was carried away by his unholy kin to a watery grave befitting his heritage. The bones at Glastonbury Abbey were, I believe, those of a king and queen but their stock was that of the deep ones with whom they bred.

Why they were buried on land can perhaps be answered by the position of Glastonbury, an island amid a boggy sea, reminiscent of Atlantis or maddening R'lyeh before they sank beneath the waves. To the strange inhabitants of the Levels, burying their kings and queens on this raised ground was a way of linking them to their lost ancestral home and binding their spirits to watch over their living descendants. Evidence to my claim abounds, for the earliest version of Gerald of Wales' manuscript records not a lock of hair but 'a line of dried scale, yellowish with age'. Furthermore, these strange creatures called deep ones stand taller than mankind, as the thigh bone evidences.

Glastonbury Tor

Though the link between Glastonbury Tor and King Arthur is so entrenched it appears to defy time, the joining of this notable landscape feature with the Once and Future King began only in the late 12th century, following the discovery of the graves in Glastonbury Abbey.

Further myth was added during the Victorian occult revival, when interest in the myths of the Celts reached new heights. The Tor became tied to Gwyn ap Nudd, Lord of the Underworld and later King of the Faeries. Stories abounded that a secret gateway to Annwn, the Celtic underworld, also known as Avalon, lay concealed in the terraced surface of the Tor. Gwyn ap Nudd's spiral castle was supposedly used as a model for the circular earthworks, which spiral up and around the Tor.

In the late 1920s (various sources attribute the year to 1925, 1927 and even 1935), local artist Katherine Maltwood devised the theory of the Glastonbury Zodiac. According to her ideas, a cyclopean zodiac was carved into the landscape some 5,000 years ago, with the Tor in the centre. As one walked around the hill, so one traversed the signs of the zodiac. According to one source, her theory came to her in a vision, in which unknown powers revealed the ancient Sumerians were responsible for its construction. What Maltwood failed to take into account was the passage of time – during the era she proposes for the construction of the zodiac the surrounding landscape was not drained and thus many of the landmarks she picks out were submerged.

NAC: Glastonbury Tor, visible from across much of the county, is not, as some believe, a natural geological feature but an artificial hill raised inch-by-inch by Stone Age man. That generations toiled on this endeavour is evident by gaze alone, for the hill is almost 500 feet above the surrounding higher ground on which the town of Glastonbury sits. Academics may argue the great mound served as a fortress, casually forgetting that Glastonbury was an island in this distant age. Without doubt, this manmade edifice was a place at which to honour the old gods, particularly Yog-Sothoth, for post holes atop the surface of the hill once supported a wooden tower.

St. Carantoc and the Dragon

In the reign of King Arthur, St. Carantoc, a Welsh evangelist, came to the West Country seeking to found a new church. Unsure where best to erect the house of God, he beseeched the Lord for guidance. Carantoc possessed a miraculous altar, a vast slab of marble, which he alone could carry without burden. The altar stone was thrown into the Severn Estuary, Carantoc vowing that wherever it washed ashore he would erect a church in God's honour.

While Carantoc waited and prayed for the altar to find a resting place, King Arthur was riding through the Somerset marshes. A ferocious dragon, a beast so ravenous it had consumed hundreds of villagers and withered the crops, was terrorising the land and knowing of Arthur's piety and valour, the locals had begged his assistance in ridding the land of the destructive beast.

Upon reaching the shore of the Severn Estuary, the king spied a marble slab in the water, bobbing as if it were made of wood. After his knights had hauled the weighty slab ashore, Arthur gazed upon the inscription carved into its otherwise unblemished surface – 'The Altar of St. Carantoc.' Knowing nothing of the saint, Arthur ordered the slab to be covered and departed, leaving the stone where it lay.

A short while later, Arthur and his retinue encountered a stranger on the road, a white-haired man possessed of inner radiance and otherworldly calm. The man bade the king to stop, whereupon he enquired as to whether Arthur had seen the altar of St. Carantoc. Fearful the man might be a warlock, for such were known to inhabit the marshes, Arthur demanded the stranger reveal his name and reason for seeking the holy relic. Carantoc, for such was the stranger, smiled warmly and answered with his name. Upon hearing the name, Arthur dismounted and bowed before the saint, for he recognised in the man a far greater devotion to God than he possessed.

Arthur admitted he knew where the altar was to be found, yet in return for such knowledge he requested a favour – Carantoc must summon the dragon from the foul marshes.

Carantoc duly obliged, turning his back to the knights and uttering a strange incantation. In an instant the ground parted amid clouds of stinking sulphur and the slimy beast crawled from its hiding hole.

Fearful, the knights, save for Arthur, withdrew, yet their fears were quickly allayed when the beast slithered toward St. Carantoc and bowed its head, as a man might before the image of Christ. St. Carantoc, after leading the beast to Dunster Castle, ordered the beast to cease its privations and released it back into the marshes. According to one myth, the dragon remained in the area, no longer a fearsome beast to be avoided but instead treated by the locals as a pet.

Good to his word, Arthur awarded St. Carantoc land around the river mouth at Carhampton, for here the altar had washed shore. The saint erected a new church as he had vowed, yet he did not place his miraculous altar stone within the precinct – that great circle of stone was gifted to Arthur, who had it turned into the famous Round Table.

The memory of St. Carantoc's deed lives on to this day. Each May Day, the Minehead Sailors' 'Oss' parades through the streets of the town, 'threatening' one and all to feed it money or risk its wrath. Locals claim the event marks an episode during the time of the Viking raiders, when local sailors disguised their ship as a sea serpent to scare off the marauders. The general shape of the hobby horse leads one to suspect this tale of sea monsters is another fishy story.

NAC: What manner of beast did St. Carantoc encounter that fateful day? Many retellings list the dragon as winged, with slimy scales and swathed in a sickly stench befitting its loathsome nature, while others describe the beast as serpentine, more akin to a wyrm than a dragon. In all likelihood the former is correct, for contemporary Welsh versions of this tale refer to the dragon as "n adeiniog cenedig blanc," or 'winged scaled horse.'

Such a term combined with the beast's other descriptors leads one to deduce that the dragon was a shantak. What is certain is that St. Carantoc knew powerful magics of a most ancient nature, for the story clearly states that his incantation was in a language unknown to Arthur, a man

who would have understood the Celtic tongue of the Welsh and the Latin of the Church. What sorcery St. Carantoc wielded is yet another mystery, for my researches point toward no such charm for enchanting shantaks, yet the saint both summoned the beast from the mire and bound it to his will.

The happy ending of this tale is a much later addition, typical nonsense designed to appeal to audiences and reduce the terror of dragons.

-Ley Lines-

The theory of ley lines dates back to the early 1920s, when Alfred Watkins realised that many of the ancient footpaths running through the Herefordshire landscape ran straight between distant hilltops. Watkins' theory ran that in olden times, back when Britain was more or less covered in dense forest, ancient man cut tracks through the vegetation in order to travel through the landscape. Although millennia have passed, these ancient tracks have remained, now little more than country lanes and bridle paths whose distant origins are forgotten. One key feature of Watkins' work is that ley lines were attributed absolutely no spiritual or mystical significance – they were early roads or ceremonial pathways, a means of travelling between two points with minimal diversion.

In 1936, Dion Fortune, noted elsewhere for her theories concerning Brent Knoll (see page 47), published the novel *The Goat-footed God*, in which she suggested ley lines were natural energy lines linking sites of ancient mystical importance. Since then, ley lines and the occult have been inseparable.

At Glastonbury a dozen or more ley lines cross paths, forming an extremely powerful nexus point. Cadbury Castle, itself associated with Glastonbury by dint of King Arthur, boasts multiple lines crossing, as does Brent Knoll, the royal burgh of Somerton, the cities of Wells and Bath, the Romano-British temple on Lamyatt Beacon and scores of other sites linked to early Mythos related areas of the county.

NAC: It is beyond coincidence that many of Somerset's notable vantage points are associated with dark cults. Not only are such sites clearly visible from many other cult centres, they are connected in the landscape in a manner that lurks at the edge of my reason. Some form of symbolic union, mystical as well as geographic, ties these centres of religion and power together, like nodes in a vast spider's web, stretching out across the landscape and into counties beyond. Situated almost centrally, the imposing Glastonbury Tor is a landmark visible from all edges of the county, almost as if it has been raised deliberately to serve that hallowed purpose.

Author's Note: Although Professor Ainley-Chant disappeared before the theory of ley lines as mundane or magical routes was proposed, his research clearly indicates that he had an inkling of their existence.

-Priddy Monuments-

Five miles north of Wells, high in the Mendip Hills, stands the quaint village of Priddy. Nearby is a Neolithic landscape of barrow mounds and earthworks. Of the barrows, it is widely said a golden coffin, the final resting place of some great king, lies in the heart of one. Such tales have prompted many to dig here but all have come away empty handed.

Sprawled across the landscape are a large number of circular earthworks, known as the Priddy Circles. Three of these are monumental in scale, being over 450 feet in diameter and run in a straight line at close proximity to each other. Scattered among them are many smaller circles, seemingly placed on no particular alignment.

NAC: Viewed from the ground the Priddy Circles are all but invisible, humps and bumps in the fields of little interest to the casual passerby. By fortune and favour I managed to procure a ride in a hot air balloon across Priddy and, armed with my sketch pad, made many drawings. Many years have now passed and I look again at my absent sketches with horror and loathing, for in my mind's eye

they graphically portray the seething iridescent globe of Yog-Sothoth. What insanity possessed our ancestors to carve such graven image into the landscape of this county?

But the madness does not end there! The mounds that form the Priddy Nine-Barrows are placed so as to form a V-shape in the landscape. It is widely reported that the antiquarian who first dug into them found nothing of value but value is subjective to the needs of the searcher. His diary states categorically that he found within the heart of each barrow 'naught but a worthless stone, standing upon its end.' Not only was this landscape sacred to Yog-Sothoth but the cult of He Who Is Not To Be Named worshipped here as well! Oh cursed land, that God would wipe it from existence and spare us the knowledge of our damnable past!

Author's Note: The area surrounding Priddy is swathed in Neolithic tumuli, henges and earthworks.

-The Screaming Skull of Chilton Cantelo-

In 1791 John Collinson wrote *History and Antiquities of Somerset*. Among the tales he recounted was that of the screaming skull of Chilton Cantelo, a story he claimed was already well-documented thanks to multiple eyewitness statements. The skull in question belonged to Theophilus Broome, who departed this world in 1670. As he lay dying, he made his kith and kin vow that his skull would forever remain at the farmhouse where he lived. After honouring Broome's dying request, the family later sought to have the grisly artefact suitably interred on hallowed ground but each time they attempted to remove the skull it let out a terrifying scream. According to popular gossip, the skull remains in the farmhouse to this day, though stashed away out of sight.

NAC: My research into the story of the skull of Chilton Cantlo reveals a wholly different and far more disturbing tale, one which baffles me to this day. Theophilus Broome's dying request was not to have his skull kept in the farmhouse but an object he called 'the receptacle of the brain.'

By chance I stumbled across a lengthy document at Wells Cathedral Library, a written confession of many pages, which sheds light on this cryptic phrase. Alas, after making brief notes on the covering letter, for I was already running late for another appointment, I replaced the fragile manuscript. On my next visit I was perturbed to learn the librarian knew nothing of the Broome confession, nor did a thorough search find any trace of it.

By Broome's own hand it is written that while exploring on the edge of his lands (Broome gives no specific details) he unearthed a cylinder about a foot high and of roughly equal diameter. Through a transparent covering he gazed upon a human brain suspended in milky-white fluid. Found close by was a squat box of metal Broome could not discern. Though he admits he knew not what prompted him to do so, he connected a 'lengthe of thin metalle' which snaked from the box into one of three sockets on the front of the cylinder.

Broome's heart, he says, almost stopped, for as soon as the connection was made an unearthly, distant voice spoke to him. Fearing the hand of sorcery was at work, Broome set to run for his life lest the Devil claim his soul but he halted when the voice told him 'wondrous secrets'. Broome took the cylinder back to his house and was said to converse with it daily.

-The Swine King-

During the mythical age of Britain, long before recorded history, it is said that King Lud Hudibras was the eighth king to rule Britain since the time of Brutus, who founded the land. Lud had but one son, Bladud, an intelligent, witty, erudite and handsome youth possessed of great dignity and humility. Bladud lived in his father's court near Stonehenge, groomed from birth to be king after his father. Yet fate dealt a terrible blow to his father's aspirations, for the white blemishes of leprosy were detected upon Bladud. His parents hid the boy away in the confines of the palace but bad news always has a way of leaking out. Fearful Bladud would start an epidemic, Lud's nobles and peasants alike bade him to outlaw the boy to other lands.

So it was that Bladud left the royal palace and wandered the land, foraging for scraps of food and eating wild berries and nuts. Destitute and starving, Bladud concealed his unsightly sores in a layer of mud and sought work among the peasants. The only employment he could find was as a swineherd, the lowest of the low in society.

Bladud tended the pigs well but his affliction soon spread to the herd. Unable to return the pigs home and fearful of telling their owner what had befallen them, Bladud drove his pigs west into new lands. Eventually he reached the River Avon. Beyond a ford where the river ran shallow lay an abundance of acorns. Bladud set his pigs to roam free while he erected a camp on a nearby hill. This site is known still as Swineford, in memory of the event. (Swineford lies approximately four miles northeast of Bath.)

Bladud was awakened the following morning by the wild screaming of the pigs. Pained by their leprosy, the animals charged down the valley for many miles, Bladud following behind as fast as he could. The beasts ploughed straight into a stinking marsh of rotting vegetation and bubbling, foul-smelling water. All day the future king worked to round up the pigs and, being a conscientious man, he then washed them clean of the muck covering their bodies.

Rather than wail and squeal as they always did, the pigs actually enjoyed the wash. Once the mud was removed, Bladud saw the reason for their pleasure – their ghastly sores were healing! One week later, after constantly bathing the pigs in the mud, they were rid of their leprosy.

On seeing this wondrous cure Bladud repeated the treatment on his own affliction. Now free of his illness, Bladud returned the pigs to their owner and told him of the miraculous cure. Later, the prince returned home and was welcomed by his family as rightful heir to the throne.

By all accounts Bladud became king around 863 BC. The royal palace was moved from near Stonehenge to the area of the bubbling marsh, which Bladud named Caer Badon. The spring was dedicated to the goddess Sulis. Later, the Romans would settle here, enclose the hot springs inside a bathhouse and rename the site Aquae Sulis, ‘the waters of Sulis’. Today, this site is known simply as Bath.

However, there is another version of the story. King Bladud, a man not afflicted by leprosy in this particular tale, supposedly travelled to Greece, where he studied mathematics, philosophy and necromancy. Back in Britain he created the hot springs of Bath through witchcraft. Crafting two urns of burning brass and two of glass filled with salt and brimstone, Bladud buried them beside a natural spring. Once concealed, the urns heated, causing the water to become hot and sulphurous.

Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote of Bladud, claiming he taught the art of nigromancy (literally ‘the black art’) across the entirety of the land of Britain. Modern readers may associate necromancy and nigromancy with graveyards and zombies but the original meaning was magic cast through conversing with spirits.

*Author’s Notes: While this legend is referenced by Professor Ainley-Chant, I have chosen to take the professor’s notes and weave them into the adventure seed **The Waters of Sulis**, which appears later in this supplement.*

-Wassailing-

The origins of wassailing lie far back in time, in the pagan days of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Stemming from the Anglo-Saxon toast *wæs þu hæl*, ‘be thou hale’, wassailing’s pagan origins have largely been erased and the practice is now associated with Christmas and the New Year. Of the two different forms of wassailing, House Wassailing and Apple Wassailing, only the latter concerns us as it continues to be practiced in Somerset.

Author’s Note: The practice has recently undergone something of a revival in Somerset. In my home village, which has a number of apple orchards, wassailing still occurs during early January, albeit every other year. The version of the ceremony detailed here is one my parents participate in.

Many modern wassailers hold the ceremony on the 5th of January, Twelfth Night, though those with a sense of tradition opt for the 17th of January, also known as Old Twelvey Night, which was the twelfth day in the Julian calendar. This association with Twelfth Night dates back only to the late 16th century. When the pagan rite was held has been lost to the mists of time.

Although exact practices vary immensely from village to village, they all involve similar elements. The goal of apple wassailing is to bless the apple orchards to ensure a good crop and drive away evil spirits. After gathering at the local pub for a warming drink, the wassailers progress to the first orchard. Here, bread soaked in cider is hung from the boughs, while copious quantities of cider are poured around the roots of the trees. Adults sing local versions of a wassailing song, while children scream, shout and bang furiously on pots and pans. A fire is then lit (safely away from any trees) and shotguns are fired into the air to drive away evil spirits lurking in the orchard.

Other rites involve a King and Queen, who lead the ceremony. In some cases, only the Queen adorns the tree with cider-bread, being lifted high into the boughs by the participants.



Some wassailing groups have a special Wassailing Cup, a large bowl, often carved from white maple, a tasteless wood. When the ceremony is concluded, each participant takes a sip from the cup which, naturally, is brimming with cider.

*Here we come a wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a wandering
So fair to be seen.*

*Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,*

And God bless you and send you a happy New Year.

And God send you a happy New Year.

Traditional Somerset wassailing song (1871)

NAC: Oh, those revellers bold who brave cold winter nights to cry 'Wassail! Wassail!' when in truth their shouts should echo like unhallowed prayers, 'Iä! Iä! Shub Niggurath', for therein lies the true origin of the word and of the rite! Tamed by ignorance and time, the wassailing rite still contains many elements of its original form. No bread was hung in days of yore, for the boughs draped heavy with human sacrifices. No cider was poured to sate the roots but blood, fresh and warm, straight from sacrifice to recipient. And what apple tree were these that accepted such foul bounty? No tree known to science, for the ancient wassailing ceremony feeds only the Dark Young of Shub Niggurath!

Do not think wassailing is the only practice to Shub Niggurath to survive into our age of reason and science. What of the Yule goat of the Scandinavians, whose ancestors plundered the shores of our fair nation? For who else accepts worship through the figurehead effigy of a goat? None save Shub Niggurath, the Black Goat of the Woods!

-The Wedding of Stanton Drew-

Stanton Drew, a small village located eight miles south of Bristol, is famous for its Neolithic stone circles. The largest is aptly named the Great Circle. With a diameter in excess of 370 feet, the 30 stones (27 of which are visible) marking the perimeter are second in scale only to the more famous circle of Avebury in Wiltshire. The complex is completed by two other circles, the North East Circle, 100 feet in diameter and marked by 10 stones and the South West Circle, which has a diameter of 130 feet and a dozen stones. A recumbent stone known as Hautville's Quoit, lies further north, though its arrow-straight alignment with the centre of the Great and South East Circles clearly indicates that it is part of the site.

The most famous legend concerning the stone circles of Stanton Drew relates to a wedding. One Midsummer Eve revellers gathered on the site to celebrate a wedding.

At midnight the fiddler ceased playing, intent on leaving the party for his bed. When asked why he had stopped, he remarked that the Sabbath Day was close at hand. The bride, who by all accounts was having a fantastic time, flew into a rage, demanding that the fiddler play on and to hell with the Sabbath. Unperturbed by threats and promises of gold, the fiddler departed, lest he offend the Lord.

Despondent, the guests were about to make their way home when a stranger, clad in black, arrived out of nowhere. Although he humbly stated that he was no master fiddler, he promised to play for the party if the bride insisted on dancing through to dawn. Without hesitation she accepted and the party resumed. The fiddler played and the guests danced, and danced, and danced, for until the fiddler rested they found themselves unable to halt their jig. As dawn neared the music slowed, the fiddle's notes now sounding like thousands of tormented souls wailing but still the fiddle played and the guests danced.

The original fiddler had not returned to his house. On hearing the music start up he returned to the site and hid, eager to see who played with such energy and enthusiasm.

Then the first rays of dawn swept across the field. As the light struck each guest, still standing in their dance circles, they were turned to stone. With a bow, the fiddler swept off his hat, revealing two horns. On seeing this the original fiddler's courage failed and he fled, leaving behind him the three stone circles of petrified wedding guests.

It is said the Devil's last words to the inanimate guests were for them to be patient, for one day he would return and they would dance again. That day has yet to come.

NAC: That the stone circles of Stanton Drew relate to my deeper and now overriding quest brings both relief and horror into my mind, for I now know the dark path I tread is not one of a disturbed mind but one of a mind that risks madness at the revelations to which I am heading.

In researching another book I spoke to the farmer in whose fields the stones squat or lie. At that time I was under the illusion that the stones marked, in some primitive manner, the rising and setting of the heavens. By my calculations the heliacal rising of Aldebaran, as an example, would occur on a line drawn between the centres of the Great and South West Circles and this in turn would act as a guide to the imminent summer solstice, an important calendar date for the ancients. Such calculations are no longer accurate today but work with remarkable accuracy when calculated back to the supposed date of the construction of the circles by means of precession of the equinoxes.

With a most casual and friendly tone the farmer informed me that the circles I saw that day were not as the stones once stood, for in the time of his great grandfather the lesser of the circles, which antiquarians have dubbed the South West Circle, was not a circle at all but took the shape of an unmistakable V. He pointed where he believed the original stones had stood and I made due diagrams to aid my research.

At the time I thought nothing of this, for the farmer told me his grandfather considered the shape unlucky and out of kilter with the two circles and thus moved them to bring uniformity to the site. It was only later, after reading much lore on matters occult, that I realised the significance of the V-shaped arrangements. Oh, what ingenuity and madness our ancestors possessed, for the heliacal rising of Aldebaran would be viewed by staring down a line running down the centre of the V-shaped formation, through its hinge stone and across the centre of the Great Circle! Our Stone Age forbears, these brutish, primitive men, constructed this site, this terrible site, to worship He Who Is Not To Be Named!

Author's Note: Ainley-Chant's sketches clearly indicate the 'hinge' stone to which he refers in his notes is the lowest point of the V-formation, where both arms meet. Furthermore, the professor's study of two less grand stone circles on Exmoor, Almsworthy and Withypool clearly indicate an alignment with the heliacal rising of Aldebaran.

-Witchcraft-

The abundance of Neolithic, Celtic and Romano-British sacred sites found across Somerset is testament to its long association with magic. Even in the 1920s, Somerset folk are of a superstitious nature, more apt to believe the darker truth of oral histories than the scholarly penmanship of official records when it comes to witchcraft. Although witchcraft is rarely witnessed these days, its hold on the psyche of Somerset folk remains vice like and is never underestimated.

Recorded instances of witchcraft in the county date back to the 16th century. This is not to suggest that witchcraft only began in relatively recent times, for few medieval records concerning trials survive and of later records many have been destroyed, either deliberately or by accident. While accidents do occur, especially when one considers how susceptible paper or parchment is to water and fire, but such unfortunate events only serve to fuel the flames of superstition.

While the witch of Wookey Hole is now the most famous Somerset witchcraft story, folklore is rife with other tales of deviltry. In 1530 Mother Shirston of Castle Cary was refused milk by a farmer on two separate occasions. After the second the farmer's cows produced only blood and water.

Catherine Axford was accused of similar charges three decades later. Joan Canne, who lived in the 15th century, was believed to have rid herself of three rich husbands by works of deviltry. After her death and burial, the mourners returned to her house only to find the woman alive and well. Her spirit was eventually exorcised by the local priest. In 1609 Margaret Bridge was indicted on witchcraft charges relating to her working a love spell on one William Decon.

The year 1657 saw Jane Brooks of Shepton Mallet sentenced to death by hanging for the crime of using magic to levitate her victims high into the air and then releasing them from her charm, thus causing them to strike the earth and suffer grievous injuries.

