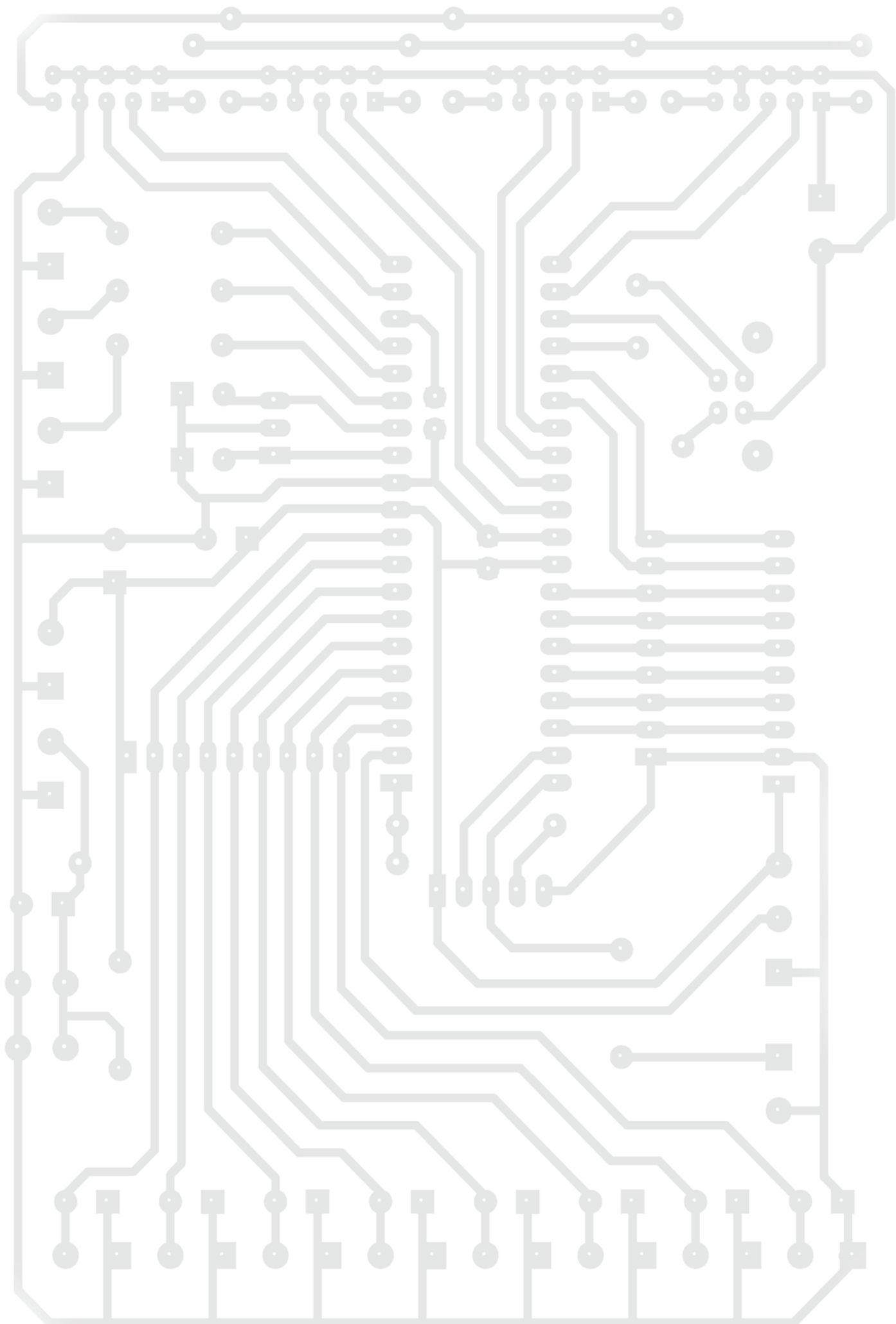


Lords of Brass & Vassal Knights



Camelot
Cosmos



Lords of Brass and Vassal Knights: Minor Houses of the Realm of Pendragon

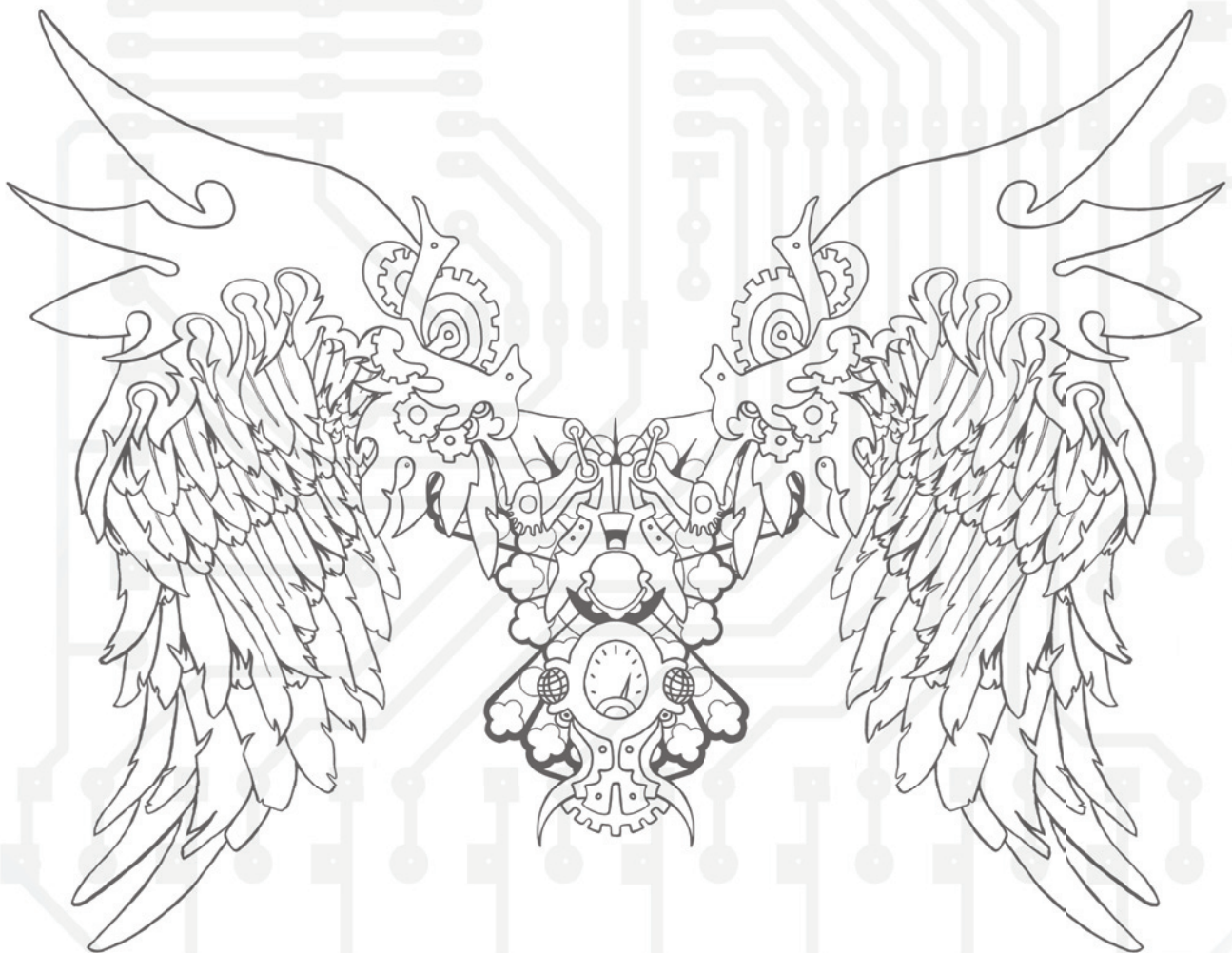
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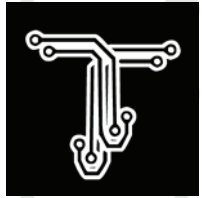
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Lords of Brass and Vassal Knights

Minor Houses of the Realm of Pendragon



The Minor Noble Houses of the Realm of Pendragon are in a curious social position in which all of their authority derives from the great Noble Houses and their independence

is continually limited to accord with the wishes of the more powerful nobles to whom they owe loyalty. Not only must minor nobles be sure to please their masters in the Great House which sponsors them, but they must also defer to the King and his direct agents. Sometimes, they are forced into deciding between these two loyalties, calculating which is the most rewarding or least dangerous to accommodate, a choice which at times can mean the difference between life and death.

