

# THE BLUE STONE

*“He was their god the withered Crom with many mists, the people whom he shook over every host, the everlasting kingdom they shall not have. To him without glory they would kill their piteous, wretched offspring with much wailing and peril, to pour their blood around Crom Cruach” - Dindshenchas of Mag Slecht.*

## Introduction.

The investigators travel from Ythancaestir in Essex to Ferriby in an attempt to track down Rollo One-Eye's daughter Unn, who in turn may lead them to her master - the mysterious “Wanderer”. On her trail, they find a pestilent village and become infected. They soon discover the mines where the serpent man has been excavating the Blue Stone, confront Unn, discover some of the serpent man's plans, and hopefully an antidote for their infection.

## Keeper's Information

The rare blue mineral known as Blue Stone has long been renowned by sorcerers as a potent aid to Summoning and to the Opening of Gates. The serpent man Seth's plan to open a gate to Yog-Sothoth requires vast quantities of Blue Stone. The closest sources of the mineral are the abandoned mines at Treak Cliff. The serpent man invoked a nest of Cthonians to do the mining, providing them in exchange with a unique sustenance.

The Cthonians' sustenance was provided by infecting the crops of the village of Heathers Edge (Hathersage) with a genetically-modified version of the *ergotism* disease. The disease left a village populated by mad and deformed humans. The psychic anguish and suffering of these poor souls is like a delicacy to the telepathic Cthonians.

**The Blue Stone** is found in few places in the world. One of these is Treak Cliff Hill, Castleton. This mineral, a purple and yellow banded form of fluorspar, is so beautiful that it has been prized for many hundreds of years. Vases found amongst the ruins of Pompeii are made from Blue Stone

## Players' Information

The players may have gleaned the following information from secret correspondence:

- A man calling himself “Wanderer”, who instructed the nefarious Dean Mark and a “Norsewoman”, stayed at some nondescript “mines” and traveled via Ferriby, (see the Fall of Guthlac Abbey”).
- Norsewoman Unn, daughter of a Deep One ruler - enemy of the Church and of man, was or still is at the Blue Stone mines, and planned to travel via Ferriby. There is mention of a “pestilent village” close to the mines. Her master is the same aforementioned “Wanderer” (see “The Clan”).

If the investigators traveled by land, they used the old road from London through Lincolnshire to reach the south bank of the Humber estuary at Brough. South Ferriby is only 1.5 miles away. The journey from Ythancaestir to South Ferriby takes 6 days walking and 3 days riding.

If the investigators traveled by sea, they may indifferently choose to join South or North Ferriby. The journey from Ythancaestir to Ferriby by boat takes about 3 days.

### The Humber Estuary

The estuary literally forms a 30 miles long split between Mercia to the South and Northumbria to the North. Further westward lies a 50 miles long by 30 miles wide swampy plain that cannot be crossed without a guide! The main passage takes place via barge between South Ferriby and North Ferriby, roughly 2 miles across.

Note that Mercia and Northumbria are at this time under *Danelaw*, i.e. an area under Danish law since it was conquered by the Vikings in the ninth century. This means that there are many Danes and Danish villages. This may well cause problems for the investigators if they are actively seeking a Danish noble woman.



### South Ferriby

South Ferriby is a small community, only a fraction of the size of its North counterpart. There are 15 houses, a church, and a small mill that provides for the 100 or so living here. The village is old and exudes an air of dampness and decay.

### North Ferriby

The town of North Ferriby consists of a church, a mill, a vast shipyard (the kingdom's most important boat construction site), and around two dozens houses providing for 200 to 300 souls. The houses are arranged along one main road flanked by two back roads, one of which runs between the wooden quays and the craftsmen's backyard. The house walls are either made of wooden planks or wattle and clay, with one window at most. The roofs are made of reeds and feature a shutter-operated smoke vent, hence the name “smokehouse”.

The market is located by the harbor to facilitate the transport of shipments to and from the boats.

## North Ferriby

Unn traveled only from North Ferriby, so investigators learn nothing of note in South Ferriby. In North Ferriby, investigators have four possible avenues to pursue:

- Ask about a Norse noblewoman traveling alone
- Ask about nearby mines
- Ask about an infected village
- Ask about shipments of blue stone

### A Heinous Crime

The following optional incident can be used by the keeper to put some advance pressure on the players when dealing with the Danes:

*The investigators are attracted by hysterical cries and a small crowd gathering not far from the local tavern. They spot the fresh body of a young boy lying in pool of mixed mud, blood, and snow, literally hacked to pieces! The witnesses are in various states of shock. Questioning reveals that the 13-old boy and some friends were throwing snowballs at passers-by. A few minutes ago, one cold-blooded Dane drew his sword, slaughtered the child, and went into the tavern!*

How the subplot develops further is at the keeper's discretion.

### Available Information

How the following information is acquired is up to the keeper. It should come as a reward for proper questioning and role-playing, for instance at the local tavern, the town market, and the riverside. The investigators may even speak to the ruling Anabys family, who own the shipyard and oversee all trading and shipping activities.

- A Danish woman called Unn, of noble stock by her dress, has been seen several times in North Ferriby awaiting a Viking longship. She departs on the vessel with a cargo of barrels and returns several weeks later. Further questioning reveals that the longship was moored at the quay adjoining the barrel-maker's backyard. The barrel-maker reluctantly confirms to dealing with Unn every month (she pays him well).
- There no mines within a week or so travel.
- There have been rumors of a village somewhere to the south-west suffering from *devil's fire* (ergotism). Further questioning reveals that this story was told by a cart driver: "the old man was shipping blue stones, remember? Nice fellow. Not talkative. Come to think of it, he should have been here a week ago. Odd."
- About twice a month there has been a delivery of blue stone by oxen and cart. The delivery is met by a Viking longship manned by Danes and taken away. Such a delivery was due a week ago but the cart did not turn up and the vessel left empty after waiting two days. Further questioning reveals that the cart always arrives at North Ferriby via the old Western Fen Trail. A nondescript monk or a priest was seen traveling with the ship (the Wanderer – alias the serpent man in human guise).

### Complications

Here are a few options to give the investigators' a hard time:

1. A brawl may ensue with local Danes if questioned about a Danish noble woman.
2. A shady looking individual may offer to show the investigators where this Dane woman stayed whilst in town. In reality he leads them into an ambush with muggers.

### The Dark Man

At least once during their visit to North Ferriby, the keeper should call for Spot Hidden rolls. The character that succeeds by the most should be told that he glimpses a short, darkish man observing them. As the investigator alerts his companions the figure darts into a side alley. No sign of the man can be found (the apparition is Brak Man Morn, a mythical figure who the investigators meet again in other times).