Ah, but these are old stories, you say, centuries old, from an age when witchcraft accusations were rife and religious fervour dominant. In that there is much truth but what of the Wincanton man who in 1870 stabbed a woman in the arm for giving him the evil eye, or the trial of another man who committed the same crime in the same place one year later? As late as 1890 the two sisters and one brother of the Sloley family were accused of blighting crops by unleashing a toad familiar onto their neighbour's land. Seven years later a man swore under oath that he had seen with his own eyes a witch flying through the air in east Somerset. Scoff if you wish but witchcraft remains a living and potent force in Somerset.

NAC: When one studies the number of deaths as a result of witchcraft trials one might be led to suspect the cults were eradicated, such was the bloodshed. Yet in truth the cults were scarce diminished, for the great majority of those sentenced to hang or burn by righteous flame were innocents, accused because of petty jealousies or acts of revenge. For every 100 women killed, just one was likely a witch! That witchcraft survived the great purge is not because of fell charm or sorcerous incantation but because witchcraft lurks in the shadows, ever present but never visible. Aye, some women who met their death were possessed of magical powers for sure but these were not true witches. No crone or hag of the dark cults would don a pointed hat and fly through the air upon a broomstick, thus revealing her presence to all!

In the course of my research I have witnessed, from a distance and without detection, the ancient rites being performed in starlit glades on moonless nights. I have heard the dread cry of 'Iä! Iä! Shub Niggurath', whose resonance strikes my heart a flutter and causes my hands to shake even as I write those words. I have heard stories of the Dark Man of witchcraft, who may be Nyarlathotep in disguise, and perceived the flutter of unearthly wings answer the summoning call. Let me state in no uncertain terms that any man who scoffs at the existence of witchcraft in this enlightened age risks his very soul!

The Witch of Wookey Hole

In the second chamber of the Wookey Hole cave complex stands a stalagmite of vaguely anthropomorphic appearance. Known as the Witch of Wookey Hole, it is the subject of several legends, all variants on a common theme.

In days long past, a witch inhabited the caves of Wookey Hole. Once a maiden fair, she was jilted by her lover and turned to black magic to avenge her wounded pride. As the years passed her witching ways transformed her into a bitter-hearted hag of vile appearance. Many years later, a Glastonbury man was betrothed to a Wookey lass. The witch, who delighted in cursing such unions, worked her magic and drove the couple apart.

Years passed and the man, who had become a monk after being jilted, returned to Wookey in search of the witch. After a cat-and-mouse chase he cornered the witch in the caves. Invoking the power of God he blessed the water running through the cave and splashed the witch, who petrified instantly.

NAC: Though the legend of Wookey Hole amuses tourists and is met by scorn by students of geography who recognise the formation as natural deposits built up over eons, none

suspect the truth behind the ugly object. More recent written versions of the legend describe the witch as 'living within the earth,' though older versions state in unambiguous terms that the witch was a 'dweller under the earth.'

It is my supposition that the rock formation is the calcified remains of an infant chthonian, wormlike creatures that tunnel through rock as easily as man walks through air. While no records remain and I must fall back on supposition, it is my belief that an inexperienced cult attempted to call one of the creatures to the surface world, believing that the cave system, much of whose length is unknown to man, would provide a swift channel. Chthonians, by dint of chemical reactions unknown to me, find water fatal. As this infant rose, it splashed through the icy river of the cave and was destroyed, calcified in an instant.

Author's Note: I personally find the idea of a chthonian being calcified rather unlikely. By this stage of the manuscript Ainley-Chant's sanity is close to breaking and his hypotheses becoming more irrational. My own research into the Mythos of Somerset, especially when one considers the great evil beneath Bath, leads me to conclude that the 'witch' is in fact a statue that has become calcified over time.





Avalon: The County of Somerset
Blood and Water

-Blood and Water-

A tale of royal blood and salty water, in which the san graal (Holy Grail) and sang real (holy blood) become entwined with the Cthulhu Mythos.

Introduction

This adventure is specifically set in 1923 and is intended for a party of four to six investigators. The year is important because it marks the death of Princess Helena Augusta Victoria, the third daughter of the late Queen Victoria. While she does not feature prominently in the adventure as an NPC, the entire story is based around her. Keepers wishing to alter the date should read the adventure first so as to fully understand the plot and then substitute another important member of the British royal family or nobility who died in the chosen year.

The antagonists of this adventure are a cult but not one that the investigators can hope to destroy quickly or easily. Their tendrils are rooted in the very heart of British high society and their heritage stretches back to before the Romans. Rather than looking at this adventure as being an open and shut case, where all the threads are neatly wrapped up, the keeper, and indeed the players, should consider it as a possible campaign beginning. While the keeper knows the full story, it is not guaranteed that the investigators will learn the entire truth on this first encounter with their new nemesis.

Behind the pomp and circumstance, Britain's royal and noble families hide many dark secrets. Since the age of Arthur select members of the country's social elite have carried deep one blood in their veins. Most remain unaware of their true lineage, dying of natural causes or accidents before the hideous truth can be revealed. Those who survive to old age are informed of their heritage and given a choice – die like any other mortal or embrace their blood and become immortal. Many are disgusted by the notion and chose to die but a few opt to live forever, albeit in inhuman guise.



Guarding this terrible destiny is a secret society, Meonia, a shadowy outfit whose origins lie with the pagan priests of the Iron Age and who are now completely devoted to Cthulhu, though using warped Christian imagery to give themselves an air of respectability. Their sole function is to guard the secret bloodlines and propagate the deep one line. Meonia had in its possession a sacred relic, a wooden cup known simply as the Grail. Any water poured into the Grail immediately becomes salty. When imbibed, it awakens the latent deep one blood, producing a dramatic and near-instantaneous full transformation. Vague rumours of this chalice of immortality escaped over the millennia, so giving rise to the myth of the Holy Grail.

In 1714 George I became king, so marking the start of the House of Hanover. By the time George ascended the throne he already had children, as did his son and heir, the future George II. Meonia waited patiently until 1737, when George II's eldest son, Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, was approached by Meonia and offered the Grail. His sons, Kings George IV and William IV, reigned over Great Britain, each carrying the secret royal bloodline. (George IV, due to a lapse in judgment, was offered immortality early, a revelation which destroyed his mind and led to increasing insanity.)

When William IV died in 1837 the next in line for the throne was Princess Victoria, daughter of Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of Kent and the fourth son of George III. Her many children married into royal families across Europe, sowing the seeds of the deep ones further afield than Meonia could ever have imagined. Thanks to their efforts, virtually every royal family in Europe carries the hybrid bloodline to this very day.

Recent History

Our story begins with Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (Frederick Christian Charles Augustus), husband of Queen Victoria's third daughter, Princess Helena Augusta Victoria. Prince Christian was unusual in that his ancestors had already mated with deep ones. Thus, he was offered the chance for immortality. In 1917 he accepted the offer and travelled to Meonia's temple beneath Glastonbury Tor where the Grail was kept. Due to a miscommunication, Prince Christian was publicly reported dead three days before his transformation. Unfortunately, the Prince was seen in Glastonbury, though until recently this escaped the cultists' notice.

Daisy Andrews, a down-on-her-luck journalist, has been retained by an author to help research a book on King Arthur and the Holy Grail. During her investigations in Glastonbury, Daisy spoke to a farmer who lived near Glastonbury Tor. His family had farmed the land for generations and she thought he would be a mine of local gossip and folk tales. The farmer (now dead of old age) said he knew very little about the Grail but he did recount a strange event he saw back in October of 1917.

He was out late on the 31st October, All Hallows Eve, hunting rabbits when he saw a party of men carrying flaming torches. Fearing witches were abroad on that dark night he hid in some nearby bushes until they passed. In the centre of the group, dressed in a dark robe, was none other than Prince Christian, whose photograph he had seen in the paper two days earlier along with a report of his death.

Distracted from her Grail quest, Daisy has spent the last few weeks digging deeper into the mystery. Unfortunately for her, her enquiries have finally come to the attention of Meonia. The cult, knowing the truth would destroy the monarchy and expose the depth of their activities, has decided to eliminate the threat and ensure the truth remains concealed.

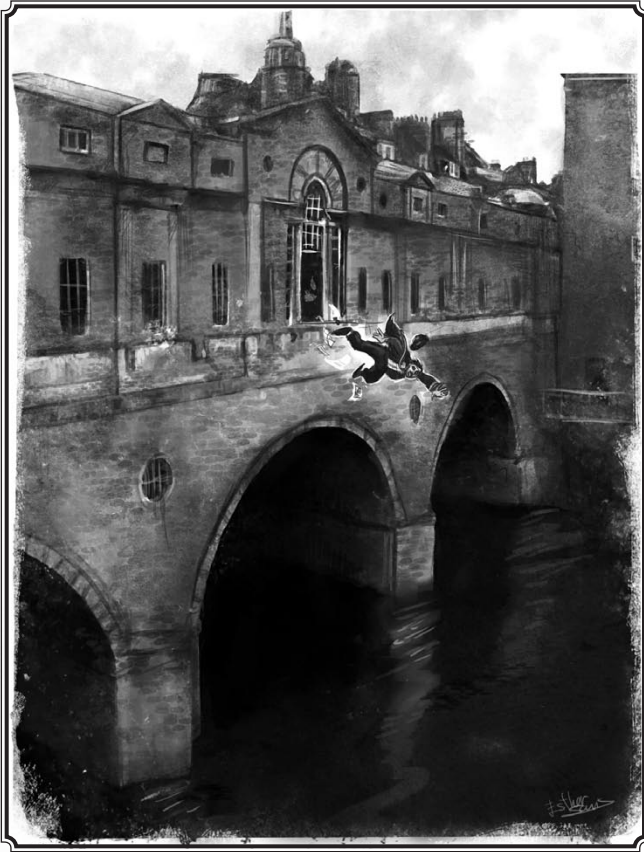
-A Watery Start-

The adventure can begin in any English city, so long as it fulfils two key requirements – there must be a river and a bridge must span the river. It is late evening and the investigators are strolling along the river bank. The keeper should decide exactly why they are here. Perhaps they are returning from a social event, or convalescing after a serious injury in a previous adventure, taking long walks in the fresh air on their doctor's advice.

What better than a bracing stroll along the river to blow away the cobwebs! The sounds of the city, despite their proximity, seem somehow muted, as if the river wishes to maintain an air of tranquillity, a repose from the hustle and bustle of daily life. The tranquillity is suddenly broken by faint sounds – someone calling out for help. Up ahead, you notice three shadowy figures on a nearby bridge. Two of them grab the third, hoisting him over the edge. He hits the water with a loud splash, his cries drowned out. He doesn't surface. The two men on the bridge begin to run back toward the hazy lights of the city.

The victim is one Jonathan Stafford, a newspaper reporter working for The Times. He carries no identification, though his identity will be learned later.

Daisy Andrews asked Stafford to investigate some leads, not realising that she had inadvertently placed her friend in danger. Grabbed by Meonia after leaving the local library, Stafford was brutally beaten into revealing what he knew before being dumped into the river to drown.



There is no hope of catching the two assailants – by the time the investigators reach the bridge they are long gone. A good 30 seconds have passed by the time the investigators reach the bank nearest the point where the man hit the water – if they are to attempt a rescue, they need to act quickly.

Underwater Rescue

Diving into the cold river and swimming to the man's location, indicated by a rapidly dwindling stream of bubbles, requires a Swim roll. Once there, an investigator must make a Swim roll to dive beneath the surface and a Spot Hidden roll to locate the drowning man. With success, they find the man. His head is slumped forward and he is making no attempts to struggle. Tethered to his ankles by thick rope is a heavy stone, keeping the poor sap weighted to the river bottom.

Rescuing the man can be achieved one of three ways. First, the investigators may try to drag him, stone and all, to the surface. This requires a STR x1% roll. Second, they may untie the ropes. Due to the secure fastening this requires an DEX x 2% roll. Third, an investigator may try to cut through the ropes, which have 8 hit points. In all cases a Swim roll is required before each action in order to stay submerged and remain in place against the strong current.

For purposes of the plot the man never actually drowns. However, the investigators should always feel that the situation is desperate and time is against them. Casually remind them of how long the victim has been in the water and describe the stream of bubbles from his mouth and nose diminishing.

Last Words and Clues

Once the victim is dragged out of the water it becomes readily apparent that he is near death. In addition to being half-drowned he has suffered a heavy beating. His face is severely battered, the swelling forcing both eyes shut, his nose is broken, several teeth are missing and the front of his white linen shirt is stained with blood, diluted pink by the water. No amount of medical aid can save him now.

His swollen eyes open a crack as he faintly mouths something over and over. A Listen roll at -20% is required to understand the whisper. An investigator placing their ear to the man's mouth suffers no penalty. With success, the name 'Daisy Andrews' is heard. Once the investigators have learned the name, the man dies. If one of the investigators is a reporter he can make an INT x2% roll. Success means he has heard of a Daisy Andrews – she is a freelance reporter based out of London. Naturally he cannot be sure that it is the same woman.

Anyone examining his chest for the cause of his bloodstained shirt discovers the symbols III:XXIII:XX carved deep into his flesh. Witnessing this grisly mutilation incurs a 0/1 Sanity Point loss.

The letters refer to a Bible passage. The keeper may allow the investigators to make an Idea roll to work out the significance of the Roman numerals, or he may let the players stew for a short while so they can deduce it themselves. While a clergyman can quote the relevant passage from memory with

a successful Know roll, others must roll Know -50% to do so. Additional modifiers may be applied for investigators known to be conversant with the Bible and for atheists. Searching a Bible requires no roll. Once deciphered, give the players Handout #1.

The carving is typical of the madness coursing through Meonia. It alludes to the grail ('the cup after the supper'), to the secret bloodline ('the new testament in my blood'), and reaffirms loyalty to Cthulhu and the deep ones ('which I shed for you'). Of course, none of this is discernible to the investigators.

Anyone who specifically says they are checking the man's fingers or who makes a successful Spot Hidden roll at -20% notices ink on his fingertips. An INT x 3% roll indicates the smudges are most likely newspaper ink. From this the logical assumptions are that the man was recently thumbing through a lot of newspapers or is involved in the printing trade.

Honest Citizens

Law-abiding investigators may wish to alert the police; after all, an attempted murder has just taken place. The police take statements, ask informative questions and take down the investigators' particulars. With no reliable description of the assailants, the police admit it is unlikely that the perpetrators will ever be caught.

Once the paperwork is filed it quickly comes to the attention of a Meonia agent. It is quickly destroyed and the case is forgotten. Investigators who keep an eye on the newspapers find no trace of the story, an unusual occurrence. Should they return to the police station at any point, no one claims to remember the case being brought to their attention.

Merely reporting the attempted murder does not cause Meonia to hound the investigators. At this stage, they believe that they are simply inconvenient eyewitnesses but ones unable to identify any of their members. Should the investigators become more persistent in pursuing the matter, Meonia begins to take an interest. See the sidebar **Waking the Hornets** for this eventuality.

Finding Daisy Andrews

Tracking down the name Daisy Andrews typically requires a Library Use roll. Although there are many women with that name, only one stands out as a potential lead – a freelance reporter based in London. She has submitted no articles to any newspaper in the last year, though. Her last known address is listed as 14 Chase Gardens, Enfield, North London. A telephone number is provided.

Reporters who recognise the name can gain the same information from their editor. This requires a Fast Talk or Persuade roll, depending on the approach the investigator takes and his editor's demeanour. It also takes four hours continuous work – arguments must be made, phone calls made, favours promised and so on.

-The Plot Thickens-

If the investigators telephone ahead someone picks up the receiver. However, they say nothing. After a few moments, hopefully ones in which the investigators say something, the line goes dead. Repeated connections are not answered. Something is surely amiss, which hopefully prompts the party to pay the house a visit.

Daisy's house is in a quiet suburb in North London. Knocking at the door elicits no answer, though the door does swing open! The house has obviously been ransacked – books and papers are strewn over the study floor, drawers and cupboards all through the house have been opened and their contents flung aside and furniture has been over turned. Lying on the bed is the battered and bruised corpse of a woman – Daisy Andrews (0/1D2 Sanity loss).

Meonia have already been here to exact retribution for delving into their affairs. Disturbed by the investigators entering, the Meonia goons escaped out the window and into the garden. They make a reappearance soon.

Clues

By searching the house the following clues may be discovered. The keeper may call for Spot Hidden rolls if the party is performing a general search or allow the clues to be found automatically by those searching through specific areas of the house.

The Body

The blood on Daisy's body is not just fresh, it is still warm. A Medicine roll reveals the injuries were inflicted no more than a few minutes ago. Clutched in Daisy's right hand is a fragment of brown material. Pinned to the scrap is a silver fish with oak leaves for scales (see page 72).

The Bed

Taped under the bed is a handwritten journal. It is inscribed in shorthand, something any reporter knows how to decipher. Otherwise, the investigators may have to call on the services of a journalist. The diary's key points are reproduced as Handout #4.

Facts that the investigators may know regarding Prince Christian are detailed here (see **The Books**). Investigators making an Occult roll or EDU x 3% know of Chalice Well. According to legend Joseph of Aramathea placed the Holy Grail here, causing the waters to run red. The Well is located at the base of Glastonbury Tor, in Somerset.

Any attempts to research Michael Evans lead to (literally) dead ends – he was the man they fished from the river; a man whose body has subsequently disappeared from the morgue.

The Books

Most of the books relate to the King Arthur and the Holy Grail. Investigators making an Occult roll know the basic story of the Grail – supposedly the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper, it was used to catch his blood during the Crucifixion. Popular legends claim that it was brought to England by Joseph of Aramathea afterward. Many legends claim that drinking from the cup grants immortality.

Tucked into one of the Grail books are a photograph of a distinguished gentleman and a photograph of an ornate

tombstone. Any search through the books uncovers this clue. The man's photograph and the tombstone inscription are given as Player Handout #1.



Photographs

Identifying the man is a matter of common sense – it is extremely likely that the tombstone belongs to him. Knowing more about the man requires an EDU x 3% roll. Success reveals he was a minor German prince who became a member of the royal family by marrying Princess Helena, Queen Victoria's third daughter. He and his wife had six children, three of whom are still living. Princess Helena lives in Schomberg House, a mansion in Pall Mall, London.

Any upper class English investigators know 'KG' means Knight of the Garter and 'PC' is Privy Councillor. A Know roll can be used if toffs are missing from the party.

A clergyman can quote the relevant Bible passage from memory with a successful Know roll, others must roll Know -50% to do so. Additional modifiers may be applied for investigators known to be conversant with the Bible and for atheists. Searching a Bible requires no roll. Once worked out, give the players Handout #2.

The symbol of the fish with oak leaf scales is less well known and requires an Occult roll at -40%. Success reveals it be the symbol of a shadowy group called Meonia. Supposedly drawing their heritage from the ancient druids, they are secret protectors of England and the British Empire, operating behind the scenes to remove threats to national security. Their existence has never been verified.

Library Use

Investigators who fail on the spot rolls can use Library Use later regarding the Holy Grail, Chalice Well, Prince Christian and the Meonia symbol. The latter incurs a -50% penalty.

Library Use also reveals Prince Christian is buried in Frogmore, a private garden within Home Park, which adjoins Windsor Castle. Among the tombs and graves are the mausoleums of the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother, and Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. (In 1928 it becomes the Royal Burial Ground, the final resting place of many members of the royal family, though excluding most monarchs. Edward VIII, who abdicated, is interred here after his death in 1972.)

An Inspector Calls

Before the investigators vacate the house there is a sharp knock at the front door. Should the investigators answer, they see a tall man dressed in a long, brown coat accompanied by three police officers.

These policemen are in fact the Meonia goons responsible for killing Daisy and searching the house. They are low-level members and know nothing of the cult's true nature. They honestly believe that they work for a Masonic cult avowed to defend the Empire from threats internal and external. As far as they are concerned, Daisy Andrews was a dangerous subversive looking to sully the name of the royal family.

Having been disturbed before finding what they were after (Daisy's diary, which they believe contains information on an anarchist ring operating in London) they have returned. The presence of the investigators, while initially a nuisance, has actually played into the cult's hands, for now they can arrest the investigators for murder, declare the house a crime scene and search it more thoroughly.

'Good afternoon, sir,' the tall man says. 'My name is Inspector Baker of Scotland Yard. We've had reports of screaming from this address. Would you mind if we came in and took a look around, just to make sure everything is alright?'

The man can produce identity papers attaining to his occupation if asked – not surprising given that he really is Inspector Baker of the Yard. A revealing clue that something is wrong requires a Spot Hidden roll at -20% – part of the inspector's coat lapel has been ripped off.

If the investigators have discovered the torn lapel in Daisy's hands they are bound to be suspicious. Each goon is armed and quite prepared to use violence to achieve Meonia's ends. Should access be denied (politely or otherwise) or the door slammed in their face, they draw their firearms and attempt to batter their way inside. Any hope of a peaceful solution is now over – the goons intend to kill the intruders and then claim they gunned down the murderers of Daisy Andrews.

Unaware of the link between Daisy's death and the police at the door, or perhaps hoping to bluff or convince them of their innocence later, the investigators might actually invite them inside. On seeing the mess, the inspector immediately demands to know what has occurred. In truth he is fishing to find out what the investigators' link to Daisy is. Should it become apparent that they know too much (mentioning Prince Christian is enough, as the goons have been briefed that his name will be used to besmirch that of the King), then violence ensues as the investigators are quickly charged with murder. Given that the police have not actually found a corpse yet, this should be enough to enlighten the investigators as to the goons' true identities.

Otherwise, the police search the house in a seemingly normal but routine fashion, quickly investigating each room and taking notes. Evidence of foul play (such as a corpse or a bloodstained bed) again leads to immediate accusations of murder.

Aftermath

Ideally the investigators win out, defeating the thugs. Each has a small Meonia pin hidden behind his lapel, the cult's way of identifying members to each other. Taking these may prove useful later. Goons taken alive reveal nothing other than that they serve the Empire and work for the greater good. They accuse Daisy Andrews of being an anarchist looking to discredit the royal family; an act that cannot go unpunished. They do not, however, acknowledge the existence of Meonia unless subjected to extreme physical torture.

The investigators now have two clues to act upon – Prince Christian's grave and the Chalice Well.

If the Meonia goons win, it is game over for the investigators – the cult dare not risk a public trial. Not only are the investigators innocent and not even Meonia can guarantee a jury can be swayed to their side but any mention of Prince Christian still being alive three days after his death may serve only to prompt others to take up the investigation. A quick death is the surest solution to the current problem.

-A Grave Event-

Home Park is a private garden attached to Windsor Castle. Within the grounds stands Frogmore House, which from 1925 onward Queen Mary turns into a private museum housing the Royal Family's souvenirs, the Royal Mausoleums and the graves of many lesser members of the royal family.

Any attempts to have the body exhumed through legal channels meet with no luck – not only do the investigators have a highly fanciful and defamatory second-hand story as 'evidence' but Meonia has enough clout to block such activities. Since the keeper of the graves is a Meonia member, they learn of the request very quickly.

Given that the request ties in with Daisy Andrews' research, making a request of this ilk automatically rings alarm bells in the upper echelons of Meonia.

Waking the Hornets

Should the investigators alert Meonia to their interest in Daisy Andrews' quest for truth the cult is quick to take action.

Meonia could quite easily use the newspapers, publicly framing the investigators for murder. In this instance, though, they would rather not have their foes fall into the hands of outsiders – their aim is to contain the story, not risk it spreading.

First, warning letters are sent to the investigators' houses, telling them to stop their enquiries in the name of national security or face severe but unnamed consequences. When that fails to deter them, as it undoubtedly will, Meonia begins hunting the investigators. How successful they are depends on the keeper's wishes and where the investigators go – their homes and major railway stations will be watched carefully. Rather than commit acts of base violence, the sinister cult employs Curse of the Stone spells at the earliest opportunity.