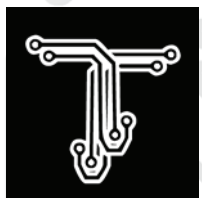
And yet in their local regions, in the villages and small towns that house their ancestral manors, they are often the sole presiding authorities. They run courts which make rulings for local peasants and craftsmen, they sponsor would-be warriors and adventurers, they commission artists and sculptors for their homes and family crypts, they employ workers on their estates and they are the biggest buyers and sellers of goods in a locality. It is the minor local lords who get the first hints of peasant unrest or growing rebellion, and their swift intervention either for or against can have a great impact on the success of such ventures. Many minor Houses have been settled in the same region for centuries, and know it far better than the major nobles who spend the majority of their time at Camelot. They take great pride in their place at the very heart of their local communities and are touchy in the extreme when nobles from the more senior branch of their extended 'family' trample over or ignore their local prerogatives.

A wise Baron is therefore firm but fair with the minor Houses, playing no favourites, accepting no defiance, but respecting long and loyal service. If a Baron can foster an air of friendly competitiveness between the minor houses that owe allegiance to him, he will find that taxes are paid more promptly, criminals more swiftly captured, and trade freely flowing within his lands. If however the Baron is unjust or unwise in his dealings with his vassals, resentment will fester in the isolated manorial halls where few spies bother to go, and a noble led uprising always has more chance of success than a peasant riot. Such direct confrontations are rare, but Great Houses that do fall often find that the rot started within.

The tables below give a summary of each minor House, using the categories given in the previous Honoured Blood supplement (the shield is the heraldic device that identifies the house, the motto is a phrase they are associated with and aspire to embody, wealth describes the original source of their status, attitude represents their key relationship with more powerful forces, strength and weakness give a record of something the house is particularly good and bad at whilst Aspect represents a single FATE aspect with which members of the house are particularly associated and which beginning characters can possess).



Sweetwater Vassals



The Sweetwater vassal families are often the result of Sweetwater romantic adventures. These Houses are united by a complex web of interrelationships as affairs and dalliances, as well as marriages, are common between all of them. There is no vassal who cannot claim some family link to the main Sweetwater line, and Sweetwater physical features (dark eyes, pale skin, long faces) are highly prized as proof of this ancestry. In homage to the artistic nature of the Major House they serve, each of the vassal houses has assumed an artistic skill with which they are particularly associated.

Covesby: The Covesbys are charged with representing the interests of the Sweetwaters at the court of King Gawain at Camelot. They were originally heralds of the Sweetwaters and can date their nobility back to a land grant given by Gawain the Founder as Arthur Covesby, their founder, played a pivotal role in negotiating the submission of the Sweetwaters to the Crown. They are known for their political skill and rarely engage in military activities any more, much preferring to exert their influence in more subtle ways. Their long connection with the court has however distanced them from the common people, and they find it hard to conceal their patronising attitude towards non-nobles. Those that are not active at Camelot often serve as chamberlains to other Sweetwater families, and they are noted for their efficient management of resources.

Sweetwater Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Covesby	Blue Sword on Red	"By the sword be judged"	Land Grant from King	Resentful of the common people	Advisors to the King	Tendency to risk taking	Courtier
Claysby	Black Castle on White	"Never yield the ground"	Battlefield Promotion	Faultlessly loyal to the Crown	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Bound by a strict family code	Indomitable
Lodgeworth	Three Doves on Green	"In the name of the people"	Land Grant from Sweetwaters	Secret Relations	Exceptionally charismatic to commoners	Tendency to financial corruption	Generous
Whiterock	White Rock or Ship on Blue	"No tide shall drown"	Shipping	Secret Relations	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency towards foolish love affairs	Handsome/ Beautiful
Newsby	Horned Red Helm on Black	"Seize the chance"	Adventuring	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Good warriors	Tendency to boastfulness	Warrior
Goldway	Gold Pot on Blue	"By skill and honour"	Invention	Resentful of Stonedwellers	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to cowardice	Alchemist
Proudham	White Bishop's Hat on Blue	"Our faith is our shield"	Ties to the Church	Resentful of the common people	Respected by the Church	Secret Enemy	Bishop
Crowbridge	Black Crow on White	"To know is to conquer"	Land Grant from Sweetwaters	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Good sages	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Wizard
Blackriver	Black Ship on Blue	"None shall deny us"	Crime	Secret Traders	Ties to the Thieves Guild	Tendency towards treachery	Pirate
Cunningham	Three White Feathers on Blue	"In trade we trust"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to the Sweetwaters	Popular with merchants	Tendency towards spiritual corruption	Merchant