The investigators must eventually come to the conclusion that the blue stone as well as Unn and the mysterious Wanderer, came from the West via the Western Fen trail. One shipment was expected recently but never arrived.

## The Western Fen Trail

A muddy trail leads westwards from North Ferriby across the fenlands, and roughly follows the route of the River Humber beyond the junction with the northbound York road, some 3 miles out of town.

The last shipment of Blue Stone was intercepted by the Worms of the Earth along the road (sent by the serpent man's enemy Quintus, see "The Tower"). The Worms ambushed the cart, scaring the oxen into pulling it off the road and into the fens. The driver and oxen were swiftly killed. The worms opened a large pit under the cart and corpses, and stole the Blue Stone shipment, carrying it off into their tunnels under the hills.

### The Missing Shipment

A days travel from North Ferriby, keen eyed investigators spot several small chunks of pale, blue stone lying upon the road. A closer look at the road surface reveals that at this point there are cart wheel tracks that veer sharply to the right, off the road, and into the fenland.

Investigators looking in the direction of the tracks, see a small flock of crows wheeling in the sky about twenty yards from the road. The birds often dip down to the ground and rise again.

Beneath the carrion birds is a large pit about 8 feet deep. At the bottom of the pit are the remains of the cart and the corpses of the driver and oxen. Between the splintered wreckage and the copious amounts of dried blood spattered all over, the investigators are not able to discern

any details: they have to get down into the pit to glean any more information.

The cart driver is long dead; his throat has been slit. A search of his clothing reveals a small purse containing 36 pennies and a rolled up parchment, which is actually an itinerary.

#### **The Itinerary**

The itinerary runs from a point near a village named Heathers Edge to Ferriby North. The village appears to be drawn in the middle of a mountainous or hilly region, and a crude representation of marshlands separates it from Ferriby North and the Humber estuary. A successful Own Kingdom roll indicates that these must be the Pennine hills.

At the bottom of the map is some Latin script:

*“The bearer of this itinerary is to be paid the further sum of 36 deniers upon delivery of his cargo to the men of the Priest”*

Keeper’s note: “the Priest” refers to Rollo One-Eye, father of Unn.

The back of the cart is empty. A Spot Hidden roll notes a thin dusting of blue powder upon the floor of the cart and also the rubble that fills the pit.

## **Traveling to Heathers Edge**

There are two possible routes. The most obvious one is to retrace the Blue Stone itinerary via the westbound trail, then somehow cross the marshy plain (known as “Dagon’s flats” to locals). This last bit cannot be done without a guide. The easiest route however, is to cross the Humber to Ferriby South, steer clear of the fenlands, and then travel west towards the Pennine hills.

The journey to Heathers Edge takes approximately 4 days walking and 2.5 days riding. Count an additional 2 days for crossing the fenlands.

#### **Deep One Ambush**

At the keeper’s discretion, if Rollo One-Eye from the prequel “The Clan” survived, the investigators may have to suffer a Deep One ambush. The Ambush can take place in the marshes or while crossing the Humber by barge or by raft. The details of the ambush and the Deep Ones’ numbers are left to the keeper. As an additional scare, the vicious keeper may even decide to stage a comeback for the Star Spawn (see “The Clan”).

#### **The Dark Man (2)**

As night falls on the first day of travel since leaving the site of the cart, call for Spot Hidden rolls. The character that succeeds by the most should be told that he glimpses a figure in silhouette of a man some distance away obviously watching them. As he alerts his comrades, the figure ducks down low and is gone. A search finds nothing.

Having reached the Pennine hills, the investigators easily find Heathers Edges or a “pestilent village” just by asking.

#### **A WARNING**

About a half mile from Heathers Edge, the investigators encounter a group of strange figures. There are six warriors dressed in black cloaks, and wearing sinister looking bird-like masks with exaggeratedly long beaks.

These militia men, and similar groups, are from villages in the surrounding area. They are charged with warning any who attempt to enter the village that it is “*infested by a plague of God*”. Anyone who ignores the warning faces certain death, either by the disease, or by their swords – no one is allowed to leave the village!

The militia guards the roads and paths that lead to Heathers Edge and also patrol into the surrounding woods. Keepers should set up a confrontation in case the investigators leave the village later on and fail to sneak past.

These warriors have no knowledge of the Blue Stone or any mines.

#### **EERIE CRIES**

As the investigators near Heathers Edge, dusk begins to descend. They are suddenly startled by a hoarse cry from the surrounding trees. Searching the surrounding area finds no obvious source of the cry, although Spot Hidden rolls locates strange footprints consisting of alternating shallow prints and deep ones. A successful Idea roll suggests that the maker of the prints is severely limping. The keeper should spend some time worrying the players with distant rustling noises and inhuman howling.

#### **COW**

Lying in a fetid heap in the road is the corpse of a cow. The cow has grossly deformed, blackened legs and swollen, red hued ears and tail. Nearing the body the investigators disturb a swarm of large flies that fly into the air in a buzzing cloud around them. The rotting corpse is awash with maggots and exudes a foul stench.

#### **ATTACKED**

Some time later, the hoarse cry is suddenly repeated close by and a figure bursts from the surrounding foliage. Any character who succeeds at a Listen roll has a chance to react first, those who fail are at the attacker’s mercy.

The figure is a man stumbling due to a gross malformation of his left leg. The man’s right arm is blackened and shriveled, but nevertheless swung at the nearest target. The man’s face is distorted by a ferocious rictus – he is obviously more beast than man.

Whether the attacks succeeds or not, the arm snaps off of the attacker at the first impact, and blackened, dried flesh flakes away. Sanity loss for the victim of this attack is 1/1D4.

Despite the loss of his right arm, the man continues to attack, swinging his left arm wildly, punching and kicking. If a character fails a Dodge or Luck roll the man gets in close enough to bite him.

## Heathers Edge

Heathers Edge is a village devastated by the serpent man's experiments with the *devil's fire* (the ergotism disease). Since late summer, two-thirds of the villagers – and their animals – have died from the disease. The survivors are split into two groups. The first and largest of these has resisted the deforming effects of the disease, but suffers from the mental effects (see Play Aids). This group still lives within the village, surviving upon insufficient and dwindling food supplies. Despite the relatively mild winter, prospects are grim.

The second and smaller group are those who succumb both physically and mentally to the disease. They wander aimlessly in the surrounding woods, coming to the village at night to harass villagers and steal food. After 2 weeks on average, they die a terrible death, abandoned by all and by God.