If the keeper wants to move the investigators abroad as part of his campaign (perhaps because he has just bought a new gaming supplement), this is the ideal chance to do so. Instead of making threats, Meonia does broadcast the investigators' names and photographs through the newspapers. Even when the adventure is over the investigators remain wanted men and women.

With its vast perimeter, entering the park unseen by night is not difficult, despite security patrols. Prince Christian is buried in the Schleswig-Holstein plot, close to Queen Victoria's mausoleum. The gravestone is exactly as per Daisy's photograph, making it easy to find. Removing the cover stone and excavating the dirt takes a good two hours, assuming a fair division of labour.



After an hour, though, the investigators are disturbed by a voice calling out from the gloom. A figure emerges from the shadows of the nearby mausoleum's railings and touches the brim of his cloth cap in polite gesture. A flash of flame erupts as the man strikes a match to light his pipe, revealing an elderly, weather-worn face. Cradled in his arms is a shotgun, both barrels snapped closed.

'Looking for valuables, are you?' the old man smiles. 'Big waste of your time if you ask me. Now how about you stop making work for me and be on your ways, eh? I won't say nothing to anyone.'

The investigators may wish to question the old man. Possible lines of enquiry and answers are given here. The chance to gather important information is now in the hands of the players, not their dice.

Q: Who are you?

A: *'Folk call me Old Jed. I'm the chief gravedigger hereabouts. Been watching you slave away for an hour or so now. I thought perhaps you was helping dig the new grave for me but seems I'm out of luck.'*

Q: What new grave?

A: *Jed gestures with his pipe at a vacant plot close to the Prince's. 'That plot there. Been told to expect a new member of the family, so I have. Dig it deep and dig it well, my old gaffer said, so that is what I was coming to do when I saw you chaps.'*

Q: Any idea who for?

A: *'That's for Princess Helena. I reckon she must be sick and near to death, because as far as I know she ain't dead yet. Not unusual, though. Been doing this for 50 years now and many a grave has been cut before the owner was ready to occupy it.'*

Q: Why is digging this grave a waste of time?

A: *Jed draws deeply on his pipe, a conspiratorial smile on his lips. 'Because it's empty, near as dammit. Ain't nothing in that box save for some rocks.'*

Q: And you know this how?

A: *'Because I took a peek before I covered it in earth. Don't go thinking me a tomb robber now; that's your line of work, not mine. I just like to take a last look at them, see them in all their finery. He wasn't the first empty coffin and he won't be the last. I figure there's another cemetery somewhere. This one here is for show and the bodies are kept somewhere else, where they can rest more peacefully.'*

Q: What about Queen Victoria? Is her body there?

A: *'Don't worry, she's resting soundly with her beloved Albert,' Jed replies, turning briefly to face the mausoleum behind him and doffing his cap in respect.*

Q: Do you intend to use that shotgun?

A: *Jed sniffs the air casually. 'Reckon as not. Nothing here needs shooting.'*

Q: And you won't call the police?

A: *'What good will that do? You think people around here want the world knowing these graves is mostly empty? Serves no one no good, does it? No, you be good chaps and scoot, and I'll clean up your mess.'*

Q: Have you ever seen this symbol before? (referring to the Meonia one)

A: *'Pick a grave around here. Chances are you'll get lucky sooner rather than later. No idea what it means, though at least some of the graves as have it are empty. If you're asking for opinions, though, I have one – some sort of clue to show which graves are empty and which are not.'*

Optional Encounter

This adventure is more a conspiracy story than a full-on horror story. Keepers whose groups enjoy battling lesser minions of the Mythos should be catered for with this optional encounter.

While the burial place of the royals is duly respected by humans, those foul carrion feeders known as ghouls see nothing more than another meal. While the corpses interred in stone mausoleums are almost impossible to reach, ground burials are a veritable feast. On the same night the investigators are digging up the grave, a small band of ghouls is hunting for its next meal. With corpses few and far between, the chance for live flesh is too good an opportunity to miss.

-Glastonbury-

In the 21st century Glastonbury is very much at the centre of New Age culture. In the 1920s, the roots for this mystic boom are being laid but they will not bear fruit for another three or four decades. The ruined abbey, impressive Tor and Chalice Well do attract tourists but the spiritual connection is extremely weak.

Chalice Well

Chalice Well lies at the foot of Glastonbury Tor, is signposted and can be reached on foot in 15 minutes. In later years the surrounding area will be sculpted into an ornate garden but in the 1920s the area is little more than a cleared patch of ground amid a copse of yew trees. Near to the well is a spring, from which reddish water bubbles vigorously at the rate of 25,000 gallons a day. A Chemistry roll reveals the likely cause of the red hue is iron oxide, though it requires laboratory analysis to prove this theory.



The well lid, a wooden disc with a wrought iron surround, has two padlocks but neither is currently locked. Checking the padlocks reveals a tell-tale sign – an engraving of a fish with oak leaf scales. Seemingly plain on top, the underside reveals wrought ironwork in the shape of two interlocked circles broken by a vertical line.

An Occult roll reveals the two circles form a *Vesica Pisces* (Latin for 'bladder of a fish'), a symbol associated with Freemasonry. The vertical bar supposedly symbolises Excalibur (In fact, the two circles represent the bloodlines of the royal family and nobility and the deep ones, intersecting so as to show their union. The use of the word *pisces*, 'fish', in describing this symbol is no accident.). A History roll made at -30% recalls that the lid was designed in 1919 by church architect and archaeologist Frederick Bligh Bond. Given time to perform a Library Use roll, the investigators can learn that Bligh Bond is (he dies in 1945) both a Freemason and a member of the Theosophical Society.

Beneath, the well sinks to a depth of nine feet, whereupon it branches into two stone-lined chambers. Despite being called a well, the water is only knee deep at the bottom. Rusted handles allow access down the shaft.

Left Hand Chamber: Adorning the back wall of this chamber is an ancient engraving of a cup above which is a *Vesica Pisces*. Early Christians assumed this was carved by Joseph of Aramathea and symbolised the Holy Grail, after which the well is named. The engraving actually goes back many centuries earlier, to Neolithic man's first union with the deep ones. Later Christian graffiti (in Latin) is scratched into many of the stones.

Right Hand Chamber: On the rear wall of the chamber is a faded mural. Painted in the Middle Ages by servants of Meonia, it shows a party of six individuals marching up the right-hand side of a steep hill atop which rises a tall tower. One of the figures wears what could be a crown. Coming down from the hill on the left hand-side are five figures – the one with the crown is not present. This is the investigators' final clue – they need to visit Glastonbury Tor.

Glastonbury Tor

Professor Ainley-Chant's supposition that Glastonbury Tor is an artificial structure is quite correct. Although in later centuries it was used by cultists of Yog-Sothoth, it originally served the deep ones. Deep within the mound is a secret, stone-lined chamber. In days of yore, human kings would climb to the top of the Tor and light a beacon. Clearly visible from the Bristol Channel, the beacon was a summons for the deep ones, a call that another was ready to join their ranks. While the deep ones made their way inland via a saltwater river running far beneath the Somerset Levels, the humans would descend a spiral staircase into the mound's heart.

The practice was largely abandoned during the early Dark Ages, for the rise of petty tyrants and lesser kings meant there was no ruler worthy of transformation, at least not until Arthur came along. At some point after the Norman Conquest, the church of St. Michael was raised on the summit, a convenient cover for Meonia who had already long transformed their sacred imagery into ones less offensive to Christians.

The current tower dates from around 1360 and formed part of a larger church destroyed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. At least that is the official history. The second church, also dedicated to St. Michael, was actually ripped down after Henry VIII was offered immortality. Fearing the cult had spread throughout the entire Church, Henry's anger against Rome was a convenient excuse to try to purge his realm of the vile heathens.

Despite Henry's best efforts, Meonia survived (though not without losses and setbacks). Twenty years after Henry's death, the concealed entrance was reopened and the ceremonies recommenced. Access to the chamber is gained through the hollow church tower. One of the flagstones is marked with a tiny fish emblem, unnoticeable by those who come here for the view and casually survey the ruins but clear to see for those who know that something is concealed here.

The flagstone lifts, revealing a tightly winding spiral staircase. The stairs descend 200 feet into a small chamber, from which branches a low tunnel.

Immortality Beckons

At the far end of the tunnel is a vast, stone lined chamber supported by ancient wooden beams, grey with age and sagging precariously. Here, in this sacred place, the transformation from human of royal blood to immortal deep one has taken place for millennia. Flickering torches cast dim light over the chamber, though the area outside the centre is heavily shadowed. Directly opposite from where the tunnel enters is a second tunnel. This one leads downward to the underground river the deep ones navigate to reach the site.

Cut into the flagstone floor is another *Vesica Pisces*, this one measuring 10 yards across. In the centre of the overlap rises a small column of plain black stone (from R'lyeh). Standing in the left hand circle are two deep ones (Sanity roll required). In the right hand one are two members of Meonia (use the stats for Constable Baker and Constable Hempston). Standing in front of the pillar, holding a crystal cup in her withered hands, is an old woman dressed in regal clothing – Princess Helena, the wife of Prince Christian.

If the investigators remain hidden in the shadows the deep ones and Meonia agents begin chanting in a strange, ululating tongue, baritone and croaks merging together, increasing slowly in tempo and resonating around the chamber. Princess Helena raises the chalice to her lips and

drinks of the salty liquid contained therein. She replaces the chalice and smiles, nodding to the deep ones. Suddenly she grips the pedestal, grimacing, her eyes wide opened.

Her skin begins to scale over, her hair falls out in long clumps as her head contorts and reshapes, loud cracking echoes as her bones begin to stretch and contort into their new form and her neck splits, revealing gills. All told, the process takes five rounds and costs the investigators 1D4/1D10 Sanity points.

Once the transformation is complete, a deep one stands in Princess Helena's place. The two deep ones then approach her, bow and escort her toward the second tunnel. Only when they have departed do the Meonia agents make to leave via the spiral stairs.

The Dagon Grail

The Dagon Grail, carved from crystals found only in R'lyeh, is an enchanted item. It brims with salt water, refilling automatically whenever liquid is poured out. The water tastes extremely salty but has no effects on imbibers lacking deep one ancestry. For those blessed with hybrid blood, the water acts as a power mutagen, bringing on full conversion within scant moments.



The investigators can choose to interfere at any point in the proceedings. Whether they elect to reveal their presence through immediate violence or with words is up to them. Violence is met with violence, the deep ones and Meonia agents attempting to hold back the intruders and protect Helena until her transformation is complete. As soon as Helena achieves her destiny, she flees toward the submerged river.

Should dialogue be opened before Helena drinks from the chalice, it is she who speaks to the investigators, waving aside the Meonia agents who move to stand between her and the intruders.

'You have no need to fear for my safety,' the princess says calmly and quietly. She gestures toward the walls of the chamber. 'This ceremony has been carried out in this very place for millennia. King Arthur stood here, though he refused to accept his heritage, preferring to live like a man, to fulfil his dream to unite England against the Saxon invaders.'

'Many kings have attempted to trace their lineage to Arthur, not in a vain search for fame or to legitimise their claim to the throne but because they seek the true heritage of his blood, immortality. These creatures,' she gestures at the deep ones, 'are not mankind's enemies. We can share this world. Now, do you wish to shoot me or allow me to complete my destiny and claim my birthright?'

Despite protests from the deep ones and Meonia agents, Helena allows the investigators to depart unharmed, so long as they swear an oath to remain silent about what they have seen.

The elderly Princess Helena has POW 10 and 8 hit points up to the point the transformation is complete, at which point she has the statistics of a deep one (but has no hunting spear).

Cleaning Up the Mess

Meonia is quick to take action after the events of the adventure. Whether or not the investigators have visited the cemetery, all the empty graves at Frogmore are dug up and skeletons 'borrowed' from regular cemeteries placed in the coffins. Investigators demanding the graves be excavated are duly humoured, if only to avoid an unnecessary scandal.

Polite comments are made about the investigators' state of mind, with equally polite suggestions that they really ought to seek medical help. Old Jed cannot corroborate the investigators' far-fetched story, since he dies of a heart attack (chemically induced) the day after the adventure ends. The Grail temple is closed down and the ceremonies shifted to a new location. Any evidence gained from Daisy's house is quickly ridiculed as fiction, the work of a deranged anarchist seeking to blacken the name of the royal family. The investigators may know the truth but no one else ever will.

With all the evidence removed, Meonia continues to keep a watchful eye on the investigators but takes no overt action. The proverbial dog is once again sleeping (and toothless), so kicking it serves no purpose. As mentioned before, the cult will continue hunting the investigators if the keeper needs the party to go abroad.

-Player Handouts-

Player Handout One: Luke 22:20

Luke 22:20

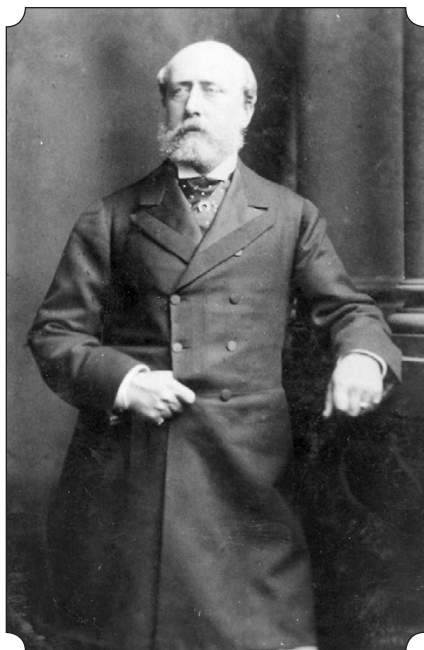
Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Player Handout Two: 1 John 5:6

1 John 5:6

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Player Handout Three: Prince Christian's Tombstone



His Royal Highness Prince Christian
Frederick Christian Charles Augustus KG, PC

22 January 1831 – 28 October 1917

I John 5:6



Player Handout Four: Daisy's Diary

Early entries indicate Daisy was working as a researcher for Peter Malhoney, a historian writing a book on King Arthur and the Holy Grail. She notes that, according to legends, Joseph of Aramathea brought the Grail to England after the Crucifixion. He founded a small church, which later grew into Glastonbury Abbey. A sub-entry reads, 'The Grail and Glastonbury seem tied together in myth.'

Other entries of interest read as follows.

One month ago: My work for Peter Malhoney has taken a strange turn. While in Glastonbury I spent time talking to local farmers, people whose ancestors have worked the land for centuries. I suspected that if anyone knew older legends it would be these people. One farmer told me a strange story.

On October 31st, All Hallows Eve, of 1917 he was out shooting rabbits late one evening, near in the vicinity of Glastonbury Tor. Around midnight he saw a group of people dressed in white robes and carrying burning torches walking across the fields. You might laugh at this but he thought they were witches, so he hid in some bushes.

As the strange party neared he saw another man in the centre of the group, one dressed in black robes and with his hood down. He swears blind it was Prince Christian. I asked how he knew and he showed me an old newspaper dated 28th October 1917. The headlines carried a photograph of the prince and news of his death. I asked the farmer if he was sure and he swore blind that it was the same man. It was only because of the photograph he recognised him.

Two weeks ago: Received reply from Buckingham Palace today. Informed me Prince Christian had indeed died on the 28th of that month and that on no account could he have been in Glastonbury.

Nine days ago: Someone is following me. It has taken me a while to realise it but someone is definitely tailing me. I have asked Michael Evans, an old friend, to dig around for me. They will not suspect his involvement.

Three days ago: Must return to the Chalice Well. I'm sure it plays a part in this mystery.

Yesterday: I'm sure that Prince Christian was in Glastonbury three days after his supposed death and I can prove it. I just need to dig up his grave to prove it!

-Dramatis Personae-

Meonia Goons

Meonia operates two levels of membership. At the top are the secretive rulers, shadowy figures with strong connections to the royal family and many of England's oldest noble lines. Their hands, while not clean, are never directly involved in the dirty business of protecting the realm's hybrid elite.

Below them are the rank and file members, dupes who sincerely believe that they work for an organisation devoted to safeguarding England and the Empire. Politicians, military officers, policemen, lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists and judges rank among their number. When Meonia feels threatened, it activates its minions, spinning plausible lies to ensure its true purpose remains unknown.

MEONIA GOONS, Duped Minions of the Cult

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
Inspector Baker	13	14	16	16	13	15
Constable Hemston	17	14	13	12	11	14
Constable O'Rourke	12	11	15	11	10	13
Constable Smith	16	10	12	9	16	11

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: .39 Revolver 40%, damage 1D10, Billy Club 40%, damage 1D6+db, Grapple 40%, damage special

Old Jed

Old Jed has been tending the graves at Frogmore for 50 years. Long in the tooth but still physically fit, he has become so much a part of the scenery that people tend to forget that he is in the vicinity. As a result, he knows about the fake burials and has a good idea that many of the royals supposedly buried at Frogmore are missing from their graves. Preferring to work at night, when his presence will not disturb mourners visiting the graves, he has also encountered the cemetery's other inhabitants – ghouls. As a result, he never goes out to work after sunset without his trusty shotgun.

OLD JED, Age 74, Gravedigger

STR 14 DEX 10 INT 12 CON 14
SIZ 12 POW 7 Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: 12 gauge shotgun (2B) 50%, damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Deep Ones

STR 14 DEX 13 INT 11 CON 11
SIZ 16 POW 10
Move: 8/10 swimming Hit Points: 14

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Claws 25%, damage 1D6+db, Hunting Spear* 25%, damage 1D6+db

* *impaling weapon*

Armour: 1-point skin and scales

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a deep one

Ghouls

STR 16 DEX 13 INT 13 CON 13
SIZ 13 POW 13
Move: 9 Hit Points: 13

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Claws 30%, damage 1D6+db, Bite 30%, damage 1D6 + automatic worry

(see *Call of Cthulhu* 6th Edition, page 160)

Armour: Firearms and projectiles do half rolled damage; round up any fraction

Skills: Burrow 75%, Climb 85%, Hide 60%, Jump 75%, Listen 70%, Scent Decay 65%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 75%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a ghoul



Avalon: The County of Somerset
Strange Little Girl

- Strange Little Girl -

A tale of madness and revenge in which the investigators must survive the sanity-draining power of the Dark Child and find a way to rid the world of her.

Introduction

This adventure is set in the 1920s and takes place in and around the Mendip Hills in northern Somerset. It is intended for a party of four to six investigators and is designed to fit into any ongoing campaign. Run as written, it could serve as the investigators' first introduction to the Mythos horrors of Somerset, or indeed the Mythos in general. It is intended to be played in a single session.

The year the adventure is set in is not hugely important. What matters is that the adventure starts on 19 June, exactly two days before the summer solstice dawns.

While the core of the adventure takes place in Somerset, the investigation begins in whatever town or city the investigators call home. For ease, the assumption is that they live in London, the largest city in the world during the 1920s. Should the party dwell elsewhere the keeper will need to change some details of the adventure in advance of play, most notably swapping the British Museum for a large museum close to the investigators' homes.

While this is very much a Cthulhu Mythos tale, there are no cultists to gun down, no gods to prevent from rising from their ancient slumber and very few monsters in the traditional sense. Rather, it is a creepy tale; one best run at night with the lights dimmed, for there are darker creatures abroad than deep ones or shoggoths.

Staging the Introduction: Homeownership is the 1920s is an unusual occurrence, especially for those not of the upper classes. As such, it is very likely that one or more of the investigators lives in rented accommodation, whether an apartment, a single room or a house. The keeper

should pick one of the investigators who rents his abode in advance of play. Ideally the investigator should not have an unusual surname. It does not matter what his first name is, as the coincidence revolves only around the first initial and the surname. Because no first names are actually used, the investigator may be male or female. During the text, the nominated investigator is referred to as the chosen investigator.

Keeper's Information

Four years ago this autumn, Professor John Farnsworth of the British Museum, his young research assistant and two junior antiquarians conducted a field investigation into, and analysis of, a small and little known toppled standing stone in the woodlands of the Mendip Hills. Farnsworth, a senior member of the British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography Department, had been researching Neolithic sites for some years and believed the builders of England's many Neolithic monuments shared a common spiritual view of the world they inhabited.

Farnsworth's subsequent academic paper, *The Common Cult of the Neolithic Monument Builders*, published the following spring, was widely accepted as an authoritative treatise on the countless monuments that dot the English landscape.

Although Farnsworth recorded the discovery of several potsherds and flints, he deliberately withheld his most important find – a collection of thin stone tablets on which were inscribed letters in an ancient alphabet similar in many ways to ancient Phoenician. While his paper would make him a minor celebrity among British antiquarians, Farnsworth knew that if he made knowledge of the stone tablets public they would be taken from him and given to linguistic experts

to translate. His paper had made him a celebrity but such fame was fleeting. If he could decipher the writings, writings likely to belong to Neolithic man, a people who supposedly had no script, his work could revolutionise antiquarianism and ensure his immortality.



While Farnsworth was correct in his assumption that the tablets were a major archaeological find, he had no idea that the writings were sacred to a small cult of Shub Niggurath and were protected with an ancient curse.

Three years ago, on the heliacal rising of Aldebaran, the curse was activated for the first time in millennia. A lesser aspect of Shub Niggurath, known to the cultists as the Dark Child, stepped into our world, hell bent on enacting revenge. Within a week, one of the junior antiquarians was dead, seemingly an accident. Two years ago, the Dark Child was summoned again, resulting in the death of the second junior antiquarian.

Word of the deaths quickly reached the ears of Farnsworth and his research assistant. The pair argued bitterly. Farnsworth had grown increasingly fixated with the stone tablets, convinced they held the secret to understanding the prehistoric landscape of Britain and the wisdom of Stone Age man. His assistant, however, had grown fearful of the stones and begged Farnsworth to destroy them before they too met their deaths. Unable to persuade Farnsworth to change his mind, the research assistant quit his post late that summer and returned to his native Yorkshire.

As Farnsworth laboured over the tablets he started to become paranoid, believing his peers were out to steal his forthcoming fame and glory. In December that year he arranged to take a year's sabbatical and dropped out of sight. Hiring a cottage in the remote Lake District of northwest England at first, he moved location frequently, never leaving a forwarding address and making no attempts to contact his peers or the world at large.

One year ago, the Dark Child walked the earth again. Farnsworth's assistant, a boy he treated like a son, met his death four days later. Farnsworth, in self-imposed exile, knew nothing of the lad's passing. Had he done so he might, perhaps, have come to his senses and halted his translation.

Recent Events

Three weeks ago Farnsworth made a major breakthrough with his research, finally learning the terrible truth of the existence of Shub-Niggurath and her millennia-spanning witch cult. The professor travelled to Somerset with all haste, intent on discovering more about the tablets and the cult of which they told.

Four days ago the heliacal rising of Aldebaran occurred. For the fourth time in as many years the Dark Child crossed the boundaries of time and space to deliver her unique brand of justice to the desecrators of her shrine. Immediately she set to work on Farnsworth, whose location she quickly augured thanks to his possession of the tablets. Unable to slaughter him outright, for that is not the Dark Child's way, she has been trying to lure him to his death through psychological manipulation.

Two days ago, having reached the end of his sanity, the professor wrote to his research assistant at his last known address – an address now inhabited by an investigator who shares a remarkably similar name.

-Scene 1: A Strange Letter-

Early on the morning of 19 June the postman delivers the chosen investigator a letter. Aside from the handwriting being spider like and the ink smudged in one or two places, the letter appears perfectly normal, giving the addressee's first initial and full surname. Should the investigator check at any time, the postmark is clearly stamped 'Bath, Som.' and dated two days previous. If the player does not recognise that as meaning Bath, Somerset, then the investigator may make an Idea roll to deduce the location. Inside is a single sheet of paper, roughly folded and written upon in the same spidery writing as the envelope. Hand the investigator **Handout #1** at this time.