Claysby: The Claysbys are the second most renowned warriors of the families devoted to the Sweetwaters, and naturally resent the greater reputation of their rivals, the Newsbys. They are noted for their refusal to accept defeat and their stubbornness. Blackbeam Hall, their ancestral seat, has been burned down six times but rebuilt every time in timber rather than stone as the Claysbys prefer to depend on their own well-drilled troops rather than stone walls. A family legend asserts however that if the Hall falls a seventh time the family will become extinct. For this reason the Claysbys have become experts in defensive siege techniques and have added many hidden features designed to protect the Hall. It is whispered that these defences may even include First Empire relics. These 'relics' are said to have been loaned to the Claysbys by the Crown in return for some unspecified service, but the Claysbys are tight-lipped in response to any enquiries on this topic.

Lodgeworth: The Lodgeworths are the result of a liaison between the current Baron Sweetwater's great grandfather and a maid in the employ of the Whiterocks. The resulting child, Edwin Lodgeworth, would no doubt have been another unacknowledged bastard, were it not for the fact that his case was championed by the Whiterocks and the child was raised as their ward and instructed in the bearing and manners of the nobility. It is likely that this was done more out of a sense of amusement than duty, or as a means of embarrassing the Sweetwaters, who were eventually forced to offer a land grant to their offspring. Edwin was also apparently a virtuous and generous youth, and his case prompted much pity on the part of the common people, which the Lodgeworths have been careful to cultivate ever since. They are the Sweetwater vassals most respected by the peasantry, and have funded schools and hospitals for the poor.

Whiterock: The Whiterocks are the wealthiest of the Sweetwater vassals, with enormous resources derived from their control of the port city that bears their name. Much trade passes along the northern sea-lanes between the coastal baronies, and a large fishing fleet is also based in Whiterock. The Whiterocks are also noted for their eccentricity and tendency towards disastrous love affairs, but thus far these foibles have resulted only in emotional rather than financial trauma and the power of the family remains unchallenged in their region. It is said that there are even Whiterocks who dream of forming a new barony by uniting some of the coastal cities under their banner, a plan that would threaten not only the Sweetwaters but several other existing Baronial families. It is likely that if such a plan were to succeed, the 'Whiterock look', a noted attractiveness that runs in their family, might play as persuasive a part as the huge bribes the family has the wealth to offer.

Newsby: The Newsbys are the brashest, youngest, and most militarily gifted family to serve the Sweetwaters. Their founder, Jonas New, was an adventurer and mercenary employed by the Claysbys with a dubious claim to some distant relationship with them. Initially supportive of dungeon clearing and other expeditions which garnered much wealth for Jonas and his sponsors, the Claysbys were shocked when Jonas announced that he had secretly wed one of their daughters and got her pregnant. The new family were swiftly ennobled to prevent further embarrassment, but the Claysbys resented what they saw as a betrayal. The family have since grown considerably as Jonas had six sons who each married young and had several children. All of the family still live in Newsby Keep, and are noted for their continued unity and devotion to each other. It is rumoured that Jonas, the patriarch of the clan, still lives, his life extended unnaturally beyond normal bounds by something that happened on one of his adventures, but the public leader of the Newsbys is now his third son Robert (who garnered honours to himself during a tour of Castlekeep with the Pendragon Legion).