Nobody has any idea of what has caused this scourge of God – “devil's fire”.

### Heathers Edge

The desolated village is situated in a large clearing in the woods, most of the area split into three large fields, each field in turn composed of thin strips of arable land. Separating the woods from the fields is a strip of bad pasture where animals would graze. There are no animals here now, as they too fell victim to the disease and were uncared for. The village itself consists of a short main mud road surrounded by various wood-and-clay buildings. The poorest live in simple huts while better-to-do peasants have long houses with – now neglected – vegetable gardens. The only stone building is the small church with a cemetery in its shadow. The priest is dead. The headman's farm is a long timber hall, Saxon style, surrounded by a modest wooden stockade. Next to this farm is an oven for the peasants to bake bread. Behind a row of huts there is a fenced prairie for the sheep, and next to it, a river flows lazily, powering the water mill. Further upstream, shallow water is indicated with a line of white stones, marking the start of another road that rapidly disappears between the nearest trees.

Most houses are now abandoned as their inhabitants passed away.

## The Burning

A crowd of perhaps twenty people is gathered about a wooden stake on the edge of the village. Three women are bound to the stake. Dry kindling has been piled about their feet and lower legs. The women all bear a striking resemblance to each other although all are different ages. Most of the crowd is watching slack jawed, while a few men are setting light to the kindling.

### The Three Witches

The three women are all of one family hence their resemblance to one another. Aelfrun is the grandmother, Elfilda the mother and Godlefe the daughter. There is something oddly atavistic about

their appearance, which manifests only as a slight slant to their eyes and perhaps an amber gleam to those eyes when caught in a certain light.

The women are descended from a line that long ago cross bred with the serpent people. Their human heritage has overcome much of the taint, but some still remains.

The women's husbands – who had untainted blood – all died from devil's fire a few months back. It is because of the taint that the women have been spared by the disease. Obviously, villagers have another interpretation of this fact.

Keepers may hint at a connection to the maiden, mother, and crone incarnations of the Morrigan.

The twenty people, fifteen men and five women, may be cowed quite easily with any show of authority or threat of violence. However, putting out the fires requires further aid, the “stupefied” villagers need to be cajoled and shown what to do, but do help clear the wood without comment once so shown.

### THE INFECTED VILLAGER'S VIEWS

Since the demise of the village head, an early victim of the holy fire, the village is led by a man by the name of Freomund. The infected villagers number about 40, of which only ten are still capable most of the time. The remaining 30 are little more than simpletons able to do very little for themselves.

Whenever the investigators venture into the village they are harassed and harangued by a small crowd of the infected villagers. Keepers should emphasize the diseased villagers' symptoms, the way they reach out towards them, touch them, and berate them with meaningless shouts and taunts. See Play Aids for details about the disease.

How amenable the villagers are depends upon the investigators actions with the ‘witches’.

Those who are still rational enough to speak, can relate the following information, which is difficult to decipher from the ramblings and sudden shouted outbursts that punctuate any conversation:

- The disease began at the end August. Many remarked before it began, that the wet spring and summer was an omen of bad things.
- Within 2 days half the village had fits, not being able to sleep, and seeing demons (convulsions, insomnia, and hallucinations). A month later, everybody was infected, and the first infants and elderly people started to develop hideous deformities or rotted away. Eventually, two-thirds of the villagers died. All survivors are chronically sick.
- Some people suffering from hideous deformities have fled the village into the surrounding woods.
- The three women are witches and may well have inflicted the ills upon the village. Evidence for these claims is cited as the early deaths of their husbands, their strange looks, the fact that only

daughters have been born to the family, and their seeming immunity to the disease.

- Some unreliable sources claim that the disease is caused by the Hound of Darkness (alternately known as the Hound of Ceridwen or the Barghest), a black dog as large as a bull with fiery red eyes, which haunts the fens. All those who encounter it go mad and soon die!

## Mines? What Mines?

Enquiries about mines (they date back to Roman times and have not been worked in living memory) should be fruitless, at least initially.

### Tricked!

Optionally, the investigators can find several villagers who claim to know the location of the mines and will lead them there. The keeper is encouraged to play these guides as either inept tricksters trying to get money from the investigators, or complete madmen who lead them into the woods and attempt to kill them.

The keeper should leave the investigators in the dark for a couple of days at most, giving enough time for the disease – and despair – to kick in.

At the appropriate moment, have a villager, for instance a child, approach the investigators: *“You looking for mines are you? There are no mines around here. But there are tunnels in them Treak Cliffs not far from here, I know that much. Look like bloody big wormholes if you ask me. Maybe your lordship wants to go to the Cliffs... Nobody goes there anymore. Because of the Hound you know...”*

## THE WOMENS' VIEWS

The women do not know why they are immune to the illness. They can relate the other information that the villagers know and may well be a better option to speak with, as they are not suffering from devil's fire.

If the investigators make it clear that they need to journey to the mines, the younger of the women volunteers to lead them there.

### Rough Nights

The investigators no doubt spend at least one night at Heathers Edge. Where they actually stay depends upon their actions. If they rescued the three women from being burnt, they are offered shelter and sustenance by them in their long house. They may alternately decide to squat in an empty house.

Wherever they stay, the investigators, like other villagers, are besieged by the zombie-like villagers who come out of the woods at night (see Statistics). Such an encounter should be tense but in reality fairly non-threatening, as the disease-wrecked villagers are not particularly adept combatants, and can be easily held at bay if proper defensive measures are taken.

### The Mole

Calemund and his fellow worshippers of Crom Cruach (see “The Settlement” below) have one of their number within Heathers Edge seeking to recruit more followers for their god. This man, Sabert by name, may choose to ‘recruit’ one of the investigators as a sacrifice. Details of such an abduction are left up to the individual keeper.

## Devil's Fire and the Investigators

Within a day or so of eating or drinking at the village the investigators may begin to suffer from devil's fire (see Play Aids). Unknown to all, devil's fire is *not* an infectious disease but a form of poisoning. Investigators recover once they leave the region and start to eat safe food. If they wait too long however, they degenerate like the villagers.

The keeper should make it clear to the players that they are fighting against time to find a cure or an antidote.

## Journeying to the Cliffs

The land between Heathers Edge and Treak Cliff consists of fenland with copses of trees. When the sun is out of sight, the land is preyed upon by a ghastly creature known by local folklore as the Hound of Darkness or of Ceridwen. In reality, the Hound is a Ghast engineered by the serpent man to ward off people (see Statistics).