The addition of the man's full name and title seems oddly out of kilter with such a strangely written letter. A successful Psychology roll reveals the author *likely* adds this to all his missives and thus it was included as an autonomous action.

All being well, the contents have intrigued the investigator. Several possible courses of action involving discovering more about the sender and correct addressee are detailed here. With any luck, the investigator will alert his chums quick smart, thus allowing the entire party to swiftly become involved.

You've Made a Mistake!

The postman is only a few doors down should the investigator wish to alert him to the letter, which is obviously intended for a different individual of the same name. The postman looks puzzled if the discrepancy is brought to his attention and asks to see the envelope. The postman has walked the same streets for many years and knows their long-term tenants by name, if not by sight.

'No, sir,' he says, scratching his head, 'there's been no mistake. The address is quite clearly indicated, and that's the address I delivered it to. I'm afraid there's nothing I can do about it, sir. The post office's duty ends once a letter is delivered to the address on the envelope. I'm afraid you'll have to look into finding the correct addressee. Try talking to your landlady. She had a few tenants before you moved in. Maybe it was meant for one of them. Now, if you'll excuse me, sir, the post cannot wait!'

Questioning the Landlady

The investigator's elderly landlady, Mrs. Potts, has rented her property for decades. While her body may be aging her mind remains razor sharp – she never forgets a lodger, nor does rent day ever pass by without a polite rap on the tenants' doors. If the investigator is polite, pays on time and does not act too strangely, ignore her comments in parenthesis. Add them in if the investigator frequently performs strange chants in his rooms, constantly comes home late or caked in mud, or mutters weird phrases under his breath.

'Dear me yes, I remember him well. Polite chap he was, always smartly dressed and immaculately groomed (unlike some of my tenants). Paid his rent on time and never caused any fuss, either. (If only all my tenants were like that.) When you moved in I thought at first you were related, what with you sharing the same surname and all.' She laughs and claps her hands once. *'Listen to me harking on ahead of myself! Would you like a cup of tea, deary? It's a fresh pot. I have some lovely cake as well if you'd like a slice.'*

'Now let me see, he moved out about, oh, must be nearly two years ago now. Yes, that's it, deary, late summer two years ago. He was working with a professor as some sort of research assistant. I can't recall the fellow's name, though. Anyway, he came home one day, paid me for a month's rent in advance, apologised for the inconvenience and promptly packed his bags and left. I have no idea where he went and he never left a forwarding address.'

Mrs. Potts can supply the former lodger's first name. Given that his name depends on the initial of the investigator's first name, the keeper should create the name to suit the specific character. She recalls that he came from the East

Riding, Yorkshire, but does not know exactly where. She does not know the man's exact age but estimates that he would have been in his early Twenties last time she saw him.

A Spot of Research

The investigators have several lines of enquiry open to them already. While some basic facts might be known to investigators sitting in the comfort of their homes, other lines require active research.

Farnsworth: Professor Farnsworth, a noted academic, is relatively easy to track down. An antiquarian investigator may make a Know roll to see if he knows of Farnsworth. Alternately, a successful Library Use and an hour of time spent trawling the local library reveals a short entry on the man. Whatever method is used, give the investigators **Handout #2** if the roll is successful.

Research Assistant: Tracking down the research assistant also requires Library Use. However, he is not famous and digging up any information takes four hours. Give the group **Handout #3** after they have successfully investigated the true addressee of the letter.

The Dark Child: Researching the Dark Child can be done with Library Use (and four hours of time), an Occult roll, or a Cthulhu Mythos roll. For successful use of either of the first two skills give the investigators **Handout #4A**. For use of Cthulhu Mythos give them **Handout #4B** instead.

-Scene 2: Hunting Farnsworth-

After trawling the library the investigators should have two addresses for the mysterious Professor Farnsworth.

Home Address

There is no reply at Farnsworth's home address. Checking with the neighbours (or breaking in) reveals that the professor has not been home in 18 months. No one knows where he went or when he is due back.

Investigators who opted for a spot of housebreaking find no evidence of the professor's current whereabouts. The house is in good order, the furniture having been covered with dustsheets. Atop a bureau are several photos of a middle aged man with thinning hair and a younger man of cheerful disposition standing together in front of a toppled stone megalith. Investigators who think to remove the photos from their frame are rewarded, for on the reverse is scribbled 'Somerset' and the date 19 August four years ago. There are also two sets of initials, the first being those of the professor (JAF) and the second matching those of the investigator to whom the envelope was addressed.

The British Museum

On asking for Professor Farnsworth at the main desk, have each investigator make a Spot Hidden roll. A successful roll reveals the receptionist, who smiles politely, gestures to a handful of seats placed away from the desk and asks the investigators to wait a moment while she calls someone who can help, going slightly pale at the mention of Farnsworth's name.

Investigators who wait near the reception desk, or who make a successful Listen roll if situated further away, overhear the receptionist's part of the conversation. Listening in on the conversation of whoever is on the other end of the phone requires a successful Listen roll by adjacent investigators and a special success from those who opted to take a seat. Read the following text to the players as appropriate. If only one side of the conversation is eavesdropped, leave suitable pauses before the receptionist makes her replies.

Receptionist: 'I'm sorry to trouble you, sir, but there are a number of gentlemen at reception asking for Professor Farnsworth.'

Other Voice: 'Are they from the police?'

Receptionist: 'I don't believe so, sir. They didn't show any form of identification.'

Other Voice: 'Sigh. Alright, inform them I'll be down momentarily and don't tell them anything until I get there!'

The receptionist smiles again as she replaces the receiver. Doctor Fitzpatrick will be down to see you shortly. He's Head of Department for Professor Farnsworth. Please, do take a seat.'

The receptionist, accustomed to bolshie tourists of all nationalities, cannot be made to reveal any further information without a successful Fast Talk roll. Even then, she only blurts out, *'It's all been rather strange since the Professor went mis...'* before realising what she has said and ending the conversation. No amount of smooth-talking or badgering can convince her to open her mouth again. A few minutes later a tall, lithe man walks toward the reception desk. The receptionist gestures toward the seated investigators and the man smartly changes course without breaking step.

'Good morning,' he barks in clipped English. 'I'm Doctor Fitzpatrick, head of the British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography Department. I hear you're looking for John Farnsworth. Please, if you'll follow me we'll talk in my office upstairs. May I enquire as to why you wish to see him?'

How the investigators respond to this rather forthright question is in their hands. The receptionist's slip of the tongue, if revealed, could serve as enough for a police officer to pretend he's investigating 'the case.' Some parties may be totally open and honest, mentioning the mysterious letter, while others may try a bluff. So long as they are polite, Fitzpatrick is content to reveal what he knows.

Fitzpatrick leads the investigators upstairs to a well-appointed office, avoiding questions until they are safely in the room. Once there, he invites his guests to be seated. After locking the door he takes a seat behind a magnificent oak desk. *'Now,' he asks, 'how can I be of service with regards Professor Farnsworth?'*

Because of the open nature of this scene, likely questions posed by the investigators and Fitzpatrick's answers are given here. The keeper must determine answers to other questions, noting that Fitzpatrick does not actually know much beyond what is detailed.

Q: Where is Professor Farnsworth?

A: *'I wish I knew! The confounded chap was supposed to return from sabbatical six months ago. No one has heard a word from the fellow in the better part of 18 months now. Naturally we informed the police after he failed to return to work but he seems to have vanished off the face of the earth.'*

Q: Where did Farnsworth go?

A: *'To be honest, no one is really sure. He applied for sabbatical so he could work on a project but he kept everything very tight-lipped. He'd been hard hit by the deaths and was due a break anyway after the success of his last paper, so I agreed he could take a year off.'*

Q: What deaths?

A: *'You mean you don't know? Dear me, it was quite the talk around here for a while. Terrible loss of such promising talent. Let me see, Michael Peters died three years ago now. What a ghastly coincidence – he died about this very time! He drowned in the Thames out near Henley. Don't recall the minutiae I'm afraid. Then there was Mortimer Mulholland. He died... dear God, his death was just a few days ago... well, two years and a few days. He, um, died in a house fire.'*

Q: What was there relationship to Farnsworth?

A: *'The four of them, Farnsworth, his assistant, Peters and Mulholland, were doing work together in Somerset, somewhere in the Mendips. Farnsworth is an expert of Neolithic monuments and was doing some final field work before writing up a paper.'*

Q: Did you know (research assistant's name)?

A: *'Yes, yes, he was Farnsworth's research assistant back along. He worked for Farnsworth until some 18 months ago now. Yes, that's right, he left just before Farnsworth requested his sabbatical. He and Farnsworth had a terrible row and he resigned. No idea what became of him, though.'*

Q: Do you know why they argued?

A: *'No, not really. I know Farnsworth thought he was onto something with his research and that his assistant thought*

it was all poppycock. Farnsworth went into a bit of a lull after he left. Took it hard; he treated that boy like the son he never had. Threw himself deeper into his work after that.'

Q: Did you know (research assistant's name) was dead?

A: *'Dear God! Wait a moment, you're not trying to suggest Farnsworth is somehow behind these deaths are you? I know academics can be jealous, but to even think that Farnsworth could be a murderer is simply preposterous! The man wouldn't hurt a fly!'*

Q: Farnsworth mentioned a cottage. Do you know where it is located?

A: *'Dear me, now you're asking. My memory isn't what it used to be, you know? Let me think a moment. He was doing his field work at some stone circle in northern Somerset; dashed if I can recall the name of the place, though. Farnsworth rented a cottage close to the site, but where was it? Ah yes, of course, I remember now; I had to mail him some books he wanted. It was in a place called Folly Farm. Peculiar name, what?'*

Q: What do you know of the Dark Child?

A: *'The Black Child? Hmm, not a name I've heard before. Is it important? You're not suggesting Farnsworth is involved in some sort of slavery ring, are you?'*

Once the interview is over, Fitzpatrick offers to show the investigators the location of Folly Farm on a map. The farm lies in northern Somerset, 12 miles south of Bristol. Located in a rural landscape between Folly Wood and Dowling's Wood, the farm is several miles from its nearest neighbour.

More Research

If the investigators so desire they can check into the deaths of Peters and Mulholland. This requires a Library Use roll. Since the investigators know the approximate dates of their deaths, the roll is made at +25% and takes only half an hour to perform. Only a single roll is required to locate both relevant articles. With success, give the players **Handout #5**.

Optional: The Girl Appears

Use this scene only if you want to spook an investigator – it is not vital to the plot.

On leaving the British Museum the investigator with the lowest POW (and only that character) sees a young child, a girl of perhaps eight years with raven-black hair, skipping toward him. As the child draws level she turns her head, stares at the investigator through eyes like bottomless pits of endless misery and hisses quietly, *'The price must be paid. Aid him and I shall claim you as well.'* The girl then makes to skip away toward the Museum.



Should the investigator grab the child (God forbid he draws a weapon to attack her), the child screams loudly as he manhandles her. The child is no longer a little girl but a blond-haired young boy on a day out with his mother. How the scene progresses depends on the actions of the investigator.

The entire interlude costs the investigator 0/1 Sanity points if he knows nothing of the Dark Child and 1/1D3 if he knows she only appears to those marked for death.

The innocent boy is not the Dark Child. She merely used his body momentarily, transferring her essence into him in order to threaten the investigator and scare him away. How did she know the investigators were on the case and where to find them? Well, first this is a lesser aspect of a powerful deity that we are talking about, and second, such events add to the creepiness of the Cthulhu Mythos – leave scientific explanations at the door.

-Scene 3: House of Madness-

A regular train service runs between London, or wherever the investigators call home, and Bristol. While there are many taxi companies in Bristol, most of them balk at having to drive outside the city, especially down muddy tracks to farms in the middle of nowhere. Convincing a cabbie to take them to Folly Farm requires a Persuasion roll and liberal upfront tips. Alternately, the investigators can hop into a car and drive down, avoiding Bristol altogether and heading straight to the farm.

The Girl Appears Again

This encounter must occur, though exactly how it plays out depends on whether the investigators are driving to Folly Farm or someone is driving them. If you used the optional encounter, the driver need not be the same investigator.

Ideally, it should be dusk as the investigators drive down the winding lane to Folly Farm. If they took the train this lateness is easily explained. However, if they chose to drive, and if the players know how long it takes to drive from London to rural Somerset in the 1920s, then you might need to arrange a delay. A flat tire, difficulty finding a petrol station, getting lost down the myriad lanes of Somerset, or ending up caught behind a flock of sheep being shepherded down a single track lane are all suitable and plausible delays.

Investigator Driver

Folly Farm lies a mile off the closest major road. Little more than a winding track, the twisting route is concealed behind tall hedges, making it difficult to see what lies ahead. As the car rounds a particularly tight bend, the driver, *and only the driver*, sees a young, dark-haired girl standing in the middle of the road barely a dozen yards ahead!

If the investigators have uncovered any facts about the Dark Child the investigator may be inclined to run the girl down, figuring her some terrible Mythos beast in disguise. However, with scant seconds to react, the investigator's instincts are more likely to kick in before he can make such an informed decision. In order to do anything but swerve to avoid the child the driver must make a POW x 1% roll. With success, he is free to act as he wishes. Otherwise, he veers the car violently to one side, forcing him to make a Drive Automobile roll at -20%.

Should the Drive Automobile roll succeed, the driver manages to steer around the girl without crashing his car. On a failed roll, he loses control and the car slams into the densely packed hedge, causing each occupant 1D3 hit points of damage and leaving the vehicle with a buckled wheel and cracked radiator. Should the roll be a result of 100, the crash is more severe, with each occupant taking 1D6+1 damage and the vehicle being written off. Fortunately the lane prohibited excessive speed, or the crash would have been far worse.

No matter what course of action or outcome occurs, there is no sign of the girl afterward. An investigator who elects to run the girl over feels no impact from a collision – she simply melts away unharmed. Seeing the girl in the road yet finding no evidence that she existed costs the investigator 0/1 Sanity points. If he knows of the Dark Child the Sanity loss increases to 1/1D3 for understanding that she only appears to those marked for death. Should he explain his reasoning for either gunning the accelerator or swerving to his comrades, his fellow investigators lose 0/1 Sanity.

NPC Driver

In the event that the investigators managed to bribe a taxi driver to take them from Bristol to Folly Farm, or one of them has a chauffeur, the encounter with the girl still occurs.

The keeper can run the scene one of two ways.

First, only the driver sees the Dark Child. He automatically takes evasive action, wrenching hard on the steering wheel to avoid striking the girl. Unless the NPC has been given stats for some reason, assume his Drive Automobile is 35%. Chances are the vehicle will crash into the hedgerow, the investigators will suffer cuts and bruises and the rest of the journey must be made on foot. Shocked and stunned, the driver fervently claims he tried to avoid hitting a dark haired girl standing in the middle of the lane. Such claims by themselves cost no Sanity. However, if the investigators have learned something of the Dark Child then 0/1 Sanity points are lost.

If a cabbie was driving he is angry at the damage to his vehicle and demands the investigators pay recompense. This totals £5. The cabbie refuses to accompany the investigators to the farm, preferring instead to walk back to the main road, hitch a lift to the nearest town with a garage and have someone fix his cab. He is completely incidental to the adventure and should play no further part.

The Farmyard

From the entrance to the farmyard it is obvious that the farm has not been occupied in many years. The cobbles that once lined the farmyard have been dislodged or smothered by voracious, straggly weeds. A lone cottage stands in the centre of the yard, its windows boarded up, its once whitewashed walls now adorned with mysterious red stains, there are dozens of shingles missing from the roof. Nearby stands an open sided barn stacked full of rusting farming machinery. A cattle shed, in a similar state of disrepair to the cottage, stands to one side, its doors and much of its wooden roof missing. Near to the cottage stands a rusting water pump – this still works and provides clean water.

An investigator making a successful Spot Hidden roll can tell that the red stains on the cottage form regular, albeit overlapping, patterns – a five-pointed star. Close investigation reveals the pentagrams have crude markings in the centre, flame-like squiggles.

Those who know the right spell or who make a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll recognise the symbols for what they are – Elder Signs.



On approaching the cottage it also becomes clear that whoever boarded up the windows did a very thorough job. Typically, a few boards are nailed across the windows to prevent anyone gaining access but in this case the boards are nailed tight, eliminating any gaps and preventing outsiders from seeing within.

Farnsworth, who is inside the cottage, learned just enough of Elder Signs through researching the tablets to recognise them as protective symbols. Unfortunately, he never learned the spell required to actually empower them. As such, they are meaningless daubs of paint, about as useful at stopping a rampaging Mythos creature as harsh language.

Meeting Farnsworth

Should the investigators attempt to break in to the cottage Farnsworth unleashes both barrels of his shotgun. Half insane and scared witless, the professor does not give any warning that he is armed and about to open fire. Stacked behind the door are several large pieces of furniture. Forcing it open requires the investigators to overcome STR 24. Ripping the boards off the windows requires a suitable lever (parts of the rusting farm machinery in the barn suffice) and overcoming STR 12.

Hopefully the investigators remember their manners and either knock at the door or call out to Farnsworth before attempting entry. A weak, frail voice demands to know who the callers are and what they want. Farnsworth has been subjected to many tricks by the Dark Child over the past few days and he is extremely wary.

Ideally, the players will want to roleplay out this encounter. Farnsworth must be convinced that the investigators are potential allies and not soul-destroying monsters. He demands to know who each investigator is, how they found him and more importantly, why they are looking for him. Honesty is the best approach, for Farnsworth, if unconvinced of the strangers' sincerity, is quite prepared to leave them outside as the sun sets and that is not a healthy place to be.

If the players want to resort to die rolls, convincing Farnsworth that the investigators are allies calls for a Persuade roll at -40%. Each pertinent detail they recall regarding the professor or his work is worth a +10% bonus. For instance, mentioning they learned of the cottage's location after speaking to his superior, Doctor Fitzpatrick, is worth the bonus. Similarly, making mention of receiving the letter and explaining the bizarre coincidence of names applies as well.

Telling Farnsworth his research assistant is dead at any point in the adventure costs the professor 1/1D3 Sanity points and, due to his fragile mental health, may drive him temporarily insane. He loved the young man like a son and blames himself (not unreasonably) for his death. Had he not taken the tablets, then perhaps his assistant, not to mention Peters and Mulholland, would still be alive today.

Once he is sure that the investigators are not dangerous, he lets them in. Several long moments pass while he removes all the furniture keeping the door barricaded. Farnsworth then calls out for the investigators to wait a moment. He moves back into the cottage, squats behind a mouldy armchair and aims his shotgun at the door. Only then does he invite them to enter. Should they enter before he gives permission, there is a chance (equal to his POW x2) that he opens fire, suddenly convinced that he has been duped by the Dark Child. As soon as the investigators are safely inside Farnsworth begins barricading the door.

The interior of the cottage is dark, illuminated only by a few flickering candles, damp and reeks of mould, decay, sweat and human excrement. On one wooden table lie the stone tablets and Farnsworth's handwritten translation. The total provisions in the house comprise of a dozens cans of food, six apples, a box of 24 candles, three boxes of matches, a dozen 20-gauge shotgun shells and two large buckets filled with drinking water from the pump in the farmyard.

What Farnsworth Knows

Farnsworth invites the investigators to sit and then begins telling his story, explaining how he found the stone tablets and set out to decipher them so as to make his name in the field of antiquarianism. He knows of the deaths of Peters and Mulholland, though he admits that at the time he largely thought them unfortunate accidents. Since then he has learned the following information from working on the tablets. Some of the facts are garbled, Farnsworth not being conversant with the Cthulhu Mythos to any extent.

- The tablets were likely brought to these shores by Phoenician merchants millennia ago. He suspects they practiced their religion in Cornwall, where they traded for tin and that over the centuries the cult became rooted among the locals. How the tablets ended up in Somerset he has no idea.
- The tablets are protected by an unearthly spirit known as the Dark Child, a vengeful manifestation of Astarte, the Phoenician earth goddess. By removing the tablets from the sacred site, he unwittingly activated a curse.

- The curse cannot be halted simply by righting the wrong. Replacing the stone tablets where he found them will not halt the Dark Child.
- The Dark Child can only manifest on earth between the heliacal rising of Aldebaran and dawn on summer solstice, a period of one week. However, until her vengeance is complete she can return each year to hunt down and destroy the perpetrators. If he can withstand her vengeance for a few more days, he will be free for another year, a year in which he hopes to discover a way to banish the Dark Child forever. He begs the investigators to remain with and watch over him while he tries to complete his translation of the stone tablets.
- From bitter experience he knows she can produce powerful, compelling illusions involving sight and sound. He has resisted them only by blocking his ears with candle wax and remaining indoors in total darkness. The candles are lit only during the day, when the Dark Child seems weakest. Sleep is likewise foolish, for she can induce terrifying nightmares.

What courses of action the investigators take is now up to them. Three options are presented here and there are notes in the sidebar on what happens should they try to make a run for it. Whatever decisions they make, the Dark Child has her own plans. These are described in Scene 4. The remainder of the night should be a harrowing experience for the investigators.

Smashing the Tablets

Farnsworth's story clearly indicates that the Dark Child was summoned as a result of the tablets' discovery. One logical course of action proposed might be to destroy the accursed texts. The professor immediately refuses to allow this.

'Are you mad?' Farnsworth says, his eyes bulging incredulously. 'There is a greater evil in this universe than you can possibly imagine. Destroying the tablets would rob humanity of a chance to understand these powers and find a weakness. No, we must study them, translate them and then publish our findings. The world must know the truth or we are all damned!'

Farnsworth will try to stop the investigators from destroying the tablets, using physical force if necessary. He may not be a skilled pugilist but he likely retains his shotgun. He gives one warning to those who make a move against his precious tablets, levelling his shotgun and vowing that he will fire. The professor is good to his word as well.

The tablets are merely pieces of inscribed stone – destroying the tablets actually has no effect on the Dark Child, other than making her mad. It is very important for the keeper to be aware that the method of banishing the Dark Child can only be found in the tablets and Farnsworth's notes. If both are destroyed there is no hope for the investigators – even if the Dark Child fails to destroy them by dawn on summer solstice morn, she will return unflinching next year at the appointed hour.

Killing Farnsworth

That Farnsworth is the last survivor of the four desecrators should be obvious to the investigators. Given the Dark Child is a spirit of vengeance it may occur to someone that Farnsworth's death would end the manifestation. Farnsworth has considered this course of action but what little remains of his sanity prohibits him from suicide while any hope of finding a way of banishing the Dark Child remains available.

Voicing this option openly, even if it is immediately dismissed, causes Farnsworth to become highly suspicious of the investigators. He refuses to eat food they have cooked and certainly will not sleep in the same room as them for fear of being killed in his sleep. He keeps his shotgun loaded and, given his nervous disposition, may at the keeper's discretion open fire on the investigators at the slightest perceived provocation.

As with destroying the tablets, this course of action only infuriates the Dark Child. Robbed of her prey she unleashes her dark young immediately against the cottage, likely spelling the doom of the investigators.

Mythos Research

Learning a spell typically requires an entire Mythos book to be fully read followed by a further 2D6 weeks study per spell and a successful INT x3 roll. This adventure takes a short cut for the sake of providing an interesting story. Reading Farnsworth's garbled and incomplete translation requires 2D6 hours of study. After that the reader may make an INT x3 roll. With success, he locates the spell necessary to banish the Dark Child. He does not learn the spell (that must be achieved normally) but the adventure allows for the ritual to be invoked directly from the page, albeit at the additional cost of it taking 10 whole rounds to perform. Should this be attempted at any point, proceed straight to Scene 5, **End Game**.

Let's Make a Run for It

The idea of being in a remote farmhouse while *something* plots their demise is not likely to appeal to most investigators. The nearest neighbour is a mile away – a mile over rough, unfamiliar ground on a moonless, cloudy night. Given all the circumstances, that one mile will take several hours to cross.