Goldway: The Goldways control the main road that runs through the north of the Sweetwater lands linking the Sweetwater's Baronial capitol with the port of Whiterock. They therefore maintain close ties with the Pendragon Legion who patrol all the major roads of Pendragon and help to fund Legion waystations that protect travellers and merchants. They are unusual amongst Sweetwater vassals in that they are known for pragmatism more than eccentricity, although they are also rumoured to be alchemists or even secret wizards. Their main skill is in goldsmithing, and their artistic skills in the production of gold jewellery and even decorative weaponry is well respected. They control several gold mines on former Stonedweller lands, however, and are concerned that these will be reclaimed by Stonedwellers if the tribes ever become more politically active.

Proudham: The Proudhamms are known as a devout and pious family, far more interested in the affairs of the Seraphic Church than any other Sweetwater vassal (or indeed, the Sweetwaters themselves). They control the town that hosts Belltower Cathedral, the base of the highest ranking clergyman in the Barony. Secretly, they are descended from the bastard child of an ancient former Bishop, and their ties to the present church are ones of blood as well as faith. They represent the Sweetwaters in any negotiations with the Church, and often serve as chaplains or confessors to other vassal houses. Unknown to the family, however, they are secretly opposed by a group calling themselves the Pure Church, which resents the linking of a noble family to a powerful Bishopric and the nepotism that sees many Church appointments going to Proudhamms.

Crowbridge: The Crowbridges are descended from an advisor to the Sweetwaters who acted as the custodian of their collection of First Empire relics. This ancestor, Garrett Crow, was rumoured to be from the Morganite realm of Mordred, and had been expelled from the Mages Guild for unspecified crimes. The family have tried to live down this somewhat scandalous origin and are the quietest and least likely of all Sweetwater vassals to engage in politics or court notoriety. They are often seen in the background of Sweetwater delegations, ready to offer advice on a range of obscure topics. Their ancestral home, Crowhaven Tower, is a preserved First Empire building that the family have been excavating and repairing for the last three hundred years. Perhaps in response to the suspicion derived from their origins, the Crowbridges are careful to administer their lands with notable fairness and consideration towards the common people, who have grudgingly come to admire their unusual lords.

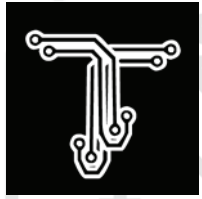
Blackriver: The Blackrivers are pirates turned privateers, the descendants of a pirate captain called Captain Rivers who claimed to be a bastard descendent of the Barons of Riversmeet. Whether or not the claim was true, he was certainly a charismatic and ruthless leader who soon united up to thirty pirate ships under his command. The Whiterocks in particular were determined to capture him and offered a large reward, which, the legend says, Rivers claimed himself when he voluntarily surrendered. Due to be executed, he negotiated a deal whereby he accepted a title and a pardon in return for betraying his former pirate comrades. Within a year most of his former comrades were dead and Rivers was being regularly employed to track down and capture other pirates, a task the family continue to this day.



Cunningham: The Cunninghams were ambitious merchants with interests scattered throughout Sweetwater lands. It is rumoured that they purchased their title with a massive bribe, or by ignoring a huge gambling debt that the ninth Sweetwater Baron had incurred with them. They are the Sweetwaters ambassadors to the Merchants guild and act as bankers for their lords as well. No family knows just who owes what as well as the Cunninghams do, a source of influence which the family are quite skilled at exploiting without ever pushing their luck too far. They advocate peace and see the Sweetwaters as the best and most historic means of maintaining stability throughout the region, but they press for money to go towards trade interests and dislike the power of the Church, which they see as stifling innovation.



Ebbsford Vassals



he House of Ebbsford has a habit of ennobling families with a long history of service to them. Despite the quiet, reserved nature of the main family line this policy creates a great deal of loyalty from their vassals. Many of these lesser families also possess skills quite diverse from their patrons. In this way the Ebbsfords are able to delegate the concerns of the House which they find onerous or trivial and concentrate on their first love, the research and discovery of First Empire artefacts. Other Houses are often surprised by the attitude of these vassals towards the main branch, since there is a friendly informality in their interactions which actually derives from the great affection in which the Major House is held but which other Houses mistake for disrespect.