The keeper should strive to make the journey from Heathers Edge to the mines as tense and frightening as possible. A nearby boxed entry gives a narrative example:

*You depart Heathers Edge lead by your guide and soon enter a dimly lit forest. The trees grow close together and their branches entwine overhead, given the impression of a series of gloomy, wooden tunnels. The wind whistles through these branches with a mournful howl, or perhaps it is something else that moans and howls?*

*As you progress further into the wood, the note of the wind seems to alter as though it were carrying another sound with it, a sound like that of a vast hound howling and baying. This baying is intermittent but seems to be drawing close; sometimes it is ahead, then behind or perhaps on your flank.*

*With relief, the eaves of the far side of the forest draw near. The gloom does not lift, as the sun begins its descent behind the black cliffs looming on the horizon some two or three miles away.*

*Leaving the trees behind, you sense some presence watching from the shadowy forest.*

*Crossing the open fenland, something catches your eye and you start as you see a huge, abnormal silhouette of a hound shaped creature on a rise against the western sky. Its distance from you is hard to tell. Perhaps as little as 500 yards.*

*As though seeing you staring back, the vast hound raises its head and bays at the night sky before starting towards you. It runs as fast as a charging warhorse doubled with a freakish catlike gait.*

*What do you do? Back to the gloomy woods or ahead to the uncertain cliffs – both a 10-15 minute run? The demon races towards you.*

*As you take to your heels, your guide stumbles, falls prone upon the ground. The beast is upon her in a moment and she is tossed and torn apart like a straw puppet. A grisly end, but one that gives you a few more moments to flee.*

*You top a rise and see before you a small, boggy wood hidden from your view until now. Perhaps a place to hide? The demon is almost upon you. Too late? No, the heavy creature falters as you enter the wood: it dares not venture onto the soft marshy ground...*

## The Clay Mire

The boggy land within the copse soon loses its vegetation cover and gives way to a clay mire lying like a turgid pool at the foot of a low mound. Atop the mound, some sort of standing stones can be seen in the gloom.

A successful Spot Hidden roll notes a low hump within the clay mire, a few feet from the base of the hillock. Investigation involves wading into three feet of thick, sucking, gray clay and finds a small body, likely that of a child. The body is shrunken and shriveled, its skin bearing many puncture wounds. Sanity loss is 1D4 on a failed roll.

The clay mire is home to the young Cthonians that the serpent man uses to mine the Blue Stone. The blood from the sacrifices of the nearby settlement and the rituals that the serpent man has taught the people, feed and nurture the young Cthonians. The clay mire is not natural, it is the result of prolonged exposure of the surrounding rocks to the caustic slime of the Cthonians.

## The Stone Circle

The stone circle atop the mound consists of twelve irregular stones arranged in a circle around a single central stone. All thirteen stones are similar in appearance, being about 3 feet tall and 1 foot wide. All are rough and unfinished. The outer stones have patches of silvery color upon them. Closer examination reveals them to be silver coins hammered into the stone. The central stone has similar patches of gold and also bears many stains of a deep brown/red color – dried blood.

Spot Hidden or Track rolls reveal tracks leading away from the stone circle, down the mound, and into the denser region of the wood to the north-east. These tracks lead to the “settlement”.

## The Settlement

The settlement consists of six families (12 adults and 10 children) who live in crude huts and tents amidst the trees of the forest. Half of those living here have been deformed by devil’s fire and are mentally deranged.

Investigators entering the settlement are greeted in a relatively friendly manner, although they may be taken aback by the hideous, emaciated looks of the people. The leader Calemund recognizes them as outsiders and tries to allay any suspicions claiming that he and his fellows have left Heathers Edge to its fate, and live a simpler life here in the woods. This simpler life seems to be aiding them, as none have fallen foul of devil’s fire since being here. The investigators are offered shelter and food for the night. Under normal circumstances, neither Calemund nor any of the settlers admits to partaking in a bloody cult of the dark Celtic god Crom Cruach – see “Secret History below”.

If asked about the Hound beyond the woods, Calemund blanches, then moves aside from his people indicating that the investigators should accompany him. In a low voice, he states that he too has seen the beast, just once, but took it to be a delusion from the madness of the devil’s fire before it left him. He asks if the investigators have any ideas what it could be or mean.

### Protective Scent

The settlers are all too aware of the great Hound outside their wood. The serpent man, in the guise of a priest of Crom Cruach, see below, has told them that the beast has been sent to hunt down any who flee the god’s wrath.

The Hound has been conditioned to ignore any who bear a certain scent that the serpent man gifted to Calemund. This scent is fruit-like yet somehow reminiscent of rancid urine.

Investigators may notice a hint of this smell about Calemund and several others in the settlement. Calemund has a small pot of the milky ointment in his hut and may well use it as a bargaining point to save his life.

## SECRET HISTORY

One of the first victims of devil’s fire was a farmer by the name of Calemund, of Irish descent. His forebears fled Ireland when Patrick was converting the Irish to Christianity. His people bought with them worship and knowledge of the dark Celtic god Crom Cruach. Calemund had been raised on tales of this old god and the rites to worship him to ensure that the crop was fertile. His father, as his father had done before him, took the young Calemund into the forest near Heathers Edge, and showed him the mound and the stones that their ancestors had raised to mimic that of Magh Slecht in old Ireland.

Not much escapes the notice of the serpent man, so when Calemund’s family began to show signs of malformation in August, the serpent man approached him in human guise. Using a *domination serum*, the serpent man convinced Calemund that he was a priest of Crom Cruach, and that only by turning to the lore and knowledge of his



forbears could his people be spared. In desperation, Calemund took his eldest son, his first born, up to the stone circle and sacrificed him. The blood of his son seeped into the soil and the spiritual *effluvium* spilled by the slaughter attracted the attention of one of the serpent man's Cthonian young. Writhing from the packed and blood soaked earth, it appeared to awe-stricken Calemund as a blood-soaked, giant worm: "*Crom Cruach!*" he yelled.

Calemund took this as a sign from Crom Cruach that the village was being punished, as his ways had been forgotten. The village could be saved by sacrificing to the dark god. Calemund has recruited others and formed a small clan of worshippers. Away from the village, they subsist on a meager diet of wild mushrooms, fruits, nuts, and meat from animals found within the woods. This food has the advantage of being free from ergot, and the cultists thus recovered from the disease, aside from the permanent malformations and the temporary insanity.