Farnsworth abjectly refuses to leave the safety of the cottage after dusk and no amount of Fast Talking or Persuasion can convince him otherwise. His faith in his Elder Signs is absolute and he cannot be swayed to the contrary. He also believes his garbled notes somehow hold a vital clue on how to extricate himself from his current predicament and he needs time to find that vital piece of information. Furthermore, he has heard strange footsteps in the farmyard after dusk and has no intention of fending off whatever horror awaits in the darkness once the sun sets.

The sounds he heard were made by a dark young, summoned to ensure Farnsworth did not leave the cottage while the Dark Child mentally tortured her prey. While the Dark Child would prefer to keep everyone alive for a little longer, only Farnsworth is truly important to her – should an escape attempt be made the investigators' lives are forfeit.

-Scene 4: Night Falls-

The Dark Child intends to taunt Farnsworth for one more night. So far the old man has proven remarkably resistant to her powers, mainly because he keeps his ears blocked with plugs cut from a candle and has stayed awake. Although she could compel him to death with great ease, she does not feel Farnsworth has suffered enough yet. One more night of misery. One more night before her vengeance is complete.

Some of the Dark Child's tactics are described here. The keeper is free to reuse these or create new ones to torment the investigators. What matters is not the order or frequency but the fact that the bitch is relentless in tormenting the cottage's inhabitants. She has 50 magic points available to her. If the investigators have not tried to escape the cottage or banish the Dark Child before the following dusk, she grows impatient and unleashes the dark young against them.

Broken Car

Investigators who drove to Somerset and avoided crashing their car present the Dark Child with a problem – she cannot allow Farnsworth to escape her clutches so close to the solstice, or she will have to wait another year to enact revenge; a year in which the professor may uncover a way to destroy her current incarnation.

Powerless to act during the day, she waits patiently until night fall. Knowing the moon is new, she retreats to Folly Wood, a site sacred to Shub Niggurath, and summons a dark young. Her peculiar ties to Shub Niggurath allow her to keep the creature bound until dawn, enabling it to carry out multiple acts of servitude on her behalf. Its first task is to destroy the investigators' car.

The investigators' first clue that something has gone awry outside is the sound of tortured metal. Unless steps have been taken to reduce Farnsworth's over-the-top security, it takes five rounds to unlock the door. By then, the creature has finished reducing the car to a pile of scrap metal and shuffled off behind the cottage. It has strict orders not to harm the investigators except in self defence or if they try to escape – the Dark Child wants her playthings to suffer first.

Come and Play

Shortly after sunset the Dark Child begins skipping around the house, singing softly yet in a voice that carries clearly into the cottage. She is invoking no spell – merely toying with her prey.

The keeper should take great pains to mimic an innocent child's voice yet without reducing the players to fits of laughter. The voice needs a slight air of menace but nothing overt. The following text is a sample of her mocking and is based on a party of four investigators and Farnsworth but the keeper should feel free to add his own comments. If any of the investigators has children, the Dark Child's voice mimics that of one of them (male or female).

'Five scared adults hiding in a house, secretly plotting quiet as a mouse. I'm lonely. Won't you come out and play with me? Please come out and play. I know such fun games. The professor's friends came to play and look at the fun they had. We went swimming and toasted marshmallows over an open fire and watched the trains! We all had a lovely time. Please come out and play.'

Help Me!

At some juncture the Dark Child invokes her unusual version of Soul Singing. Her words are thus audible only to one investigator. Pick a victim at random unless an investigator is known to have young children, in which case he *automatically* becomes the victim. Others may make a POW x3 roll or less to discern the words but cannot do so until the victim begins acting strangely (such as by trying to unbarricade the door or claiming his child is outside the cottage). The chosen victim hears the voice of his child, or that of a niece or nephew if he has no children, in danger and seeks to rescue her.

'Help me, daddy! Help me! I'm trapped in the barn, daddy, and there's a monster! Help me! I'm scared and lonely!'

Left alone, the victim makes his way out of the cottage and to the barn, where he sees his darling child lying on the ground, obviously in pain. Unfortunately, the spell has blinded him to reality – between him and the girl is a rusted piece of farm machinery with multiple sharp prongs.

Unless the poor sap is stopped, he runs straight onto the prongs, which pierce his flesh multiple times, inflicting 3D6 damage in total.

Should the hapless investigator be grappled, the Dark Child ends her spell after five rounds – there is no point continuing the ruse if the victim cannot be made to involuntarily kill himself in her trap anytime soon.

Have You Met My Mother?

Through her Mindblast spell the Dark Child projects images of Shub Niggurath, dark young, human sacrifice and other imagery associated with the cult of Shub Niggurath directly in the mind of a chosen victim, likely tipping him over the edge into insanity.

A Night of Nightmares

Although the summer solstice draws nigh and the nights are mercifully short, sleep cannot be held at bay forever. Ignorant of the Dark Child's powers, the investigators may well arrange a shift rota of sleep and guard duty against what horrors the Dark Child has in store for the cottage's occupants. Aware of the investigators' names through their introduction to Farnsworth through the cottage door (or through using some supernatural sense if no names were mentioned), the Dark Child casts Nightmare at some point in the early evening. For the sake of the story, she casts the spell once, happening to strike lucky first time in naming an investigator who falls asleep. In the event no investigator plans to sleep, Farnsworth, exhausted from keeping a 24-hour vigil, succumbs to Morpheus' call during the evening.

When the chosen investigator nods off, the insidious spell comes into effect, plaguing the investigator with nightmares. He awakes 1D3 hours later in a cold sweat and probably screaming at the top of his lungs. Should a successful Psychoanalysis roll be made on the victim's waking from the terrible dream, give the players **Handout #6**.

-Scene 5: The End Game-

For all her otherworldly powers the Dark Child has no inkling that Farnsworth has translated sections of the ancient tablets and that he has unknowingly found the spell to banish her from this plane of existence. The first she knows of this is if the investigators learn the correct spell and begin the chant of dismissal. The spell requires 10 rounds to perform when read off the page and uses a minimum of 9 magic points. As normal, this gives a mere 5% chance of success.

The instant the chant is begun the Dark Child senses her time is short. Fortunately, she has kept the dark young close at hand. It reaches the outside of the cottage after 1D4+2 rounds. It spends the remaining time smashing through the walls and attacking the investigators. Meanwhile, the Dark Child uses whatever magic points she has left to assault the investigators, concentrating on the one reading the ritual.

So long as the ritual's existence is known, any investigator can read the chant – if one is killed or driven insane, another can take up where he left off without ruining the spell. Time is not on the investigators side but with a little luck and good expenditure of magic points they have a chance of watching the coming summer solstice sun break the horizon.

If the dismissal is performed successfully, the Dark Child wails like a banshee as she is wrenched from this world by a mass of black tentacles, which rise up through the ground and draw her into whatever dark dimension she calls home. Witnessing this costs 1/1D3 Sanity points but at least the nightmare is over. With the Dark Child gone, the dark young rapidly dissolves into a pile of black goo.



-Player Handouts-

Player Handout One: The Mysterious Letter

My dear friend,

What have I done, what have I done? The terrible truth I have uncovered will not revolutionise antiquarianism but rather bring the walls of reality crashing down around our ears! God forgive me God forgive me God forgive the men who first called upon Her dark name and brought the light of madness into being. All the myths and stories of blood and revenge the terrible sacrifices of the druids and the cults of the witches stem from one source one dark and malevolent source whose existence I have glimpsed in these accursed tablets.

The deaths of Peters and Mulholland were Her revenge is Hers She shall claim us all and there is nothing we can do, I have seen Her I have seen Her the Dark Child stalks me tempting me to my doom! Innocence and death hand in hand.

I beg you in the name of merciful God to find me with all haste. Come to the cottage the cottage here this all began. Come before She takes me and my soul is lost!

Your eternal friend,

John
Professor J. Farnsworth

Player Handout Two: Who's Who

FARNSWORTH, Jonathon Archibald Gatley, B.A., M.A., PhD.; English professor; born 21 April 1863, Highgate, London, son of Winston Gatley Farnsworth and Nicola Clarrisa MacDonald; married Elizabeth-Ann Crowe 1884, no children, widowed 1887; educated Jesus College, Cambridge; joined British Museum British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography 1893. *Publications:* The Common Cult of the Neolithic Monument Builders /jointly/. *Address:* British Museum, P.O. Box 27, London /Office/; 22 Portland Road, London /Home/.

Player Handout Three: Newspaper Clipping

The clipping comes from the York Herald and is dated 20 June last year.

FATAL ACCIDENT IN YORKSHIRE MAN KILLED BY SPEEDING TRAIN

A man was killed yesterday at Earswick Station, Yorkshire, after leaping in front of a moving train. The train, the quarter past nine to York, was passing through Earswick Station at high speed and was not scheduled to stop. The man has been identified as < research assistant's name >, a native of East Riding who had recently returned to the Yorkshire area after leaving a post at the British Museum, London.

Shocked eyewitness reported the man gesturing excitedly toward the track in the moments before the train arrived,

calling out for someone to rescue a little girl who had fallen onto the tracks. None of the witnesses report seeing a child on the tracks and the man, who appeared highly agitated since his arrival at the station, was widely believed to be under the influence of alcohol at the time. As the train thundered through the station, the man leapt from the platform directly into its path, whereupon he was struck and thrown to the far side of the track.

A doctor, who was waiting at the station for the next scheduled train, rushed to the man's side, whereupon he heard the victim mutter, 'She has taken me as well.' The victim died soon after of his injuries.

The York coroner is expected to rule on the case within the next week after further evidence has been gathered.

Player Handout Four A:

The Dark Child, Occult Version

Together with the Black Mother and the Night Hag, the Dark Child is part of English occult lore, being one of three aspects of the vengeful side of the Earth Goddess. No documentary evidence for her exists before the Viking invasions of the 9th century and it is entirely likely that her aspect is a later corruption of the Norns, the three goddesses responsible for weaving a man's destiny at his birth. All accounts of the Dark Child describe her as a dark haired girl of pale complexion. In witchcraft she is a spirit of vengeance, who walks abroad in the week before the Midsummer Solstice to punish those who have violated sacred sites or broken oaths of secrecy. The Dark Child is supposedly only visible to those she has singled out for death. References to her can be found in *Malleus Maleficarum*, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* and *Sasucismus Triumphatus*.

Player Handout Four B:

The Dark Child, Mythos Version

Documented in several tomes, most notably *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, the Dark Child is strongly associated with the cult of Shub Niggurath, the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young. Her name is invoked only in curses associated with protection of sacred places against defilers and it seems she cannot be summoned by other means. The Dark Child is supposedly only visible to those she has singled out for death.

Player Handout Five: More Newspaper Clippings

The first clipping is dated 19 June three years ago and the second 21 June two years ago.

MAN DROWNS IN THAMES

A man has drowned in the River Thames at Henley-on-Thames. Mr. Michael Peters, 27, an antiquarian at the British Museum, London, was on holiday in the town and alone when the tragedy occurred.

Mr. Peters was walking along the riverbank during the late evening when he leapt into the river. Swollen by recent rains, the victim was rapidly swept downstream. A passing rowing team from Cambridge University came to Mr. Peters' rescue but he died a short while later.

One of the rowing team, who wished to remain anonymous, recalled that Mr. Peters was alive but barely conscious when he was pulled from the river. He made attempts to return to the water, claiming he must rescue a drowning girl. Subsequent search efforts revealed no trace of a child in the water and no missing persons were reported in the vicinity.

The anonymous rower speculated that Mr. Peters, in the fading light, had mistaken a small log or dog for a child and jumped in to rescue the girl. Children playing loudly in a nearby park perhaps added to his confusion that a young girl was in trouble.

FATAL HOUSE FIRE

Firemen have recovered the remains of a man who died in a house fire in Baker Street, London.

Firemen were called to the scene at 8 o'clock yesterday evening when a passerby spotted smoke and flames billowing from the residence. By the time the crew arrived the house was well ablaze. An elderly neighbour, Mrs. Betty Watkins, 72, informed the firemen that a man walking by the scene had suddenly run into the house, calling out loudly

that he had seen a young girl in one of the upper windows. Mrs. Watkins told the firemen that the house was empty, the residents having gone on holiday to Kenya some weeks ago and not due back for another month.

After quelling the flames, firemen entered the building and recovered the body of an adult male. No trace of a young child was found in the building. The man has since been identified as Mr. Mortimer Mulholland, an antiquarian at the British Museum. It is widely believed Mr. Mulholland, who was not badly burned, died from inhaling smoke.

Player Handout Six: Recalled Dream

You remember it was night, though the sky was beginning to lighten in the east. Aldebaran was already in the sky, for there was no moon and it was clearly visible. You were standing on the edge of a dark, gloomy wood, too scared to enter yet strangely compelled to do so. A young girl, dark-haired and perhaps eight years old, took your hand in hers. She smiled and told you she would guide you safely through the wood to a secret place. Her voice, so pleasant and soft, was irresistible and, led by the girl, you entered the wood. Although the forest was claustrophobic, you felt no unease. Time passed and you entered a clearing in which lay a gigantic stone. The girl bade you to lie on the stone, saying you should rest after your long journey.

No sooner had you laid down when ropes, no, not ropes, but thick, black tentacles slithered from the stone and bound you tight. No bed, an altar, an altar where many had died to feed... to feed. Something rose up around the altar, stalagmites sprouting through the mossy soil. You struggled against your bonds to no avail. Not stalagmites, not rocks... teeth, enormous teeth closing around you, **PIERCING YOUR FLESH. BLOOD FLOWING, THE CHARNEL STENCH, THE HORROR, THE HORROR!**

-Dramatis Personae-

Professor Farnsworth

Farnsworth's love of all things historically British began as a young lad, when he discovered a Roman coin beside a Neolithic monument. That men had reused certain sites throughout history fascinated him and he yearned to learn more. After leaving university he joined the British Museum as a research assistant while undertaking his doctorate. He has slowly climbed the academic ladder, becoming deputy to the head of the British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography Department.

Farnsworth's sanity has been eaten away by the Dark Child's nightmarish visions, his discoveries regarding the Cthulhu Mythos and a lack of sleep. His once bright eyes are terror-filled, his dark hair is marred with fresh streaks of grey, his skin is sallow and pale and the bags under his eyes are deep and dark. The last two days have been a blur of feverish study and nightmarish visions, leaving him little time for niceties such as eating, washing or going to the toilet. He has not changed his clothes, now largely soiled, since he arrived at the cottage.

PROF. J. FARNSWORTH, Age 63, Antiquarian

STR 9 DEX 10 INT 16 CON 12
 SIZ 13 APP 12 POW 12 EDU 20
 SAN 15 Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Anthropology 23%, Archaeology 72%, Astronomy 29%, Credit Rating 26%, Cthulhu Mythos 05%, Dodge 25%, Drive Automobile 32%, History 61%, Listen 47%, Occult 30%, Other Language (Saxon) 33%, Persuade 45%, Spot Hidden 50%

Weapons: 20-gauge shotgun 39%, damage 2d6

The Dark Child

While the Dark Child is commonly believed to be a lesser aspect of Shub Niggurath, she may well be a lesser servitor. That she is tied to Shub Niggurath in some manner is beyond doubt, for only cultists of the Black Goat know the incantation to summon the Dark Child. As the name implies, the Dark Child takes the form of a human youth, typically a raven-haired girl of seven or

eight years of age. This form is illusory, though the Dark Child has no ability to reveal her true guise voluntarily.

A creature of vengeance, the Dark Child does not revel in carnage or gore. She uses her spells to drive her victims insane before luring them to an untimely death through her Soul Singing spell. Unlike the regular spell, no pipes need be played. Instead, the Dark Child merely forms words of what she wishes her victim to see. If the victim's own moral compass does not lead him to his death, then Mental Suggestion is applied.

The Dark Child is susceptible to physical harm, though she cannot be slain by such means, magical or mundane. Should she suffer damage in excess of her hit points, her childlike form dissolves in a writhing mass of slimy black worms, which burrow into the soil. Witnessing this costs 1/1D6 Sanity points. Her destruction is fleeting, however, for she reforms, completely unharmed, in 1D4 hours.

THE DARK CHILD, Lesser Aspect of Shub Niggurath

STR 7 DEX 14 INT 21 CON 22
 SIZ 7 APP 15 POW 50
 Move: 6 Hit Points: 15

Damage Bonus: -1D4

Weapons: none

Spells: Dominate, Mental Suggestion, Mindblast, Nightmare, Soul Singing, Summon/Bind Dark Young

Sanity Loss: None unless a viewer knows he is witnessing the Dark Child, in which case it is 0/1D3

Dark Young of Shub Niggurath

STR 41 DEX 19 INT 12 CON 23
 SIZ 42 POW 23
 Move: 8 Hit Points: 38

Damage Bonus: +4D6

Weapons: Tentacle 80%, damage db + STR drain Trample 40%, damage 2D6+db

Armour: Firearm attacks cause 1 point of damage, 2 points if they impale. Shotguns do minimal possible damage. Hand-to-hand weapons do normal damage.

Skills: Hide in Woods 80%, Sneak 60%

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10



Avalon: The County of Somerset
St. Swithun's Hole

- St. Swithun's Hole -

***B**eneath the hills of Somerset, in a lair perpetually shrouded in utter darkness, lurks a fell host of accursed souls, condemned to devour carrion and living flesh for eternity. When the investigators enter this dank domain, they unwittingly make themselves the main course for a grisly feast.*

Introduction

This adventure is intended for use with four to six investigators and can be played in a single evening. No particular type of investigator is required, though those with physical skills such as Climb, Jump and Swim will have opportunity to shine more than those with cerebral pursuits. Unlike many *Call of Cthulhu* adventures this one is not a traditional investigative story. It is more akin to a modern horror film, combining elements of *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* with *The Descent* (a film we strongly suggest keepers watch before running this adventure).

The adventure largely lacks a framework, allowing the investigators to explore as they desire and leaving the keeper to crank up the tension and horror at his own pace. Due to the open nature of the story, keepers can add other elements as they desire without affecting the overall story – survival in the dark depths of the earth.

Much of the adventure takes place beneath the Mendip Hills, in a cave system known today as Swildon's Hole. We suggest the keeper start play with the lights on but dim them once the investigators enter the caves running beneath the Mendip Hills. If you can arrange it, a small room is best for play, emphasising the claustrophobic conditions encountered when spelunking.

Keeper's Information

Saint Swithun was a 9th century bishop of Winchester to whom several miracles are attributed. By the 9th century Britain was predominantly a Christian nation. Rural communities still held strong to many ancient and pagan traditions, as they do today, but the great pagan faiths had been crushed or consumed under the sign of the cross. However, in the year 854 a band of Saxons living in the Mendip Hills grew weary of Christianity and returned to the old faith, honouring their ancestors' barbaric god Woden. Like the ravenous wolves in whose skins they were cloaked, the marauders, whose numbers included men and women, fell upon farming villages and travellers, raping, looting, murdering and, so it is said, consuming the flesh of their victims.

On learning of these godless acts St. Swithun rallied an army of God-fearing men and marched to holy war, intent on ridding the kingdom of the foul stench of paganism before the cult could spread. Amid the barrows and henges of the Priddy Downs the two forces clashed in bloody combat. By day's end St. Swithun was victorious and the holy cross stood tall on the battlefield. Those marauders not killed in the brutal fighting were dragged before St. Swithun to receive his judgment. The bishop offered them redemption and salvation if they would accept the cross once more but to the last they refused. Like rabid dogs they barked and howled, cursing the White Christ and all his servants.

At the edge of the battlefield lay a deep hole, which locals proclaimed reached into the bowels of the earth, having no other exit. Unwilling to order the arbitrary execution of the prisoners, evil as they were and as heinous as their crimes

may have been, St. Swithun ordered they be thrown into the hole along with the corpses. Of the 200 prisoners taken that day, no man or woman was spared this judgment. The hole was sealed with a flat stone, upon which the mark of St. Swithun was engraved along with a warning, *'Swithun, bishop of Winchester, declares let no man raise this stone lest he unleash the powers of darkness.'*



St. Swithun's plan was that the prisoners would die of thirst or starvation; natural causes of death and thus leaving no blood on his hands. Such was the barbarity to which the marauders had sunk that yet heartily fed upon the flesh of their deceased comrades. Water they found in abundance, for they drank water from a subterranean stream that flowed through the cave into which they had been cast. When the corpses were picked clean they turned on each other, the strongest killing and devouring weaker members. Yet still they did not die.

Two generations later the Vikings swept across the landscape, raping and pillaging in the name of the same pagan gods the marauders worshipped. Knowing that news

of their advance had reached the rich monasteries, the Vikings scoured the land for signs as to where the monks had hidden their gold and silver relics. One such band, led by Ivar Gold-Hair, stumbled across the capstone engraved with Swithun's name and the sign of the cross. Removing the stone and casting it aside into a nearby ditch, they gazed into the darkness and smiled. Here, they figured, lay one such haul of treasure. A dozen Vikings, veterans of combat, descended into the gloom. None ever saw the surface again.

With the heavy stone no longer covering the entrance the surviving Saxons, for those who had eaten of human flesh found their lives greatly extended, sought to escape. Clawing and scrambling their way up the shaft they reached the surface. After a spate of grave-robbing the locals formed a mob and, one dark night, attacked the accursed Saxons while in the act of feasting on the recently interred. Weeping and gibbering, the terrified cave-dwellers slunk back into the darkness, nursing their wounds. The world of the living had shunned them but they would survive as they had done for so long, for now they could dine upon the flesh of curious rats and rabbits and sheep whose poor footing sent them to their death. Though food was always scarce, it was enough to ensure the ghouls, for such they had become, survived.

A thousand years and more has passed since the godless Saxons were thrown into the cave, yet still they haunt the dark as degenerate ghouls, driven to consume rotting flesh in a land where the sun never shines and still worshipping their fell gods.

Enter the Investigators

The adventure as written begins in The New Inn public house in the heart of the picturesque village of Priddy. The investigators have been invited here by an old friend. For the sake of the adventure the friend is called Doctor John Wilkinson, an antiquarian with specialist knowledge of Saxon Britain, though this should be changed to fit specific campaigns. If you are running this adventure as part of an ongoing campaign and do not wish to introduce a sudden new friend, any antiquarian the investigators have met before will suffice.

If all else fails, certain investigators may be invited to Priddy based on their academic reputation or have been recommended to Wilkinson through a friend of a friend.

Over a light lunch and several pints of rather good local ale Wilkinson explains the reason for the summons.

'I am so glad you could make it,' Wilkinson beams as he wipes a line of froth from his moustache. 'It is all very exciting! I suppose I should start from the beginning, really. Two months ago a local farmer was draining a ditch near the Priddy barrows, Neolithic burial mounds a few miles from here. At the bottom of the ditch, covered in thick mud, he discovered a huge, flat stone, faintly engraved with strange writing and marked with a cross.'

'The farmer contacted the museum in Taunton. Their man came out, took one look at the stone, deduced the writing was early Anglo-Saxon and contacted me. Anglo-Saxon finds are rather rare, so naturally I came straight away. The stone was rather faded and had been damaged but enough of the writing remained for me to identify the name of the writer. It was St. Swithun! Yes, the very same saint after whom St. Swithun's Day is named. That's the 15th of July, by the way. Sorry if I'm preaching to the choir – force of habit when you have to deal with students all day!'

'Near to the ditch is a deep shaft, an entrance it seems to a natural cave complex. This entire region is riddled with them, you know. Locals call the place Swildon's Hole but that is because the name has been altered over the ages. Really it should be St. Swithun's Hole! Fascinating, isn't it?'

'I have a theory that the saint hid something here, likely some sort of religious treasure. Although the Vikings invaded a few generations after Swithun had died, there are documents that report some sort of local uprising in this area. Churches and monasteries were always prime targets due to their wealth, so it makes perfect sense the local monks would have hidden their treasures.'