Each of the villagers who joins Calemund's "settlement" sacrifices their first born, by striking their head upon the central stone and smearing it with blood. The bodies are then slung into the clay mire where the Cthonian young fall upon them, sucking the juices from the corpses.

#### Crom Cruach

Crom Cruach's main sanctuary was at Mag Slecht in County Cavan, where he was reputed to have a circle of 12 stones with himself at the centre. The 12 outer stones were capped with silver and the central one with gold.

There are many conflicting stories, myths, and even translations of Crom Cruach. His surnames "with the many mists" and "king of the Underworld (*Anwnn*)", his association with 12 lesser idols, human sacrifices, and the cultists' fear of him, make him a possible alias of the Destroyer Tawil at' Umr, avatar of Yog-Sothoth. On the other hand, his surnames "bent one", "lord of the mound", "the worm god", could as well make him one of Nyarlathotep's many masks.

As far as this scenario goes, any interpretation is equally valid, and has no further bearing on the outcome. The serpent man and Unn are the real villains, and Calemund and his followers are merely criminal fools.

#### SPENDING THE NIGHT

If the investigators do spend the night, they are rudely awakened by the villagers attempting to overpower them and to bind them. The villagers use force, striking to subdue.

#### A Sacrificial Ceremony

The investigators may oversee, or indeed unwillingly participate in, one of the bloody ceremonies to Crom Cruach. The description that follows should be modified based on where the investigators are seeing events from.

*The followers of Crom Cruach gather outside the stone circle, while Calemund and a misshapen cackling crone – the Angel of Death – drag the sacrificial victim to the center. All begin to rhythmically beat the outer stones with wooden clubs, sending low vibrations into the ground.*

*The mud in the clay mire begins to heave and undulate as though something were trying to make its way to the surface. The thick, gray mud rises in mound and then breaks open, revealing the foul monstrosity that has answered the cult's call. Worming its way to the surface like a maggot writhing in a bloody wound, the creature has a pulpy gray-black worm-like body, and multiple tentacles writhe about its gaping maw (Sanity loss 1/1D10).*

*The old black witch croaks the name of Crom Cruach, then orders Calemund to dash the victim's skull against the central stone, leaving a smear of blood, bone shards, and brains upon the rock (SAN 0/1). The body is then heaved down the hill where it rolls to within a few feet of the maggoty creature. Tentacles reach out and drag the body closer, before the creature begins to feed, sucking the juices from the still warm body (SAN 1/1D3).*

If the investigators are caught up in the ritual, the keeper should bear in mind the cultists' bewildered state of mind, and allow the investigators to easily turn the situation around with any kind of bold, heroic, or violent deed.

## The Mines

As the investigators approach the looming cliff face, they will spot several dark openings leading into its depth. The tunnels and caverns are all unlit unless otherwise noted, those venturing within without a light source must succeed in a Luck roll every five minutes or stumble, a second failed Luck roll results in a bad fall causing 1D2-1 damage.



Before playing this part, the keeper should come up with a strategy for Unn who hides in the caves. Where is she when the investigators arrive? The keeper must decide for instance how stealthy the investigators are and how long they remain undetected. A related issue is what happened

to the Hound in the fens (the Ghast): was it killed? If not, did it return to Unn and somehow alert her? Moreover, when Unn or the Ghast(s) discover the presence of the investigators, what do they do: blindly attack them? Trick them? Bear in mind that the investigators may be quite diminished physically and mentally (by injuries, sanity loss, ergotism, etc.), and adjust the threat in consequence. In any case, Unn prefers stealth, trickery, and magic to frontal combat, directing for instance one Ghast to attack the group towards the “Ghastly” pit, while she singles out one fleeing investigator at a time and attacks him or her with the Black hand curse (see Statistics). If events seem to be going against her, she may attempt to flee or else surrender and claim that she thought the investigators were agents her suspicious master sent to kill her. Note that nothing short of torture or earnest death threat can get her to talk; even then, she remains vague and never reveals more information than described under “The Cave Walls” below.

### Ghastly Encounter

Note that a second Ghast roams freely through the tunnels. Like the first Ghast, it is smart enough to stay clear of the Cthonian. The Ghast’s size means it cannot pass through some of the narrower tunnels shown on the map.

Investigators should first hear the sound of padding hooves, or perhaps rasping breath echoing through the tunnels. Then a sense of something large rushing towards them before the beast nears their light source and can be seen, its huge frame filling the entire cross section of the tunnel...

### CAVE OF THE SERPENT

This dome-like cave is used by both the serpent man (when he is in the area) and Unn as a combined living and working area. The cave is dimly lit by a pale blue glow of two 1-foot diameter crystal globes positioned inside cavities on one wall, and the orange glow seeping from the still-warm central hearth. The Serpent lights are easily smashed, and doing so extinguishes their glow. The walls are entirely covered with carved signs (cuneiform serpent people language or *Aklo*), except for the huge carving of a stylized *serpent* biting its tail, which fills the far wall and reaches half-way to the cave’s apex. The effect of the whole is awe-inspiring in its scope and in its alien-ness. The center of the cave is best described as an alchemist’s laboratory (a successful Occult roll or similar skill is required to grasp this). There is a central hearth, complemented by a blacksmith’s instruments for metal melting and working, some of which, like tongs, shears, and hammers, can serve as improvised weapons. Around the hearth one finds all the apparatus necessary for the art of alchemy: a multitude of glass flasks, vials, funnels, sieves and linen filters, mortars, ovens, a water-bath, cauldrons, etc. Many recipients hold both natural and artificial substances, many of which are poisons of varying potency (keeper’s discretion). Furthermore, the cave contains a crude wooden bed, a workbench, a chair, and several locked chests holding personal effects of Unn and the serpent man.

There is a strange smell to this cave, fruit like yet somehow reminiscent of rancid urine.

### The Chosen One

The cave walls contain vital clues to a first understanding of the serpent man’s plans (see “The Cave Walls” and “The Serpent on the Wall” below for more details). The problem is: it is all written in *Aklo*, the original cuneiform language of the Valusian serpent men. The keeper has several options to infuse some of this knowledge to the players:

1. The investigators fail to grasp the text, but unravel some of the non-Aklo based information, see below for more details.
2. The investigators coerce Unn – if they captured her – to decipher some of the Aklo.
3. The keeper secretly chooses one investigator – the Chosen One – to have atavistic traits (serpent people blood), and grants him or her an innate 35% skill in Read Aklo. To the investigator’s own surprise, he or she will understand bits of what is written, without any recollection of ever encountering the script before.
4. Alternately, the keeper may decide to have Aelfrun (assuming she is still alive - see “The Burning” above) play the role of the Chosen One. One way to get her to the cave is to have one investigator remember that like symbols, alas in an immature form, are carved in the timber posts of the three women’s home.

Follows a description of items of interest to be found in the Cave of the Serpent:

### The Ointment

Searching the chests finds a small earthenware pot containing a milky ointment from which the smell in the cave emanates. Wearing the scent prevents the Hounds from attacking.

### The Workbook

This is a collection of notes and thoughts by Unn since she has met the serpent man. It contains all sorts of knowledge of both alchemical and magical interest. The notes are predominantly written in Latin. Certain sections are in Norse runic letters that Unn is familiar with.

Studying the whole work takes 2 months and has the following benefits with a successful Read Latin roll: Occult +3%, Natural World +2%. There is no Sanity loss for reading this book.

There are several significant passages that the keeper may allow the investigators to quickly find, by browsing through the workbook:

*“The Blue Stone should be taken full circle from the Tail to anoint the Head, that the power may flow truly through the World Serpent.”*



*“The fungus that the Wanderer grows is what causes the astonishing pestilence upon the villagers. This is what they call Holy Fire in the kingdoms of France and of Burgundy. The fungus first soils the rye, then the people who eat rye bread or drink ale. The fools know only one fate: die of madness and gross deformations. Fortunately, they are too dim-witted to choose starvation...”*

*“I must remember that the dream beasts cannot suffer sunlight... The asps are very dangerous: in my master’s absence, I always carry my the antidote with me when I have to feed them.”*

*“I found the last batch of blue stone to be insufficient for the stones of Rollright. Diligent Quintus has long ago prepared the stones of Avebury. We have received no news of him lately. Anyway, with the power of the Great Henge the door shall open, and with the lesser stones ready, none shall be able to close it.”*

#### **Domination Serum and Sleeping Serum**

If the investigators rummage through the potions, they may come across the serpent’s man domination serum and sleeping serum. Conversely, the keeper may decide to have Unn use the sleeping serum against the intruders.

*Ingesting the domination serum – and failing a Luck roll - makes the victim very suggestible to the voice of serpent people. He or she will do almost anything told by a serpent man. It takes 1D10+10 days for a victim to be free of its effects.*

*The sleeping serum is a very volatile fluid (POT 13) based on alcohol. Anybody close enough to inhale the fumes may suffer its effects. If the serum overcomes the victims’ CON in a Resistance Table match, each falls into a profound sleep for 3D6 hours. Optionally, the keeper may rule that the victims transit to the Dreamlands during the unnatural sleep - see “City of the Black Stone”.*

#### **The Cave Walls**

The cave walls are inscribed in Aklo, the original cuneiform language of the Valusian serpent men. Each of the following items can be figured out on a successful Read Aklo roll:

- *The subject that occurs the most can be transliterated as “Seth”, and is referred to in third person mode. Seth visited the “land of the pyramids (Egypt?)”. It is possible that Seth is the author of the inscriptions.*
- *The most prominent theme is “the opening of a door”, which preludes the “destruction of all living things that crawl, walk, or fly at the surface of the sphere”. This event seemingly involves finding and persecuting a “world serpent”; it is unclear whether this is a physical or a symbolic entity. In one instance, Seth sees the World Serpent in a dream.*

- *A substantial area is devoted to “a gathering of priests” referred to as the “Black Ring”. The name “Toth-Amon” is mentioned in relation to the Black Ring. It seems that the Black Ring is incomplete as long as “the Chosen One” has not been found. Who or what the Chosen One is, is not specified.*

Punctuating the Aklo text are several abstract charts. These are representations of the night sky with stars and constellations, the position of the moon, etc. With a successful roll in an appropriate skill, the keeper may allow an investigator to understand the nature of the charts, and even to determine the crucial date they point to: November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1021 AD! This is indeed the day the door must be opened through which Yog-Sothoth will come, and erase all life at the surface of the earth.

#### **The Serpent on the Wall**

The 12-foot diameter carved figure of a serpent biting its tail, provides further clues to investigators keen enough to solve its puzzle, whether they can read Aklo or not. The style of the carving is clearly of Celtic inspiration, yet oddly different. The area enclosed by the serpent is the only area of the cave without inscriptions, except for what appears to be a Latin letter “S”, slightly higher than the serpent’s geometrical center. Close inspection of the serpent or successful Spot Hidden rolls uncover more Latin letters arranged just outside the serpent’s perimeter. Starting from the head at the top, and moving full-circle to the tail, one finds the letters “R”, “M”, “Q”, and “U”. The letters are the initials of the cultists of the Black Ring, namely “Rollo”, “Mark”, “Quintus”, and “Unn”. The central “S” refers of course to the serpent man “Seth”.

In fact, the serpent is a geographically accurate representation of the *ley line* – the World Serpent – that crosses the land (see “City of the Black Stone”), which the serpent man needs to power in order to open the door to Yog-Sothoth. The letter “R” thus marks the location of Ythancaestir (“The Clan”), “M” that of Guthlac Abbey (“The Fall of Guthlac Abbey”), “Q” that of Avebury (sequel “The Tower”), and “U” that of Little Rollright (see “The Workbook” above). The letter “S” is positioned near London. Indeed, the serpent man - as monk Stigand - spends most of his time in London lately, at the court of king Cnut.

We leave it to the judgment of the keeper how much the players need to understand of the above. The keeper can help “slow” players with additional hints or Idea Rolls. Mind that in the Dark Ages most people did not feel the need for maps: to go from A to B, they only wanted to know the succession of milestones along the way.

#### **FUNGUS CAVE**

This warm cave is dimly lit by the reddish glow coming from a small hearth against the wall opposite the entrance. To the left and to the right, the rough cave floor slopes

down a few feet, forming two "pools". Each pool is filled with turgid water, upon which floats a strange fuzzy and spongy matter.

Here, Unn and Seth grow the parasite fungus (a virulent variant of ergot) they infected the village's rye crops with. As long as the investigators do not disturb the sluggish pools, there is no danger. However, throwing something, falling or being pushed into a pool releases a cloud of poisonous spores. Ingesting or inhaling the spores subjects the victim to a particularly acute form of devil's fire (see Play Aids; CON vs POT 15 and switch immediately to the terminal stage of the "disease" if failed).

### STORAGE CAVE

This cave is used as a storeroom. It is largely filled with watertight barrels, both empty ones and others containing Blue Stone. There are also several tools, like pikes, quarry hammers, one timber ax, two wheelbarrows, etc.