'The local farmer said some cavers went down in 1901 and came back up with a few bones and a corroded Saxon sword. I mean, if that isn't evidence that Swithun was up to something, then what is, eh? They're in the museum at

Taunton now, of course. Come tomorrow morning—I am planning to explore the caves more fully and I'd like you to come along!'

Assuming the investigators are up for a spot of spelunking, Wilkinson suggests everyone gets a good rest now as tomorrow's efforts are likely to be rather strenuous. All the exploration gear he needs is being delivered early tomorrow, at which time he will show the investigators how to use it.

-The Exploration Begins-

By the time the investigators rise the next morning Wilkinson is inspecting his equipment – pitons, hammers, boxes of waterproof matches (coated in wax), chalk sticks, coils of rope, a camera in a waterproofed satchel, rubber boots and sets of sturdy clothes lie scattered across the inn's tables. Among the gear is one carbide lantern per investigator.

Encased in brass, so as not to affect compasses, carbide lamps burn acetylene produced by dripping water onto a tablet of calcium carbide. They burn with a smoky flame, which Wilkinson says can be used to mark the walls of the caves. He neglects to mention that the marks are very easy to erase. Each block of calcium carbide lasts for two hours if used to fuel a bright light (30 feet diameter) and double that if used for dim light (10 feet diameter).

After a hearty breakfast the landlady brings out bundles of sandwiches packed in waxed paper and clay bottles full of watered down beer – provisions enough to last the investigators for one day, two if they eat and drink sparsely. Once everyone is ready, Wilkinson makes sure the equipment is equally distributed, though he is chivalric and does not overburden female investigators. With that, he leads the party of explorers out into the morning mist towards the entrance of Swildon's Hole.

The entrance is a narrow, triangular hole in the ground, barely wide enough for a grown man to fit his shoulders through, though it widens a short way down. Wilkinson suggests that he goes first, since he is the expedition's leader, though he can be persuaded to allow someone else the honour.

Whoever goes down first, Wilkinson suggests the supplies and equipment are lowered down next, followed by everyone else.

The slick-walled entrance shaft drops 150 feet before ending in a narrow passage. The shaft is not a vertical drop but twists and turns, allowing explorers to scabble down safely with either a Climb or DEX x5 roll (whichever is highest). Rappelling is impossible due to the non-vertical nature of the shaft but tying a guide rope to arrest falls is permissible. Any failure could cause one of the problems suggested here or something of the keeper's devising.

- The investigator twists his ankle on the descent, halving his speed for his next 1D4 hours.

- A foot slips, causing the explorer to slide several yards before catching his fall. This causes 1 hit point of damage from cuts and bruises to his hands.
- Unaccustomed to the rigors of manoeuvring through small gaps, an investigator becomes stuck. See page 99 for guidelines on how he can work himself free.

The caves are dark, dank and claustrophobic, the walls for the most part slick with dripping water. Wondrous geological formations – stalactites, stalagmites, curtains and columns – glitter in the light of the carbide lamps. A small stream flows along the floor, its depth varying from a few inches to a few feet. The icy waters eventually come out in the Wookey Hole cave system through a narrow (and impassable) channel.

Life Below Ground

Caving in the 1920s is a vastly different experience to modern spelunking. Complex safety harnesses, nylon rope, hard hats, waterproof torches and clothing, and SCUBA are all decades away. This remains very much the age of amateur explorers, equipped with rudimentary equipment and a great deal of pluck. Some special rules apply while below ground.

Cold Water: The stream running through the cave has never been warmed by the sun. Immersion in the stream requires the investigator to make a CON x5 roll to avoid hypothermia. A failure means that they suffer a –10% penalty to all rolls – their hands are shaking and brain is fogged. Removing this condition requires adequate heat and dry clothes.

Darkness: While it is dark on a cloudy moonless night, it is nothing compared to the utter darkness below ground. The darkness is absolute and extremely disorienting – visibility is reduced to absolutely zero. Hide rolls are automatically successful in total darkness – do not bother rolling.

Trying to strike a foe, even an adjacent one, reduces the attacker's chance to one-fifth of normal and even then this percentage is only permissible if the attacker has some idea of where his target is located. Typically this requires a Listen roll first but even that is fraught with danger, for that scuffling sound behind you might be a fellow investigator! Under no circumstances should the investigators know exactly where their comrades and enemies are once darkness descends.

Even with lamps, the darkness is never far away. Carbide lamps emit light in a 30 feet diameter sphere but beyond that the darkness resides. Flickering shadows as something passes by may be visible but no details can be discerned.

Rate of Travel: Approximately 100 yards per hour. This is not a show cave with a concreted floor – it is a sprawling maze of narrow tunnels, short climbs and drops, loops and dead-ends.

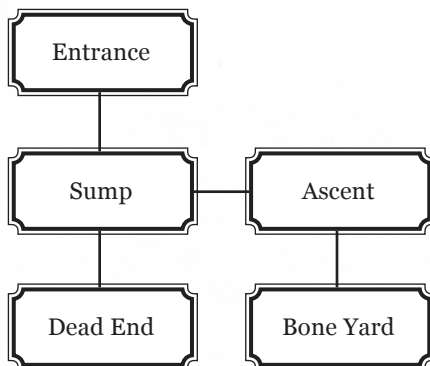
Sound: Any sounds made in a cave system echo through caverns and passages, bouncing and rebounding off the walls. Using Listen to discern a sound warrants a +15% bonus, as even quiet noises are amplified. Using Listen to try and deduce the source of a sound's origin incurs a –25% penalty.

Navigating the Caves

Navigating the uncharted cave system does not require the keeper to constantly consult a map and read off directions and distances, nor are the players expected to draw maps of the investigators' route. Instead, we use an abstract system for the exploration and discovery phase. It is assumed that someone (or possibly more than one person) will be trying to make a map, mark the route or memorise the path as the investigators explore.

Obstacles and Locales: For each hour of exploration the keeper must roll 1D4 and check the General Encounter Table. This determines a special feature of the caves that the investigators stumble across during that hour. Exactly when the encounter occurs in that hour is up to the keeper to determine. You will notice there is no entry indicating a meeting with the ghouls. Keepers should read the section entitled **Running the Ghoul Attacks** (see page 100).

The keeper should draw a very quick map as the party advances. Draw a square with the word 'Entrance' in to mark the start of the journey. Then draw a straight line and add a second square with the second hour's event in. Should the investigators backtrack to a previous event location and branch off in a different direction, just draw a line heading at a different angle. This gives the keeper an easy reference for determining how far the investigators are from known areas, such as the entrance. An example is included here.



In this example the investigators begin at the entrance. During the second hour they cross a sump. In hour three they encounter a dead end, forcing them to backtrack and

seek a new route. Hour four sees them make an ascent in a new direction, while in hour five they stumble across the Bone Yard. To determine how far, in hours, the party is from the entrance, the keeper simply needs to count all the boxes backward. In this instance, it is four hours hard slog back to the entrance. Of course, this implies someone has made a map of the route and the map is accurate.

Mapping: After each hour of exploration the keeper should make a secret Navigate roll for whoever is keeping track of the party's route. Success means that he has drawn, marked or memorised the route correctly, allowing the party to backtrack with relative ease. Should they elect to backtrack along a previously travelled route at any time, the keeper should *not* roll for a general encounter – there will not suddenly be a sump or specific locale where there was not one before. Should the Navigate roll fail, the investigator's map is faulty. This will only be discovered when the explorers decide to backtrack.

Backtracking using an incorrect map *automatically* leads to a new area of the caves and thus a new general encounter. After dealing with the encounter the *investigator* may make another Navigate roll. Success means he realises where he went wrong and leads the party back to the known trail. Failure indicates they are still lost and so have another general encounter the next hour. Repeat this as often as necessary until the investigators know where they are in the cave system.

General Encounter Table

D4	Encounter/Obstacle
1	Boring: Nothing special occurs during the hour. The investigators make good progress deeper into the caves.
2-3	Natural Hazard: See the section entitled Natural Hazards.
4	Specific Locale: See the section entitled Specific Locales.

Natural Hazard Table

Roll 1D6 and check the table. Sumps, ascents, descents and squeezes can be avoided simply by finding an alternate route. Do *not* roll for an encounter the hour after an obstacle is avoided. A Navigate roll is still required to map the route, though.

D6	Encounter/Obstacle
1	Sump: A sump is a dip in the passageway that has filled with water. Carbide lamps must be extinguished before entering a sump, leaving the explorer in pitch darkness. A Swim roll is required to navigate through the sump.
2	Labyrinth: The investigators enter a maze of interlinked, winding passages. At the end of the hour an investigator must make a Navigate roll to locate an exit. Otherwise, they remain trapped in the labyrinth for the next hour. Do not roll for an encounter while the party is going around in circles.
3	Tight Squeeze: The passageway narrows drastically, forcing the investigators to crawl on their bellies or shuffle sideways through the narrow traverse. Roll 2D6+4. The die roll indicates the maximum Size of character who can safely squeeze through the passage. Anyone larger must make a Dexterity x5 roll to squeeze through, suffering a cumulative -5% penalty for each Size they are larger than the squeeze rating. A character more than four points of Size larger than the squeeze cannot attempt the traverse – he is simply too big. Anyone who fails the Dexterity roll becomes stuck. Wiggling free requires an DEX x3 roll. Any investigator who fails three such rolls in succession is stuck fast. Shifting them requires outside help. Helpers must use their own Strength to overcome STR 20 on the Resistance Table. Each failed roll inflicts 1D2 hit point of damage from cuts and bruises.
4	Ascent/Descent: A climb of 1D6 x 10 feet confronts the investigators. Whether it is up or down is up to the keeper. Every 20 feet or part thereof requires a Climb roll.
5	Squeeze and Sump: Part way along a sump is a tight squeeze. Any investigator who becomes stuck faces the grave possibility of drowning. In addition to having to work himself free he loses 0/1 Sanity points per round through panic and fear of imminent death.
6	Dead End: After an hour of exhausting travel the passage abruptly comes to an impassable dead end. The investigators have no choice but to backtrack and search for another route. It is time to see how well the navigator did!

Specific Locale Table

Roll a D3 and consult the table. Add +1 to the die roll each time you roll on this table after the first. The incrementing die roll means that sooner or later it will be impossible to roll a certain entry. For instance, after the first roll the die roll becomes 1D3+1. Since the minimum number that can be rolled is now 2, this makes discovery of the Viking Finds an impossible task. This represents the mazelike nature of the passages, not all of which will be, or indeed can be, explored and the fact that the investigators have pushed on past the location of the Viking Finds.

Each specific locale can be encountered only once. Should a duplicate be rolled, treat it as no encounter for that hour. Each entry is detailed further here.

D3	Locale
1	Viking Finds
2	The Bone Yard
3	The Waterfall
4	Long Jump, Long Drop
5	Cave Paintings
6	The Temple of Woden
7	A Way Out
8	(Optional) The Darkness Below

Running the Ghoul Attacks

The ghouls who call the labyrinthine home are drawn to sound, light and the smell of blood. Keepers should note that there are no random encounter tables or predetermined times when the ghouls attack, though some suggestions occur through the description of the caves. Likewise, there are not any firm guidelines on how many ghouls attack – the ghouls strike where and when the keeper decides.

Introduce the ghouls through blurred movement on the edge of vision, strange gibbering sounds echoing through the caves and scrabbling sounds in the dark distance, not a brutal assault. While such sounds might be worrying on the surface, the added atmosphere of being trapped underground makes them more nerve shattering. Each ‘encounter’ of this nature calls for a 0/1 Sanity point loss. Chip away at the investigators’ Sanity as well as their hit points!

Let the investigators know they are being stalked by *something* and slowly build up the tension. Never forget this is *Call of Cthulhu*, where fear of the unknown is much better than a full frontal view of some hideous creature. Once the investigators (and hopefully the players!) are scared of what might be down here with them, let the ghouls attack.

Attacks should be sudden and terrifying, with shadowy forms leaping from the darkness onto investigators’ backs, taking a bite or swipe and then scuttling away into the inky darkness before any one gets a clear view of them.

Ideally there should not be a prolonged assault by a mass of flesh-craving degenerates – this is not a fantasy dungeon crawl and using that sort of mentality will result in dead investigators and a boring *Call of Cthulhu* adventure. Similarly, the aim of the adventure is not to rack up an impressive body count of ghouls (or investigators) but to survive the horrors for long enough to find an escape hole. There are a maximum of 30 ghouls remaining in the cave system, enough to place the investigators at a serious disadvantage. Of course, never reveal this, or the investigators will start becoming the hunters and keeping tally.

For their part, the investigators cannot go running off to a shop and purchase a vast quantity of ammunition. Blazing away at every shadow will quickly result in the hollow click

of the hammer striking an empty barrel. Once they know they are facing a pack of flesh-hungry ghouls that horrible sound should be worth a 0/1D3 Sanity point loss!

Specific Locales

1) Viking Finds

The first investigator to enter this chamber kicks a hard object lying submerged in the stream. Reaching down, he discovers it is a corroded metal helmet complete with a full face guard of archaic design. Lifting the object up causes a fleshless skull to slide from the helmet and plop into the water. The sudden appearance of an intact human skull costs 0/1 Sanity points. An Archaeology roll reveals the helmet to be of Viking design, though it is impossible to pinpoint an exact date beyond the mid-9th to mid-11th century.

A Medicine roll made while investigating the skull reveals the head was not hacked from the body, there being no cut marks on the vertebrae. Rather, it appears to have literally been torn off by brute force! Learning this costs 0/1 Sanity points.

Investigation of the rest of the chamber reveals half a dozen swords, some metal axe heads, more helmets, and, in one corner, a pile of chain mail hauberks. These also date from the Viking age. All the metal is heavily corroded, the hauberks having rusted into tangled masses and the swords too brittle to wield in combat. Strangely, given the quantity of ancient arms and armour, there is no sign of any skeletons.

These are the armour and weapons of Ivar Gold-Hair. Lured deep into the caves by thoughts of gold and jewels, the Viking warriors were ambushed in this cave by the ravenous ghouls, each meeting a violent and bloody death (though not before sending many ghouls to their deaths first). Their corpses were then stripped of their useless adornments and dragged to the Bone Yard (Area 2) to be consumed.

2) The Bone Yard

The passage widens into a cavern. The centre forms a basin, in which the stream pools knee-deep. Casting their torches around the walls, the investigators see that the ground is higher to the north and south. The elevated terrain is also covered with a deep carpet of bones.



A casual inspection reveals they are animal bones and all of them have been cracked by force. A successful Natural History roll identifies them as rats, cats, rabbits and sheep. Anyone closely inspecting the bones may make a Spot Hidden roll. With success, the investigator discovers the bones have been gnawed, though he cannot tell what made the marks. On a special success the investigator makes a horrifying discovery – the teeth marks are human. This grisly revelation costs 0/1 Sanity points.

Delving deeper into the pile unearths human bones; femurs and ribs at first and then a human skull. These bones too have been gnawed. Investigators who know the bones higher up the pile were gnawed by humans detect similar teeth marks with a Spot Hidden roll. This costs the investigator 0/1D2 Sanity points.

Dating the bones is impossible but they have obviously been built up over many years. Wilkinson, if no one else does so first, raises the question of how the bones came to be here. Whether or not the investigators yet know they have been gnawed, it is quite obvious the animals did not all wander into the cave by accident and just happen to drop dead here. This chamber is the ghouls' refuse tip for the remains of their meals.

Anyone rooting around in the pile should make a Luck roll. A maximum of one roll is allowed per investigator. Anyone making the roll finds something of interest. Roll a D4 and consult the following table. Wilkinson becomes very excited at any Saxon finds, clapping like a giddy schoolchild, convinced he is about to make a major archaeological discovery.

Roll	Discovery
1	Silver Coin. An Archaeology roll identifies it as a Saxon coin minted in Somerton and dated to around 850 AD. A History roll reveals this is the right era for St. Swithun. Should the second roll fail, Wilkinson can confirm the date matches the period of the saint. <i>Value:</i> £25 to a collector.
2	Gold Bracelet. An Archaeology roll reveals the intricate detailing and knot work pattern is of Saxon origin but cannot narrow the date down any further than 600-900 AD. <i>Value:</i> £100 to a collector.
3	Hacked Bone: The investigator drags out a human bone. Although this one shows gnaw marks, it also has a deep gash, evidence of violence. An Archaeology roll allows the investigator to surmise the injury was inflicted by a heavy, sharp object, such as a sword, though he cannot prove it down here. A First Aid (made at -20%) or Medicine roll reveals the injury was made before death occurred.
4	A Dog Collar: A small metal tag bearing the name Rover attached to a leather collar. The writing is modern English, though it could date back to anytime in the past few centuries. This can be found only once. Should it be rolled again, treat it as a roll of 1 instead.

3) The Waterfall

A natural spring, flowing from deeper in the limestone hills, emerges in this chamber as a waterfall, its cold waters tumbling 25 feet down the side of the cave before joining with the stream running through the cave network. Concealed behind the waterfall is another passage. Detecting this side passage without penetrating the waterfall requires a Spot Hidden roll at -20%. The water is only a few inches thick and crossing it brings no risk of hypothermia.

Note to Keeper: This is an ideal time for a ghoul attack. If an investigator goes to move through the waterfall, one might leap out at him, hissing and snarling. Alternately, if everyone enters the side passage, then one might be waiting outside!

4) Long Jump, Long Drop

A deep rent 12 feet wide and thrice that deep splits this small cavern in twain. The two obvious options are to take a run up and leap the gap (requiring a Jump roll) or scale along the cave wall (a Climb roll). Failure at either roll results in a long drop and a hard landing for 3D6 damage. Clever investigators may come up with alternate ways to cross the divide or reduce the risks of falling – do not penalise them for being inventive.

Note to Keeper: Since the party is likely to split while overcoming this obstacle, this is another ideal time for a ghoul attack.

5) Cave Paintings

Unlike other specific locales, this entry can be reused if the keeper wishes. A total of three caverns boasting crude paintings exist within St Swithun's Hole. The keeper may roll a D3 to determine which one is discovered, pick one, or combine them into a single cave (found only once). The latter signifies various waves of explorers adding to more ancient paintings, continuing the process through the ages.

The Dark Past: The imagery depicts a gigantic, bloated, anthropomorphic figure with rabbit-like ears squatting over a dark hole. Surrounding the central figure are smaller figures, humanoid in design. Strange black blobs, evidently part of the overall picture, yet clearly not human, surround the humanoids, seeming to rear up menacingly. A successful

Cthulhu Mythos roll reveals that the painting honours Tsathoggua, the black blotches being formless spawn. How the investigators interpret this scene is up to them but the truth is that it shows Tsathoggua's worshippers revelling in his presence. It was drawn in the distant past by the subhuman voormis, who once dwelt in parts of the caverns no longer accessible to modern explorers.

Prehistoric: A traditional cave drawing of bison, woolly rhinos and other prehistoric animals. These were not drawn by cavemen, who lived in the mouth of caves rather than in the stygian depths of the underworld but by an earlier species of ghouls who haunted the caverns. They died out long ago, victims of early human settlers waging war on the night stalkers.

Saxon Age: Crude stick figures are waging war against each other. Hovering over one army is a cross, while the other is watched over with a stylised wolf's head. An Idea roll reveals the nature of the symbolism within the drawings. The Saxons painted the imagery in the blood of their victims, marking their defeat and the start of their life beneath ground.

6) The Temple of Woden

Propped against the back wall of this circular cave is a skeleton, its bones lashed to three spears by leather cords. Rusting chain mail dangles in shreds from its fleshless bones and a rusted broad sword lies at its bony feet. A yellow-white tube has been rammed into the skeleton's left eye socket. On nearby shelves stand crude stone bowls, each about two inches across.

Before the Saxons degenerated into full ghouls they worshipped here. The corpse, one of their fallen comrades slain in the battle against the Christians, was tied to the spears to form an upright altar of flesh and bone, a grisly parody of Woden, chief god of the Germanic pantheon. Here they begged for a good death or release from their charnel pit but Woden did not answer their lamentations.

The tube protruding from the skeleton's eye socket is a bone scroll case. Inside is a tightly wrapped piece of vellum on which is written Anglo-Saxon runes. If none of the investigators can decipher the tongue, Wilkinson does so. Give the players **Handout #1** at this time.

Although the translation involves kennings, colourful descriptions used in place of more mundane text, its general meaning should be decipherable to the players with a little thought. The scroll, written after the imprisonment of the cannibalistic Saxons, gives a brief account of their lives and fate. Should the players struggle to make sense of the document, Wilkinson sheds a little light on the subject matter.

'Ah, yes, lots of kennings in there. Metaphors, really, designed to conjure specific images in the audience. Poor quality poetry, really, but I guess this Coenwulf wasn't a poet. Now let me see if I can work it back into modern English for you.'

'It begins with a famine. He speaks of winter being particularly hard on the stomach. Hmm, it seems the local priests blamed the villagers for the problem, accusing them of being sinners. That doesn't seem to have gone down too well. See here, the writer speaks of returning to the pagan gods and forsaking Christ. Probably didn't please the priests much.'

'Then they... oh my! It seems they turned to cannibalism. It's quite clear from the text; they drank blood and ate the dead. Then it jumps to a battle scene. No idea how much time passed I'm afraid as there the text is indecipherable. The fight lasted all day because he makes reference to sunset. Ah, he mentions Christ again, only this time with a chieftain or leader. It seems the pagans and Christians were fighting each other. Then the leader of the victorious Christians threw the survivors into darkness. Dear Lord! He must mean this cave system! The Christians condemned the prisoners to die in this foul pit!'

'The next bit is rather strange, never seen anything like it before. He makes mention to no Valkyries coming to take them to Heaven. Ah, he must mean because they won't die in battle that the afterlife is denied them. A horrible fate for one who believes in the warrior culture of the old Saxon ways. The poor sods must have starved to death. Bit of a ghastly story all round, really.'

Wilkinson's deduction regarding the fate of the Saxons is erroneous – death did not claim them, as the writer himself intimates, for they had already begun to walk down the dark path that would convert them to ghouls, unable to die of old age. Any investigator deducing that the foul creatures hunting them are the Saxons, still alive after a millennium and more, costs everyone who hears his opinion 1/1D2 Sanity points.

7) A Way Out

A dim circle of sunlight (or moonlight if the investigators have taken some time to get here) illuminates the centre of this room. Unfortunately, the light shines down a shaft in the cave's ceiling, the opening to which is 10 feet above the investigators' heads. Anyone wishing to escape needs to first reach the opening to the vertical shaft. Without modern climbing equipment, going up the walls and along the ceiling requires a Climb roll at -75%. An alternative is to form a human pyramid (which is a perfect time for a ghoul attack!).

Once in the narrow, slick shaft, the climber must either haul his way up the slick surface or 'walk' up using their back and legs. The former requires six Climb rolls, each at -20%, or 10 Climb rolls with no penalty. For the former, each roll equates to 30 feet. The latter method moves the investigator 20 feet. The shaft emerges near the Priddy Pools, a wetland of open water, fen and swamp.

8) The Darkness Below

This encounter is optional and provides the keeper with a way to extend the adventure. Hidden away in the deepest recesses of the cave is a deep, dark hole. It plummets thousands of feet in a series of shorter drops, eventually leading to the great unknown world wherein chthonians and trapped gods dwell. Perhaps, with enough travelling, it connects to the measureless cavern of N'Kai, which lies deep beneath K'nyan or the sunless chambers under the Nameless City within which lies madness, or descends into realms inhabited by colonies of serpent people or Mi-go. The possibilities are endless, if the keeper wants to explore them.

-Player Handouts-

Player Handout One: Summary of Scroll

By the hand of Coenwulf son of Sigmund son of Penda son of Aldwulf, chosen of Woden.