The storage cave would make a good temporary hiding place.

### SNAKE PIT

The floor of this dark and musky cave drops 4 feet below the level of the surrounding tunnels. It is littered with the bones of small mammals.

Here, Seth breeds Basilisks for their poison. There are currently two of them coiled in a far corner (see Statistics - Spot Hidden roll to detect them from the entrance).

A compassionate keeper may leave a flask of antidote (Unn's in fact) in the snake pit.

### "GHASTLY" PIT

A 10-foot wide hole blocks one branch of the double tunnel (see map). The hole is pitch black, roughly 12 feet deep, and widens such that the sidewalls cannot be seen at the bottom. An undefined stench rises from the pit. If the investigators are quiet for longer than a minute, they distinctly hear something heavy starting to shuffle in the shadowy recesses of the pit, something that breathes and snarls in a horribly low-key tone. An "incomplete" Ghast lives at the bottom, the initial misshapen fruit of Seth's experiments (see Statistics).

It takes a Jump roll to safely reach the other side. Of course, one can better use the other branch of the tunnel, but if an investigator is in a hurry (e.g. fleeing a Ghast), the keeper should request an immediate answer: "left or right?" Under time pressure, a mistake is very easily made! Needless to say, falling into the pit is a horrifying experience (1D6 falling damage; -1D6 with a successful Jump roll). Sanity loss always applies, whether or not the fallen investigator can see. This Ghast is blind, hence investigators with a torch have a relative advantage.

### THE MINES

The actual mines extend as far as the keeper desires, and are not shown on the map. Venturing into this maze of narrow tunnels is very hazardous as it is easy to get lost!

The Cthonian that mines the Blue Stone for the serpent man is not always present at the mines, and it is up to the keeper's discretion whether he desires the investigators to encounter it or not. It is recommended that the investigators should only encounter the creature if they

venture too far into the mines. The following clues precede an encounter with the Cthonian:

- The sensation of air rushing past investigators as the Cthonian moves in a tight fitting tunnel some way ahead of them.
- The tunnels trembling and debris raining down around them, as the Cthonian burrows into the stone.

## Conclusion.

If all went well, the investigators have learnt Seth's plan to advance Judgment Day to November 1st, 1021 AD. After Mark and Rollo, they confronted their third member of Seth's brotherhood of sorcerers: the witch Unn. They have also discovered the existence of yet another cultist named Quintus.

The investigators are free to go where they please. Whether it is their home base, a nearby monastery, London or Canterbury, they will be met by their employer the Archbishop of Canterbury, and none less than the priest Stigand, personal chaplain to king Cnut (see "The Tower")!

The following sanity awards apply:

- 1 Sanity point for discovering Seth's plan.
- 1D3 for ridding the world of nefarious Unn.
- 1D8 for killing one Ghast, and 8 for killing 2 or more.
- 1D4 for stopping the disease or the sacrifices to Crom.
- -1D4 for not stopping the disease and the sacrifices.
- -1D3 for letting Unn go.

## Play Aids – Devil's Fire

Rye and grasses can be affected with the *ergot* disease in damp seasons, and when grown on damp, ill-drained lands. Ergotism is a disease that results from the ingestion of grains and cereals infected with ergot by humans and domestic animals. There are three main types of ergotism: gangrenous, convulsive and hallucinogenic. All three types have a high mortality rate.

At the time of this scenario, the cause of ergotism is unknown. Ergotism is known by various names such as holy fire, evil fire, and devil's fire.

### A real world example of an infected village

August 1951, in Pont-Saint-Esprit in mid-southern France, three people died and fifty others went completely insane for about four weeks because of ergot infested rye flour.

Hundreds were affected with 20-day bouts of insomnia, but that was the mildest of the effects. The fifty or so people who had eaten a lot of the bread were plagued by horrifying visions and obsessions, one man counting pot lids in the kitchen for three weeks, people unable to stop crying for days, then laughing hysterically for days more. One local bruiser broke out of seven consecutive straightjackets, and had to be strapped to a bed with

heavy cowhide belts. He broke out all of his teeth biting through the straps, jumped from a three story window and ran half a mile on two broken legs before they wrestled him down. He had visions that huge tigers were chasing him.

## Ergotism and the Investigators

For this scenario the keeper should assign a POT of 13 to the poison and have the investigators roll a Resistance check each day they eat bread, porridge, or drink ale in the village. The die roll should be made in secret or at random times, so as to preserve the mystery of the disease's *modus operandus*. Resisting the poison means that the victim only suffers the minor symptoms of ergotism, see below.

Keepers should choose which form of ergotism to inflict on each investigator: Convulsive or Gangrenous. Additionally, all victims suffer the symptoms described under Hallucinogenic ergotism. The following summarizes the symptoms of the poisoning as time passes:

### Convulsive Ergotism

<i>Day 1</i>	Slight fever, hunger.
<i>Day 3</i>	Ravenous hunger, fever; lose 1D4 hit point per week.
<i>CON weeks - if Resistance roll failed</i>	Seizures, violent retching, hard to breathe. Roll CON vs. 10 every day or suffer deformity as muscles twist and bones break: incur 1D4 damage and permanent -1 STR or -1 DEX. Loose 1 hit point per day.

### Gangrenous Ergotism

<i>Day 1</i>	Nausea, aching limbs.
<i>Day 3</i>	Severe pain in one limb (keeper's choice); Lose 1D4 hit point per week.
<i>CON weeks - if Resistance roll failed</i>	Limb becomes blackened and brittle, almost impossible to use. Roll CON vs. 10 each time the limb is used, failure indicates it breaks at a joint: incur 1D8 damage and permanent -1D3 STR and -1D3 DEX. Loose 1 hit point per day.

### Hallucinogenic Ergotism

<i>Day 1</i>	Insomnia, nervousness.
<i>Day 3</i>	Severe disorientation, hallucinations; all skills halved.
<i>CON weeks - if Resistance roll failed</i>	Sanity loss 0/1D10 everyday; if 5 Sanity points or more are lost, the victim breaks into a strange hysteric dance, until lapsing into unconsciousness from exhaustion. Incur 1 hit point loss each time this occurs.

The illness and its effects regress and eventually disappear once victims leave the area and partake of clean food.

## STATISTICS

### Unn, 25, Red-Haired Witch and Blue-Stone courier

STR	9	CON	14	SIZ	14	INT	15
POW	17	DEX	14	APP	13	EDU	14
SAN	0	HP	14				

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Weapons:** Dagger 35%, 1D4.

**Skills:** Read Aklo 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Dodge 40%, Hide 55%, Natural World 50%, Occult 50%, Potions 45%, Sneak 65%.

**Spells:** Black Hand (Shrivelling), Bind Ghast

Unn is tall and skinny by medieval standards. She has a long face, not unpleasant to look at, and long red hair. She wears a Viking-style long straight blue dress and a red apron, a wide belt, and soft leather boots.

There is a strange smell about Unn, fruit like yet somehow reminiscent of rancid urine.

Unn was sent to Treak Cliff by her father to personally oversee the collection of the Blue Stone needed to activate the Head Stone. Whilst at the cliffs she has been an avid student of the serpent man, learning what he will teach of poisons, potions, and magic. Now Unn can be counted as a "priestess" of the serpent man's brotherhood of sorcerers: the Black Ring. As such, he knows the Black Hand spell, a variant of Shrivelling that burns flesh (1 hit point per magic point if Resistance Table roll is failed), and leaves characteristic black handprints on the victim's skins.

Unn is calculating and self confident. Although keen to rejoin her family for the forthcoming ritual, she is not about to throw her life away for the Blue Stone.

### Basilisks, Serpent man's pets

STR	1	CON	1	SIZ	1	INT	3
POW	1	DEX	10	HP	1	Move	6

**Damage Bonus:** None.

**Weapons:** Bite 30%, damage 1D4; if armour is penetrated automatic death after one heart beat.

Virulent Spit 30%, POT 3D6. Roll CON vs POT or take POT damage, success takes half damage.

**Armour:** 4 point scales

**Sanity Loss:** None

Unn created these two horrors from local vipers under the serpent man's tutelage. Each appears as a five foot long, green-gray hued snake with a white mark atop its head.

### Hounds of Darkness, Serpent man's engineered Ghasts

STR	23	CON	14	SIZ	26	INT	3
POW	10	DEX	13	HP	20	Move	10

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6.

**Weapons:** Bite 40%, 1D10

Kick 25%, 1D6 + db

*The Hounds can kick and bite once in a combat round.*

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Sneak 70%

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8

The serpent man has engineered and grown two of these creatures. One stalks the region around the mine to keep unwanted visitors away. The second is allowed to roam the mines at will. Both creatures have been conditioned to ignore any creature bearing a specific scent (worn by Unn and the followers of Crom Cruach). Of course if someone wearing the scent was to foolishly attack one of the Hounds such conditioning would be broken.

Both Hounds (that are more intelligent than dogs) have been trained to obey the serpent man's and Unn's simple commands like "go outside", "stop here", "kill that woman", etc. These commands will override any protection granted by the scent noted above.

The beasts' only weakness is that they cannot stand direct sunlight. They only venture out of the mines at night. Investigators can take advantage of this fact.

**Incomplete Hound, Serpent man's failed experiment**

STR	16	CON	11	SIZ	23	INT	3
POW	12	DEX	10	HP	17	Move	7

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.**Weapons:** Bite 25%, 1D10

Kick 15%, 1D6 + db

**Armour:** None**Skills:** Sneak 01%**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8

*A huge, "asymmetrical" monster of black hue with patches of yellow where the leathery hide is torn, and through which purulent body fluids ooze. Its mouth is continuously foaming. Its featureless face displays two huge red eyes that blink erratically.*

This is the first of the Ghosts created by the serpent man. Apart from the size, the creature only remotely reminds of a Ghost, and is kept at all times in the "Ghostly" pit. This Ghost is blind, and relies entirely on its superior sense of smell and hearing.

**Cthonians, the serpent man's miners**

STR	33	CON	30	SIZ	33	INT	18
POW	12	DEX	7	HP	32	Move	6/ 1 Burrowing

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6.**Weapons:** Tentacle 75%, damage 3D6 + blood drain

Crush 80%, damage 3D6

**Armour:** 5 point hide and muscle, regenerates 5 hit points per round.**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D10

The "parents" of the local nest. One is always deep in the earth with the young. The other may be encountered at the mines. There may be more!

**Crom Cruach, Cthonian Maggot**

STR	14	CON	22	SIZ	12	INT	14
POW	4	DEX	5	HP	17	Move	6/ 1 burrowing

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.**Weapons:** Tentacle 75%, damage 1D4 + blood drain

Crush 80%, damage 1D4

**Armour:** 1 point hide and muscle, regenerates 1 hit points per round.**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D10**"Bird Warriors", Keepers of Quarantine**

	STR	CON	SIZ	INT	DEX	POW	HP
1	15	17	16	10	11	9	16
2	14	14	15	11	10	11	14
3	17	15	17	9	9	15	16
4	15	18	15	12	13	10	17
5	14	13	14	10	14	12	13
6	16	14	14	8	17	12	14

Note: One, Three and Four have a damage bonus of +1D6 the other +1D4.

**Weapons:** Short sword 30%, 1D6+db, long spear 20%, 1D10+db, or Ax 20%, 1D6 + db

Farm Implement 40%, 1D6+db.

**Armour:** None to boiled leather (deflects 4 damage)

This group of six "bird warriors" (on account of the long-beaked masks they wear, and the black cloaks) guards the roads and paths that lead to Heathers Edge and also patrol into the surrounding woods. They kill anybody who tries to flee the village. They are both Danes and Anglo-Saxons strong men from surrounding villages.

**Villagers, "Healthy" Statistics**

	STR	CON	SIZ	INT	DEX	POW	HP
1	10	14	12	12	7	10	13
2	13	16	11	12	14	11	14
3	14	12	11	9	5	16	12
4	6	10	10	15	11	6	10
5	10	15	11	10	10	16	13
6	12	6	14	10	10	8	10

**Weapons:** Fist/Head Butt/Kick, Grapple, or Improvised 20%, 1D6+db.**Armour:** None

Obviously, there are no more healthy villagers around. The keeper should use (and reuse) the above statistics as required for the infected villagers (both at Heathers Edge and the followers of Crom Cruach). The nominal statistics may be adjusted downward as follows:

1. **Sick** (villagers): subtract 2 hit points from the nominal value; all skills halved.
2. **Walking dead** (terminal victims in the woods): subtract 7 hit points from the nominal value; halve all skills; subtract 3 points from STR and/or DEX, and modify the damage bonus and the Dodge skill accordingly; subtract 20 Sanity points from the nominal value and pick a temporary insanity.
3. **Saved** (followers of Crom Cruach): half this group has nominal statistics; for the other half, apply the "walking dead" adjustments *without the hit point loss and the skill halving*.