Wilted crops and barren earth, no food this wolf-time to feed growling wolves

Servants of the White Cross cast us as sinners

The Wild Hunt saw I, thunder across Ymir's skull, a blazing light

A sign to renew our oath to Woden and cast aside false gods

[LOST TEXT]

Like sons of Fenrir we fell upon the weak

We took our fill of corpse-beer and carrion-swill

Stronger for our deeds, fuelled by the forbidden food

[LOST TEXT]

The spear-din waged, battle-sweat soaked the earth

A sea of raven harvests lay still and silent

The sky-candle dimmed; we were defeated

Our wound hoe's bent and sword eater's splintered

The ring-giver of the White Christ showed us no mercy

Cast into damnation where the glory of elves cannot see

[LOST TEXT]

No woman of Woden shall guide our way

To the feast hall of plenty

We are cursed!

-Dramatis Personae-

John Wilkinson

Educated at Oxford University and now in the employ of the Sussex County Museum, Wilkinson is an expert in Anglo-Saxon archaeology. Regarded as something of a pariah by his colleagues because of his unusual behaviour, Wilkinson takes a very hands-on approach to his profession. Using his own money he had local craftsmen construct a replica Saxon long house in the woods near his home in accordance with a design he drew up from post holes uncovered on a dig. Here, clad in Saxon-style clothing and swigging mead from a drinking horn, he entertains guests, performing Anglo-Saxon poetry in the original language.

An antiquarian by trade, Wilkinson also has a basic knowledge of geology. He believes that understanding the strata in which a find is discovered can tell a vital part of the story when piecing together the past. It also enables him to identify gemstones and date shards of pottery based on the type of clay and firing technique.

At heart Wilkinson is a child. He lives and breathes the Anglo-Saxon period, often lamenting to his friends that he was not born 1,000 years earlier. Although he has a mischievous gleam in his eye when he makes such comments, few can tell whether or not he is being serious.

JOHN WILKINSON, Age 43, Antiquarian

STR 14 DEX 10 INT 13 CON 13
SIZ 12 APP 13 POW 10 EDU 19
SAN 50 Hit Points: 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 25%, Archaeology 67%, Art (Anglo-Saxon Poetry) 43%, Bargain 36%, Climb 52%, Credit Rating 24%, Dodge 30%, Drive Automobile 29%, First Aid 43%, Geology 16%, Hide 19%, History 71%, Jump 40%, Library Use 49%, Navigate 30%, Occult 08%, Other Language (Anglo-Saxon) 73%, Persuade 36%, Photography 22%, Sneak 25%, Spot Hidden 45%

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+db

Degenerate Saxon Ghouls

Incarcerated by St. Swithun 12 centuries ago, the fact that the ghouls still haunt the caves is testimony to their strong survival instinct and willingness to eat anything. Debased and degenerate after long centuries living in utter darkness, the ghouls have lost the ability to speak Anglo-Saxon, their former language. If anyone converses to them in the language the ghouls must make an INT x1 roll to recognise the tongue. Typically, hearing the long-dead language causes them to hesitate for one round as ancient memories flood their mind's eye. Alas, these memories are quickly stifled in favour of eating fresh human flesh.

Since ammunition is a prized commodity for the investigators, several of the ghouls should carry rusted broad swords. This gives the heroes a chance to arm themselves. Of course, it would be too kind to have every investigator armed in this manner, so ensure there is always one investigator without a melee weapon. The sword's lower damage is a result of their age.

Unlike regular ghouls, these ones can seemingly see perfectly well in absolute darkness. Their preternatural ability to move around in the dark is a combination of an excellent nose, keen hearing and the ability to see in minimal light

GHOULS, Mocking Charnel Feeders

STR 16 DEX 13 INT 13 CON 13
SIZ 13 POW 13
Move: 9 Hit Points: 13

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Claws 30%, damage 1D6+db, Bite 30%, damage 1D6 + automatic worry (see *Call of Cthulhu* 6th Edition, page 160), Broad sword 30%, damage 1D6+db

Armour: Firearms and projectiles do half rolled damage; round up any fraction

Skills: Burrow 75%, Climb 85%, Hide 60%, Jump 75%, Listen 70%, Scent Decay 65%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 75%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a ghoul

The Hag Ghoul

Coenwulf may have been the warrior chieftain of the cannibalistic Saxons but his mother, Aelwynn, was the true power behind the throne. Aelwynn's true age is unknown, for she had used the insidious spell Mind Transfer several times before Coenwulf was born. Given this knowledge, it is not unfeasible that she actually came to Britain with the first wave of Saxon invaders in the 5th century.

While her people traded their religious loyalty to Christianity, she held true to the old ways, honouring the gods as she had done for centuries. The appearance of the Wild Hunt, possibly a comment or a manifestation of Yog-Sothoth, gave her the tool she needed to lead her son and his followers down a dark path. Present at the battle against St Swithun's army, she was struck down by the saint but survived to share her son's fate.

Using the Hag Ghoul is optional. If the investigators are proficient with spells or endowed with high weapon skills, her presence and magical abilities returns the balance of power to the ghouls.

HAG GHOUL, Charnel Feeding Witch

STR 13 DEX 12 INT 15 CON 14
SIZ 12 POW 17
Move: 9 Hit Points: 14

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Claws 30%, damage 1D6+db, Bite 30%, damage 1D6 + automatic worry

(see *Call of Cthulhu* 6th Edition, page 160)

Armour: Firearms and projectiles do half rolled damage; round up any fraction

Skills: Burrow 60%, Climb 75%, Hide 70%, Jump 65%, Listen 75%, Scent Decay 80%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 60%

Spells: Cause Disease, Clutch of Nyogtha, Curse of the Stone, Evil Eye, Mind Transfer

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a ghoul





Avalon: The County of Somerset
Adventure Seeds

-Adventure Seeds-

This chapter contains a number of seeds for the keeper who needs an adventure idea quick-smart yet has not got the time to prepare anything. Each seed details the location, background, in terms of any local legends the investigators might uncover and the true menace involved, and recent events. The keeper does need to invest time in expanding these seeds into full adventures.

-The Bullbeggar-

Location

On the outskirts of Bruton rises Creech Hill, a saddleback hill dotted with copses and ploughed fields whose slopes have been farmed since mediaeval times. Atop a great curve in the hill stands Fox Covert, the barely visible remains of an Iron Age hill fort. A third of a mile to the south east, shrouded in trees on the highest part of the hill, is Lamyatt Beacon. The site of a Romano-British temple, nothing is visible above ground save for a few unremarkable stones and a slight undulation, easily missed in the dense vegetation.

Background

The Romano-British temple fell into ruin shortly after the end of the Roman occupation. With anarchy sweeping the lands and petty tyrants claiming land through force of arms, the isolated temple was deemed an easy target for raiders. Fearful of attack, the priests abandoned the holy site but not before calling forth a star vampire to safeguard the votive offerings left in its dingy basement. Bound through powerful arcane rituals, the star vampire found it impossible to return to its normal place of existence. It would serve as ordered until the time the universe withered and died.

Unable to feed, the star vampire entered deep hibernation, preserving its life energy. The relentless passage of time ticked forward and the star vampire slept undisturbed. Over the centuries the temple's stonework was stolen to construct houses but the basement and its fell guardian lay undiscovered, though not unnoticed.

Each time people came to Lamyatt Beacon to steal stone the star vampire stirred, awakened from its endless dreams by the presence of their blood. Yet it remained trapped within its tomb, unable to do more than titter loudly, craving blood and cursing its bondage. These unearthly sounds were enough to scare away generations of would-be robbers, and soon Creech Hill in general developed a bad reputation and stories of ghosts sprang up. Though the hillside around the copse is farmed, locals avoid Lamyatt Beacon, especially at night.

A local tale speaks of the bullbeggar, a Somerset term for a hobgoblin or mischievous spirit. During the 1880s the hill was a quarry, albeit only for a few short months. For several weeks work progressed well and rich rewards put aside talk of ghosts in the workmen's minds. Blasting away the hill side, the quarrymen breached the chamber containing the star vampire, unleashing it into an unsuspecting world. Fortunately for mankind, the star vampire's binding did not allow it to move beyond the top of the hill. Several unexplained deaths, reports of something unseen watching the men and accounts of strange laughing caused the quarry to be closed down.

Over the course of the next decade the legend grew, the bullbeggar being given the form of a black humanoid that chased folk off the hill.

Recent Events

A group of schoolboys from Bruton's Sexey's School, an all-boys grammar school, have a terrible secret to hide. Several nights ago they dared one of the new boys to cross Lamyatt

Beacon at night. Unwilling to lose face, the boy accepted the challenge but has not returned. Fearing expulsion at best and imprisonment at worst, the boys have sworn an oath to keep their involvement with the disappearance a secret. The missing boy's father, a friend of one of the investigators has contacted the local police but a search of the area around the school and along the River Brue has found no trace of the boy, neither has polite questioning of his school friends achieved anything. With no one else to turn to, the father contacts his old friend for assistance.

-Put Out That Light-

Location

The rugged and wild landscape of Exmoor has attracted its share of strange events. Spectral hounds, ghostly soldiers, witches and warlocks, and crazed, degenerate families are all part of the rich tapestry of Exmoor's folklore.

Background

The ancestors of the Davenport family arrived with William the Conqueror in 1066. Granted lands of Exmoor they raised sheep for many generations, becoming wealthy landowners. In the early 18th century the then head of the family, Sir Roger Davenport, a noted merchant who had spent much of his youth representing his family's business in the American Colonies, particularly in the region around the Massachusetts' coastline, returned to England with his American wife following the death of his father. Sir William Davenport, Sir Roger's grandson, sold the family's lands in 1793 for a hefty sum and invested the monies in the construction of a great mansion, Highpoint House, on the cliffs overlooking the Bristol Channel. His reasons were never satisfactorily explained.

Ever since that day the Davenport family has been regarded as an odd bunch. Many of the later scions were born with peculiar deformities or simply vanished overnight, never to be seen again. Local gossips place these strange events down to inbreeding and inherited madness, none suspecting the awful truth.

During his time in Massachusetts Sir Roger fell for the daughter of a local merchant, a family whose ancestry stretched back to the first settlers along the windswept coast. A year after their marriage she told Sir Roger of her true ancestry, of the blood of the deep ones which coursed through her veins. Appalled and fascinated in equal measure, Sir Roger's love for the girl eventually overcame his fear and loathing for the scaly creatures she called kith and kin.

Sir William discovered his secret heritage following the death of his grandfather. Enthralled by his heritage, Sir William moved the family seat as close to the sea as possible. His choice of location for Highpoint House was no quirk of fate, for below the cliffs ran deep tunnels which connected to sea caves. In the deepest basement of the house was constructed a secret passage, linking these caves to his family home.

Recent Events

The year is now 1943. Britain and its brave allies are locked in bitter war with Nazi Germany. Yet within Britain's green and pleasant land there lurks the ugly spectre of Nazi sympathisers. The War Office has received reports of strange lights along the Exmoor coastline. Suspecting the Nazis may be trying to smuggle agents into Britain, it has dispatched a small team of military personnel to investigate.

The current head of the Davenport family, Sir Reginald, holds strong Nazi sympathies. He also knows of his heritage, though nothing of the secret tunnel running beneath his home. By dark of night he has taken to trying to contact the deep ones. Once communication is established, he hopes to sway them into serving the Nazi cause by attacking shipping moving up the Bristol Channel to the great port at Bristol.

Hitler, already indoctrinated into occult circles, has been informed of the plot through his British spy network and has sent a top member of the *Forschungs- und Lehrgemeinschaft das Ahnenerbe e.V.* (an organisation better known simply as the *Ahnenerbe*), one knowledgeable of the Mythos, to aid the traitorous noblemen in his endeavour. The lights reported to the War Office are bonfires, lit by Sir Reginald to guide the deep ones to him.

-Drake's Legacy-

Location

Combe Sydenham Hall stands in a shady valley on the edge of Exmoor. The grand house was the ancestral seat of the Sydenham family between the 15th and mid-18th centuries. Today it is the property of the Tweed family.

Background

In 1585 Francis Drake married the daughter of George Sydenham. According to one local legend, Drake embarked on one of his many overseas voyages shortly after the ceremony, leaving the girl alone.

After seven years, Drake having not returned, she grew tired of waiting and succumbed to the charms of another man and decided to remarry. Drake, learning of the intended union through supernatural means, fired a nearby cannon, launching the ball half across the world. As the bride approached the altar, where the groom-to-be waited patiently, the cannonball smashed through the roof and landed between them. Taking this as a sign her husband would return soon, the girl called off the wedding. In another version of the same tale the girl did not approach the altar willingly but was rather forced into a second marriage by her tyrannical father. The outcome of this story is the same as the first.

Both stories are based around a kernel of truth, though Drake is an embellishment. In 1707 a meteorite crashed through the roof of the local church, interrupting a wedding. The stone was later removed and placed in Combe Sydenham Hall.

The stone did indeed come from outer space but it was not a meteorite. Cast into the heavenly void eons ago by a colour out of space, the hollow sphere, an embryo of that unearthly race, floated between the galaxies, eventually crashing to earth in 1707. Kept away from soil or water, the embryo lay dormant... until recently.

Recent Events

Several months ago the Tweed family left their estate for an extended holiday while workmen were performing restoration work on the old house. Knocking down an old wall, the workmen came across a small attic space, empty save for an old rock, strangely light and slightly warm to the touch. Thinking nothing of the find, they deposited the old meteorite in a small lake at the bottom of the garden, where other building rubble was being dumped. Now in the right environment, the embryo began to germinate.

The emerging larva has since slithered away to a disused well on the edge of the grounds, where its unearthly transformation of the local vegetation has gone unnoticed.

On a dark and stormy night the investigators are invited to dine at Combe Sydenham Hall. Why the investigators receive the invitation is left to the keeper to determine. Tweed could, for example, be a patron of the arts, inviting authors, artists and sculptors to his home. Such artistic types often have hangers-on accompanying them. Maybe he desires to learn more of the history of the Hall and offers a historian the chance to explore the Hall's library in the hope of unearthing a few interesting facts. Alternatively, maybe the investigators' car breaks down on the lonely moors, forcing them to seek refuge at the nearest house. Although hosting a dinner party, the Tweeds invite the investigators to join them.

No matter their reasons for being at the Hall, the now adult colour out of space rises from its watery lair, intent on feeding as quickly as possible so it can return to the heavens. And its inhuman senses have detected a veritable feast of life energy just waiting to be consumed.

-Dead Man's Morris-

Location

This adventure can be set anywhere in Somerset, though with its abundance of old barrows the Mendip Hills makes a most fitting locale. A small village is a better choice than a bustling town.

Background

Morris dancing is a traditional English dance, once popular across the country but now confined to just a few regions, Somerset among them. Clad in brightly coloured costumes and waving handkerchiefs or clashing wooden sticks (and sometimes swords), Morris dancers are common sights at country fairs. Most Morris dances performed today have their roots in England's past but over time the dances have been altered and corrupted from their original form so as to be unrecognisable.



This corruption is actually a great blessing, for many of the dances are based on ritualistic dances once performed by pagan Saxons and Vikings and covens of witches. Young children skipping and adults clapping politely or enthusiastically in time to the music and the movements of the gaily clad Morris men have no idea they are witnesses to, and in many ways participants in, corrupted rituals long thought extinct.

Recent Events

Augustus White, a local historian, amateur archaeologist, and talented Morris dancer, has spent the last few months studying a 17th century manuscript he purchased at auction. Contained in the fragile pages were details of a Morris dance, one which claimed to have been performed as far back as the 13th century, making it at least 300 years older than any other form of Morris dance.

In place of music the author had penned words, whose rhythm would help the dancers keep time. White, having no knowledge of ancient British languages, suspected the words were Anglo-Saxon, guessing (incorrectly) that the dance was kept alive by rebellious natives opposed to continued Norman rule and the brutal suppression of their traditional culture.

White has been teaching his troupe the dance, though he has been humming instead of chanting the words. He intends to surprise everyone by reciting the correct words when the troupe demonstrates the dance during a local fête. Once the dance has been performed, he intends to translate the words and publish them.

What White does not know is that the dance dates back even further than the 12th century, to the time of the Vikings. No simple dance, the chanting and dancing is part of a ritual to awaken a *draug*, a form of Viking undead (use the stats for a vampire). On the village green where the dancers are set to perform stands a low hillock. What none suspect is that the 'hillock' is actually the burial mound of a Viking warrior, a warrior who in life practiced dark magic. The night after the dance is complete the *draug* claws itself free of the earth and begins to feed on the villagers.

-Spectre of the Witch-

Location

While the finale should occur in Somerset, preferably in Shepton Mallet, investigative scenes could see the investigators travel the length and breadth of the country – once they work out what links the victims of apparent accidents. Though it might be rather clichéd, having the showdown occur in a spooky mansion would suit the tone of the adventure.

Background

Somerset has a deep and rich history of witchcraft. Jane Brooks was one such witch, sentenced to death by hanging in 1657 for witchcraft. Her story is not altogether remarkable or unusual, for she was one of many women sentenced to hang or burn for allegedly conspiring and entreating with the Devil. Brooks, of course, was not an innocent victim; otherwise our story would end there.

Janet Crickley's mother died when she was young but not before revealing that she, and thus her daughter, was a direct descendant of Jane Brooks. On her mother's death Crickley inherited a silver crescent moon pendant, an heirloom supposedly handed down through the generations from mother to daughter since the time of Jane Brooks. Crickley's father, who knew nothing of the female line into which he had married, thought nothing of his young daughter wearing the amulet day and night; it was, after all, all she had to remind her of her mother.

Jane Brooks may be long dead, her bones crumbled to dust but her vile spirit lives on in the silver pendant thanks to a powerful ritual completed on her death. Slowly, subtly, insidiously, Brooks began to control the mind of her living descendant, leading her down a dark path of forbidden lore and vengeance.

Crickley developed an unhealthy and deep interest in the occult, secretly learning charms and enchantments with remarkable ease and mastering their control with equal aplomb. With each passing year Crickley gained more power

and in doing so her mind slipped further into the clutches of Jane Brooks' indomitable, undying will.

Recent Events

By now independently wealthy following the death of her father from 'natural causes' (so said the coroner), Crickley has set about tracing the living descendants of the men involved in Brooks' death. She has so far visited six of them in the guise of researching a book on Somerset witchcraft and folklore, questioning each one about their past and asking if they thought the judgment and penalty were just. Regardless of their answers each died soon after. Brooks cared little for the passage of ages and the change in beliefs – they were guilty of her death by dint of their bloodline.

One or more investigators are contacted by a lawyer, who asks to see them with all haste. On arriving at the lawyer's office they are informed a close friend of theirs died a few days ago. Although no will has been found, the investigators were summoned because the friend's diary (which included the investigators' telephone numbers) indicated he was planning to see them the night after his death.

The lawyer hands over the diary, whereupon they discover a vital clue – the friend was looking into the recent deaths of several people, all seemingly unknown to each other but all killed in house fires with no obvious cause. He intended to speak to the investigators about the matter but died before he had the opportunity.

-The Waters of Sulis-

Location

This adventure takes place in Bath. More specifically, it occurs in the Grand Pump Room, which lies adjacent to the Roman baths. Keepers should ensure that they have read the section on Bath before expanding this adventure seed.



Background

The Mythos, that vast expanse of largely unfathomable and untapped lore, details countless strange entities. Among the many horrors that lurk on the edge of sanity is Shlithneth, a Great Old One whose cult has largely been eradicated and whose physical form is imprisoned beneath the splendid architecture of Bath. Shlithneth's physical guise is that of a gigantic, slimy worm with a mass of black tentacles surrounding its maw.

The story of King Bladud (see page 53) is based partly on fact. Bladud was a real person and one-time ruler of Britain living in the 9th century BC, he did found his royal palace around the hot springs in what is now Bath and he was a practitioner of magic. Later chroniclers added the king's leprosy and time as a swineherd to explain large gaps in the story, for many sections were left out or kept deliberately vague.

King Bladud, accompanied by an entourage of noblemen and soldiers, was hunting in the Avon valley, close to a dank marsh wherein was said to live a herd of wild swine whose flesh was extremely succulent. The king and his men did not find the pigs but they did stumble across a group of cultists in the final stages of summoning their dark god, Shlithneth.

With the creature close to hauling its ghastly form from the mire, Bladud ordered his men to action. While the soldiers and nobles laid waste to the deranged worshippers in bloody combat, Bladud worked a powerful spell to dismiss the god. By day's end Bladud was the sole survivor on the field of battle. The god had been sucked down into the swamp, imprisoned behind a powerful ward deep beneath the foul swamp in which the skirmish was fought but it was not truly banished. To ensure it could never be summoned again, Bladud moved his royal palace to the site, from where an eternal watch could be kept. The true nature of Bladud's reasoning for founding his palace in a swamp was never revealed and many fanciful tales were created to fill the vacuum of knowledge.

Within four centuries the myth of King Bladud's leprosy and the herd of pig had become the *de facto* truth. The Celtic tribes worshipped at the shrines, claiming a goddess by the name of Sulis dwelt there. According to their mythology, Sulis blessed the hot waters, imbuing them with curative powers. In fact, the sulphurous liquid was generated as a side-effect of Shlithneth's continued imprisonment. Under Roman occupation the springs continued to be held as a sacred site.

Countless generations of worshippers, unknowing of the true horror imprisoned deep beneath the earth, prayed and performed ceremonies in and around the water. In doing so they pumped vast quantities of magic points into the swamp. Each act of veneration, each prayer to the various deities associated with the springs, each ritual and ceremony they performed, slowly eroded the great warding Bladud had woven around the unholy god long ago.

After the fall of Rome the baths fell to ruin and veneration ceased for over a millennium. Although new baths were opened on the site, their use was limited until the 18th century, when the waters became a spa resort almost overnight. The sick and infirm, the healthy and rich, flooded to Bath to partake of the waters' healing properties. In doing so, their faith in the curative water unknowingly began to channel magic points into the site once again. The dark, malevolent creature trapped beneath Bath would have smiled had it a mouth and been capable of such emotion, for at last the warding began to weaken again.

Recent Events

The hot springs, which begin life deep in the rock beneath the baths bubble and flow over Shlithneth's corpulent form. As they do, it discharges microscopic young worms into the waters. Anyone who has recently drunk the water ingests the worms, leaving them vulnerable to Shlithneth's

psychic energy – the more they have imbibed, the weaker their resistance. Most often its attempts to possess humans resulted only in its victim suffering vivid hallucinations of the imprisoned creature. During the Roman age one such insane vision led to the creation of the Gorgoneion, a male head surrounded by snaking hair.

Several months ago Shlithneth reached out with its psychic energy once more but this time it made full contact with a vulnerable human mind, Luther Waites, Chairman of the Bath Historical Society. Waites drank the mineral waters every day and had little resistance to the god's call. His mind shattered by the terrifying visions, Waites has become Shlithneth's agent on earth. Imbued with knowledge on how to release his new master, Waites put a bold plan into action.

A prestigious medium, Solomon Trismegistus, has been asked to conduct a séance in the buildings surrounding the baths with the aim of contacting the spirit of the now legendary King Bladud. The vast amount of spiritual energy he will draw from the eager crowd coupled with a natural weakening of the ward due to a celestial alignment should be enough for Shlithneth to take possession of multiple human minds. Once this is achieved, the god can control the actions of its puppets and guide them into shattering its bonds forever.





Avalon: The County of Somerset

Appendix

-Appendix-

-I Be a Zider Drinker-

Cider (pronounced 'zider' by locals), made from fermented apples, is strongly associated with much of the West Country. While large breweries, such as the one at Shepton Mallet, produce cider for a wider commercial market, most farmers and innkeepers ferment their own. In small pubs across the country one can purchase a flagon of scrumpy, a cloudy, unfiltered variety, for a few pence. Investigators should be warned, for these homebrew ciders are notoriously strong and even a single pint can have detrimental effects on the drinker.

Treat a single pint of farmyard scrumpy as a POT 14-17 (13+D4) poison with a speed of effect of 10-30 minutes. If the drink overcomes the imbiber's CON, he suffers a -20% penalty to all rolls for the next 1d3 hours due to loss of balance and coordination and a fuzzy head. For each additional pint consumed in the last hour, increase the potency by 2 points, with no upper limit. Rural locals, who were practically weaned on the stuff, halve the POT.

-Magic-

Several new tomes are presented here for keepers to use in their campaigns. While all have direct links to Somerset and its varied folklore, the knowledge they contain is useful to investigators in the wider world. Three other books are partial copies residing in the county. There is also a new spell.

Occult Tomes

LEGENDS & MYTHS OF AVALON – in English, by Professor Noah Ainley-Chant, 1893, in three folios. The first volume concerns itself with Somerset legends of King Arthur, the second the witchcraft cults of the late Middle Ages and

the third on folklore relating to faeries and the Devil.

No Sanity loss; Occult +1 percentile (requires reading all three folios). No spells.

SASUCISMUS TRIUMPHATUS – in English, by Joseph Glanvill, 1681. Written by the English philosopher and clergyman and published a year after his death, *Sasucismus Triumphatus* details various tales of witchcraft and attempts to warn sceptics of complacency. It directly influenced Cotton Mathers' *Discourse on Witchcraft*. Among its contents it transcripts witch trials held in Somerset between 1657 and 1665.

No Sanity loss; Occult +1 percentile (+2 for the 1683 version, which has an enlarged appendix). No spells.

Mythos Tomes

BENEATH THE GREEN VEIL – in English, by Professor Noah Ainley-Chant, 1899 (never published), fragmentary manuscript. An unfinished collection of brief notes, variant myths, short essays and quotes from other sources. Pays particular attention to myths and legends of Somerset concerning unusual creatures and offers alternate explanations.

Sanity loss 1D2/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; average 12 weeks to study and comprehend.

Spells: Breath of the Deep, Contact Deep One, Contact Eihort.

OF SECRETS MOST TERRIBLE – in English, by Theophilus Broome, 1665 (never published). A short but extremely jumbled letter comprising 50 pages of tightly written text, the contents were dictated to the author by a Mi-Go brain cylinder. It provides cursory details of Yuggoth and Mi-Go operations on Earth, though lacks specifics.

Written by Broome in the years before his death and donated to Wells Cathedral, the book lay forgotten in the Old Library. It has since been stolen by an agent of the Mi-Go.

Sanity loss 1D2/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +2 percentiles; average 6 weeks to study and comprehend.

Spells: Contact Mi-Go.

CULT OF THE EARTH MOTHER – *Phoenician, unknown author, C.1200 BC, multiple stone tablets.* Brought to Britain by ancient Phoenician merchants to enable them to carry out their religious devotions on pagan shores, these thin stone tablets have formed the focus of a cult of Shub Niggurath for millennia. The tablets make frequent reference to the Phoenician earth goddess Astarte and the dark rituals necessary to ensure bountiful harvests. The tablets are likely unique.

Sanity loss 1D4/1D10; Cthulhu Mythos +7 percentiles; average 36 weeks to study and comprehend.

Spells: Blight/Bless Crops, Call/Dismiss Dark Child (see below), Call/Dismiss Shub Niggurath, Create Curse Whistle, Soul Singing, Summon/Bind Dark Young.

THE WITCHING STONES – *in English, trans. by Professor John Farnsworth, 192? (never published), compiled notes and translations.* Farnsworth's translation of Cult of the Earth Mother is not yet complete and the page order is badly jumbled. Should a full translation be finished and assembled into a readable order, the Sanity loss increases to 1D4/1D8, the Cthulhu Mythos increases to +5 percentiles and the full spell list from the original is added.

Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; average 14 weeks to study and comprehend.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Dark Child (see below), Call/Dismiss Shub Niggurath.

Fragmentary Mythos Tomes

Copies of these books are kept under lock and key in an annex of the Wells Cathedral Library.

DE VERMIIS MYSTERIIS – *Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; average 27 weeks to study and comprehend.*

Spells: Invoke Child of the Goat (Summon/Bind Dark Young), Invoke Invisible Servant (Summon/Bind Star Vampire), Voorish Sign.

MONSTRES AND THEIR KYNDE – *Sanity loss 1D2/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; average 21 weeks to study and comprehend.*

Spells: Command Night Beast (Summon/Bind Hunting Horror), Enchant Altar, Enchant Pipes.

TRUE MAGICK – *Sanity loss 1D2/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +4 percentiles; average 10 weeks to study and comprehend.*

Spells: Call Forth the One (Summon/Bind Servitor of the Gods).

New Spell

Call/Dismiss Dark Child: Must be performed at a site consecrated to Shub Niggurath (as detailed under Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath). The spell costs the caster and other participants a varying amount of magic points, and the caster loses 1D8 Sanity points. As part of the ritual the caster must dictate what the Dark Child is to protect, for that is her only purpose. The entity manifests only briefly to accept a sacrifice (any human, cultist or non-cultist) and agree to the charge given her. If the nominated person, site, or object to be protected is harmed or desecrated, the Dark Child manifests at the next heliacal rising of Aldebaran, which occurs one week before the summer solstice. She remains active for seven days, temporarily banished back to her realm as dawn breaks on the summer solstice. However, for as long as the desecrator remains alive, the Dark Child continues to return each year to carry out her revenge.

-Personalities-

Presented here are a number of personalities who can serve as protagonists, contacts and patrons during the investigators' adventures in Somerset. None are linked to any of the adventures in this supplement, nor are they tied to any specific locale within Somerset.

Bert Ashford

While Bert (short for Bertram) lists his profession as farm labourer, everyone locally knows that he is a poacher first and foremost. Generally he hunts rabbits with snares, ferrets and his shotgun but he is not above snagging a few of his lordship's game birds when the opportunity arises. Of course, if anyone asks he claims he found the bird dead, gently steering the conversation away from the pellet wounds the creature mysteriously sustained. His beloved wife, Betsie, maintains a mask of innocence about her husband's illicit hunting, though she has known for years that the pheasants his lordship gave Bert as a bonus for his hard work were poached. When times are good, Bert makes a few extra shillings selling his catch to neighbours and close friends.

Bert stands over six feet in his socks, tall for a local, but remains wiry due to the heavy labour required of his day job. Like all who work outdoors he has tanned, weathered skin and rough hands. For all his size, he is very much a gentle giant, possessed of an amiable nature and love of socialising over a pint or five of good ale or cider, especially if someone else is paying.

Stalking the land at night, Bert has encountered more than his share of unusual things; mysterious groups of women dancing around fires, strange noises emanating from the darkest recesses of the woods and even will-o'-the-wisps. Like many locals he has a healthy respect for faeries, even though he does not really believe in their existence.

Adventure Use: Investigators are likely to stumble across Bert during one of his poaching expeditions. If caught in the act he will be keen to make a bargain so as his lordship never hears of the matter. While he cannot offer anything in the way of wealth, Bert knows the back ways and tracks around his village better than many animals. He has also come across a few old ruins in his time, ruins no one else has yet discovered and for a few pounds he is more than happy to lead investigators to them.

Bert Ashford, Age 40, Poacher			
STR 11	DEX 10	INT 11	CON 11
SIZ 16	APP 13	POW 9	EDU 12
SAN 45			
Hit Points: 14			
Damage Bonus: +1D4			
Skills:	Craft (Snares) 46%	Dodge 39%	
	Fast Talk 29%	Hide 53%	
	Listen 57%	Natural History 26%	
	Sneak 50%	Spot Hidden 42%	
	Throw 33%	Track 34%	
Weapons:	20-gauge shotgun 48%, damage 2d6		

Charles Peregrine Winston Faulkes

Faulkes was born in Bath but his public school and Cambridge University education have removed all traces of a Somerset accent. Scion of a wealthy family, Faulkes has never had to find employment and since leaving university he has spent his time as an amateur archaeologist.

Faulkes is physically unimpressive, being of average height and build. His hook nose, pince-nez spectacles and early onset male pattern baldness make him look older than his 32 years, yet without giving him the dignity of an aged face. What he lacks physically he makes up for with a sharp mind and bookish memory.

What Faulkes really lacks is self-confidence, or backbone as his father would put it. His nervous disposition causes him to stammer and stutter uncontrollably, especially around authority figures. His politeness and nervousness prevent him from interrupting others, even when something important needs to be said.

Faulkes' historical specialty is Roman Britain. His fieldwork has unearthed a few coins and shards of pottery but nothing substantial or of interest even to the local press. His primary aim is to uncover something spectacular, something which might lead to a full-time position at the Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science and Art.

Adventure Uses: Faulkes can serve as a patron, looking for helpers for one of his archaeological digs or as a contact versed in history and the occult. From late spring to early autumn he can be found anywhere in Somerset, researching in a library, chatting to the locals in a bid to unearth stories of lost ruins or ancient treasures ploughed up in fields, or walking the landscape in a hunt for archaeological clues. Once friendship and trust are earned, Faulkes' sizeable stipend might become available to the investigators.

Charles Faulkes, Age 32, Amateur Archaeologist			
STR 12	DEX 13	INT 17	CON 12
SIZ 13	APP 11	POW 7	EDU 16
SAN 35			
Hit Points: 13			
Damage Bonus: +1D4			
Skills:	Archaeology 55%	Art 37% (Pen & ink sketches)	
	Bargain 47%	Credit Rating 42%	
	Dodge 26%	History 59%	
	Library Use 52%	Occult 32%	
	Other Language 50% (Latin)	Spot Hidden 58%	
Weapons:	Sword cane 39%, damage 1D6+db		

Doctor Thaddeus Moore

Doctor Thaddeus Moore, general practitioner of medicine, student of the Classics and amateur geologist, graduated with honours from Oxford University. After a successful career at Bristol Royal Infirmary, Moore retired to Somerset and opened a small practice, content to while away his remaining years before retirement in the beautiful countryside.

A man of healthy appetite and a fondness for frequent nips of whisky, Thaddeus is showing the signs of old age. His grey hair is thinning, his stomach is slowly extending outward and his nose shows signs of excessive alcohol consumption. Once a keen cyclist, Moore has now taken to driving an automobile when he makes his rounds. Like Mr. Toad of *The Wind in the Willows*, Moore is fond of driving inappropriately fast down the narrow country lanes.

In recent months he has treated several strange cases among the locals of the Somerset Levels, particularly in newborn babies. While outwardly the babies are fit and healthy, if a little larger than average, their skin displays moist, scaly patches. Tests have revealed no contagion, much to the doctor's relief, but he is puzzled by the widespread similarities across the entire Levels. Moore's first thought, one he admitted only reluctantly, is that the deformity is a by-product of inbreeding within isolated communities. Recent checks through marriage records shows few links between the families, leaving the good doctor stumped as to the cause.

Adventure Uses: Dr. Moore is on the cusp of discovering the Cthulhu Mythos. The mysterious deformities are due to a resurgence of breeding with deep ones. Dr. Moore could be encountered in a library or while motoring through the countryside (perhaps he comes close to running the investigators down). A wounded investigator might need expert medical care, which gives the keeper the perfect opportunity to introduce the doctor as the nearest local physician.

Dr. Thaddeus Moore, Age 50, Doctor			
STR 13	DEX 10	INT 16	CON 12
SIZ 15	APP 9	POW 17	EDU 16
SAN 85			
Hit Points: 14			
Damage Bonus: +1D4			
Skills:	Anthropology 37%	Biology 41%	
	Credit Rating 30%	Dodge 20%	
	Drive Automobile 39%	First Aid 52%	
	Geology 27%	Library Use 49%	
	Medicine 55%	Other Language 33% (Greek)	
	Other Language 33% (Latin)	Pharmacy 30%	
Weapons:	None		

Martha Mullens

Ask most anyone to describe a witch and they will not pick young, attractive and witty as adjectives. Yet those three traits aptly describe Martha Mullens, a fifth generation Somerset witch. Although young and pretty, Martha dresses in dowdy tweeds and has her hair tightly knotted into a bun by day, giving her the air of someone far older. She has never married, despite having had a string of eligible suitors since her late teens.

Martha describes herself quite openly as a white witch, a sorceress whose powers comes from Mother Earth and are used only with good intent. Investigators who do not like the idea of a witch wandering Somerset will be disappointed if they attempt to alert the authorities – she has helped almost everyone in her community in some way or another, even the local magistrate.

By day Martha makes tasty jam, visits elderly neighbours and helps with minor chores, concocts herbal remedies, acts as a midwife and investigates unusual occurrences, such as cows that suddenly stop producing milk. By night, she dances naked around a bonfire in the woods, conversing with her ‘goddess.’ Less concerned with the social mores and conventions of the age, she thinks nothing of being naked in front of others, though out of politeness she wears clothes during the day.

Martha’s greatest weakness is her zeal for the occult. In her eyes any strange event can be attributed to witchcraft or faeries, with scientific explanations a distant second. Intolerant of black magic, Martha recently aided the local police in breaking up a coven of evil witches. During the fracas she caught sight of one of the witches’ mounts, a shantak, opening her eyes to the greater terrors and mysteries of the Cthulhu Mythos. She is now caught between two worlds – fearful of dark magic and its corrupting ways, yet drawn irresistibly to discover more about what lies beyond the veil of reality.

Martha owns a copy of *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, the complete *Golden Bough* series and a partial copy (+3 percentiles) of an English translation of *The Key of Solomon*.

She has heard the name Shub-Niggurath through her investigations into and fight against black magic but has yet to uncover its meaning.

Adventure Use: Thanks to her witchcraft Martha can encounter the investigators almost anywhere, having been led to them by the spirits. Her in-depth knowledge of the occult combined with her few but potent spells makes her an invaluable ally in the fight against the horrors of the Mythos. Unfortunately, Martha’s desire to learn more about the Mythos makes her an unpredictable ally and, driven by curiosity, she may accidentally or deliberately endanger the investigators in order to further her own knowledge.

Martha Mullens, Age 27, White Witch			
STR 12	DEX 14	INT 13	CON 12
SIZ 10	APP 16	POW 14	EDU 14
SAN 59			
Hit Points: 11			
Damage Bonus: None			
Skills:	Astronomy 24%	Craft 42% (Jam Making)	
	Cthulhu Mythos 03%	First Aid 46%	
	Listen 37%	Medicine 49%	
	Natural History 47%	Occult 66%	
	Other Language 33% (Brythonic Celtic)	Pharmacy 53%	
	Psychology 29%	Spot Hidden 41%	
Weapons:	Umbrella 27%, damage 1D4		
Spells:	Alter Weather	Blight/Bless Crop	
	Detect Enchantment	Lame/Heal Animal	
	Warding the Eye		

Ned Wattle

Tall and gangly with a face pock-marked from childhood acne and bright red hair, Ned Wattle has a distinctive appearance. Ned is a reporter for the Somerset County Gazette, whose main office is located in Taunton. Relatively uneducated and possessing a methodical yet less than brilliant mind, Ned was awarded the position solely because the editor in chief was a family friend, taking Ned on as a favour to the young reporter's father.

Surprisingly, Ned has proven an effective journalist, quickly developing a network of contacts across the social spectrum and always coming up with interesting, albeit sometimes farfetched, stories. His smooth tongue, innate ability to judge character and willingness to spend entire days trawling through archives have enabled him to gather information other journalists have failed to uncover.

One thing Ned learned quickly is that people who offer bribes, ask him to change details, or request a story not be printed at all have something to hide. As a journalist, Ned feels it is his duty to publish the truth, regardless of whose social reputation is damaged in the process.

Adventure Uses: Ned has a wide range of contacts across Somerset and pays well for interesting gossip. A party of investigators snooping around Somerset's remote landscape and old ruins or asking strange questions is certain to reach his ears sooner rather than later.

Once Ned thinks he is onto an interesting story he is relentless. While he can become an invaluable ally, Ned is very likely to begin as a minor nemesis, popping up and snapping photographs at the most inopportune times and publishing stories the investigators would rather keep out of the papers.

Ned Wattle, Age 28, Reporter			
STR 8	DEX 12	INT 12	CON 11
SIZ 14	APP 8	POW 10	EDU 12
SAN 50			
Hit Points: 13			
Damage Bonus: None			
Skills:	Bargain 36%	Conceal 39%	
	Drive Automobile 29%	Fast Talk 52%	
	Library Use 41%	Listen 48%	
	Persuade 32%	Photography 63%	
	Psychology 40%		
Weapons:	Fists 35%, damage 1D3		

Robert 'Old Bob' Locock

Old Bob, as he is widely and fondly known, comes from a long line of farmers. Farming is all he has ever known and all he ever wants to do. His farm is small but profitable, though not enough to enable Old Bob to invest in his own tractor. He and his neighbours pooled resources and bought one of the 'new fangled machines,' as Bob puts it, sharing its running costs.

Old Bob is typical of many rural farmers – slightly overweight, ruddy faced from a lifestyle of drinking scrumpy cider and laconic around strangers until he has had a few pints. He wears a weather-stained smock and, when dealing with tourists, sticks a grass stalk in his mouth in a bid to convince them that he is just a 'dumb local' and not worth bothering. His trusty shotgun is always tucked under his arm, just in case he spies a plump coney (that's a rabbit to you townsfolk) or pigeon on his rambles across his land or down to the local pub.

Like many of his ilk, Bob is versed in the legends and myths of Somerset, though his knowledge of the occult extends only a handful of miles in either direction – beyond that and the world is largely a mystery. He has seen and heard many a strange thing during his life and not all of it second hand. Though a good Christian man, his belief in faeries and the power of witchcraft is resolute, if never spoken of in front of outsiders.

Adventure Uses: Old Bob is not one for scholastic research or publicity seeking and unless the investigators are somehow drawn to his lands, any encounter is likely to be accidental. The first encounter probably occurs on Old Bob's land. He will be standing by a gate, quietly munching an apple and idly watching the investigators traipse across his lands on some errand or quest. Anyone foolish enough to start digging up his fields without permission is met with a curt 'Ere you buggers, ger orf moi laaand!' followed by the sound of his ever present and always loaded shotgun snapping shut.

He's happy to answer questions on local myths, though anyone expecting a reply beyond a simple 'arr' or 'no' may be quickly frustrated. Offer him a few drinks, though, and he will share his knowledge of local stories with more verbosity. Unfortunately, not everything Old Bob has to say is completely true – whilst he is no liar, he is prone to exaggeration.

Old Bob, Age 52, Farmer			
STR 11	DEX 10	INT 10	CON 13
SIZ 14	APP 7	POW 12	EDU 13
SAN 60			
Hit Points: 14			
Damage Bonus: None			
Skills:	Craft 45% (Carpentry)	Dodge 24%	
	Drive Horses 45%	First Aid 27%	
	History 22%	Listen 39%	
	Natural History 39%	Occult 29%	
	Operate Heavy Machine 10%	pot Hidden 33%	
Weapons:	12-gauge shotgun 45%, damage 2D6+2		

Terrance Larcombe, Esquire

Larcombe, a country gent and independently wealthy, is one of those well-meaning types who is just damnably annoying and frightfully boring. A self-proclaimed bard and poet, he looks forward to spring and summer each year with childlike glee and enthusiasm, for this is when he dons his Morris dancing costume (he is head of the local troupe) and leads the festivities at fairs across the county. Once the dancing is over he 'regales' the crowds with his knowledge of Somerset's folklore and history.

No one doubts Larcombe means well and few would ever doubt his enthusiasm for his subject but the man has a voice so dull and monotonous that it can induce heavy sleep within minutes. Worse, he feels it is his duty to elucidate the masses by keeping the old tales alive and writing up new versions in the form of poetry. As vain as he is dull, Larcombe has several books of poetry published at his own expense. Since sales are poor he has taken to giving them away but not until he has read some of his dreadful verses.

Larcombe has some inkling of the Cthulhu Mythos, though he is totally unaware of it. His knowledge of forbidden lore comes not through direct encounters or reading sanity-draining tomes but through his understanding of the deeper folklore of Somerset and his Morris dancing, itself a heavily sanitised form of ancient worship of the Old Ones. Thus, while he will not be able to identify a deep one's footprints, he may be of some use in recognising ritual elements linked to dance or in recounting tales with a distinct Mythos bent.

Adventure Use: Given his wide knowledge of Somerset's legends and lore, the investigators will probably be directed to Larcombe's country house at some point – partly because whoever informs the investigators of his presence thinks Larcombe can help them and partly as a joke, for they know from experience Larcombe will bore the grockles senseless. Keen to show off his knowledge, Larcombe is only too glad to recite story after story after story, regardless of whether it aids the listener or not.

Terrance Larcombe Esq., Age 47, Self-Proclaimed Bard			
STR 9	DEX 12	INT 12	CON 11
SIZ 10	APP 11	POW 18	EDU 17
SAN 75			
Hit Points: 11			
Damage Bonus: None			
Skills:	Anthropology 23%	Art 57% (Morris Dancing)	
	Art 28% (Poetry)	Credit Rating 45%	
	Cthulhu Mythos 05%	Drive Automobile 38%	
	History 65%	Library Use 32%	
	Listen 39%	Occult 33%	
	Spot Hidden 40%		
Weapons:	Stout walking stick 36%, damage 1D4		

Thomas Burtle

Thomas Burtle is a salt-water fisherman by trade. His hands are strong and rough, his face craggy from constant exposure to salt water and stormy winds, his arm and back muscles well developed after decades rowing his small fishing boat and his skin is weathered brown. His eyes are slightly too large for his head and he suffers from what he believes is psoriasis. On land or at sea, his pipe is always clenched fast between his teeth. Like many long-term pipe smokers his teeth are worn in a distinctive manner.

Burtle's family has fished the waters of the Bristol Channel for centuries. His father was not an educated man and he saw no reason why his son should need books. 'All a man needs to know,' he used to say, 'is how to read the wind, waves and fish, and that, my boy, is in your blood.' Burtle has no idea just how true his father's words were, for many generations ago the family mated with the deep one colony in the Bristol Channel. Though the physical taint of the accursed lineage has greatly diminished (Burtle's large eyes and 'psoriasis' are a remnant), the Burtles have been drawn to the sea ever since. He has a rudimentary knowledge of astronomy but does not know the scientific names for the stars or constellations. Instead, he has given them his own names.

His daily trips out in the Bristol Channel have resulted in him seeing many strange things – coloured lights below the water, unusual fish (actually deep ones) and lightning of peculiar hues. Burtle takes all these sights in his stride, proclaiming, if asked, that the sea holds her secrets close and he has no wish to pry them from her watery grasp.

Thomas Burtle knows a single spell, though he has never studied sorcery and knows nothing of the occult or Mythos. His knowledge comes not from perusing musty tomes but rather as a sea shanty passed down from father to son over the generations. That the song always ensures a good day's catch when it is sung in a certain manner is down to the family's deep one bloodline, for others have learned the song and yet achieve no discernible results.

Adventure Use: Heroes looking to explore Somerset's coast by water or sail to the small islands located in the Bristol Channel need transportation and Burtle is one of the most respected fishermen around. He knows every inch of the coast, can smell a storm brewing hours before any visible signs and has an instinctive feel for the best places to cast his nets.

Thomas Burtle, Age 46, Fisherman			
STR 14	DEX 12	INT 15	CON 14
SIZ 14	APP 11	POW 8	EDU 11
SAN 40			
Hit Points: 14			
Damage Bonus: +1D4			
Skills:	Art 52% (Fishing Songs)	Astronomy 27%	
	Craft 48% (Nets)	Dodge 29%	
	Jump 33%	Listen 37%	
	Natural History 27%	Navigate 49%	
	Pilot Boat 57%	Swim 72%	
	Throw 41%		
Weapons:	Bill hook 42%, damage 1D6+db		
Spells:	Attract Fish		

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