Northbourne: The Northbournes are the descendents of Mortimer Longshanks, a giant peasant who distinguished himself in the Battle of the Bloody Ford during the war against the Barbed Knights. He was said to have slain three knights and captured and ransomed three more. The family often act as guard captains in units loyal to the Ebbsfords, and can be found guarding important installations where the Ebbsfords study First Empire devices. They are noted for a protective attitude towards the peasantry, but are unusual in also hiring out their troops to other houses with no sense of shame at such a mercantile activity. Family legends stress the hard life Mortimer had before he established the family name, so they tend to be very conservative and somewhat Spartan in their spending. Men and women of the house are very tall, with heights in excess of 6'5" not being uncommon. They treat their retainers well, but their followers are also skilled at repairing and scavenging weapons and equipment as the family is often loath to buy new equipment.

Ebbsford Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Northbourne	Kneeling white knight on green	"Accept none higher"	Ransom	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to financial corruption	Tall
Whitworth	Silver oak on green	"To risk is to win"	Land Grant from King	Resentful to the Crown	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency to gambling	Dextrous
Alesham	Three gold barrels on blue	"Strength through trade"	Adventuring	Secret Traders	Popular with merchants	Tendency to doing the right thing	Merchant
Rooksby	Two ravens on green	"Our words are wise"	Crime	Secret Cultists	Good schemers	Bound by a strict family code	Assassin
Dembury	White dragon on green	"Find the danger"	Battlefield Promotion	Faultlessly loyal to Land	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Tendency to doing the right thing	Bounty Hunter
Bowridge	White bowman on green	"The Seraphim guide"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to Church	Exceptionally wealthy	Hungry for glory	Mercenary
Tavestock	Gold portcullis on black	"Praise the skilled"	Invention	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Popular with the Ebbsfords	Tendency towards treachery	Elderman
Penbury	Open book on green	"None know more"	Land Grant from Ebbsfords	Faultlessly loyal to the Ebbsfords	Good sages	Tendency to boastfulness	Clerk
Foambar	Cresting wave on green	"The seas are ours"	Trade	Secret Relations	Popular with merchants	Tendency to financial corruption	Sailor
Wakeley	Wolf head on black	"Speak no ill of us"	Dungeon Clearing	Resentful of the Church	Supported by a Secret Power	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Dungeoneer

Whitworth: The Whitworths were once a much more significant house, and may even have had Baronial status in the very distant past, but made the mistake of supporting the wrong claimant during the Bastard's Rebellion in the reign of Gawain XVII. Stripped of lands and exiled, they lived as a noble family in secret, acting as peasants for several generations but always hoping to restore their fortunes. They managed to do so when the Ebbsfords came to power, offering their own hidden ancestral relics in return for renewed nobility and patronage. They remember their years of disgrace, however, and both resent the Crown and offer quiet support and assistance to other noble families who are out of favour. For this reason they are popular with other noble houses, who are also fascinated with the romantic tale of their long exile. The Whitworths tend to a slight but toned build, and are known to have very quick reactions, some say because their history makes them always alert to the possibility of sudden disaster.

Alesham: The Aleshams are an old house with ancient trading roots but possess a refreshing lack of either greed or pride. They tend towards an amiable disposition, and have an interest in medicine, sponsoring hospitals and sometimes serving as doctors to the Ebbsfords. It is said that their original ancestor, Odo One-Arm, was a warrior who had his left arm hacked off by a Black Knight. With typical lack of pretension, he then became an innkeeper and brewer, which is the source of the family's wealth. They secretly trade with the Progressors for advanced medical knowledge and support Progressor interests wherever these don't conflict with the wishes of the Ebbsfords.

Rooksby: The Rooksbys act as clerks and historians, and are charged as the custodians of the records of the Ebbsfords to protect the family's many libraries (whereas the Penburys act as clerks to their everyday affairs and estate managers). Nobody quite knows where this family came from but assume that there are family ties to the Ebbsfords as they always seem to be close confidants of their feudal lords. The Rooksbys actually descend from a branch of the Assassin's Guild who entered an exclusive, generational contract with the Ebbsfords after they discovered a First Empire device known as Garlon's Cowl, which grants the ability to go invisible but at the cost of potential possession and madness. The Ebbsfords' knowledge of First Empire devices helps soothe the worst effects of the device, but the Rooksbys refuse to allow the Ebbsfords to destroy it. Behind their dull and unassuming front, the Rooksbys maintain their dark skills, which the Ebbsfords with great reluctance sometimes call upon.

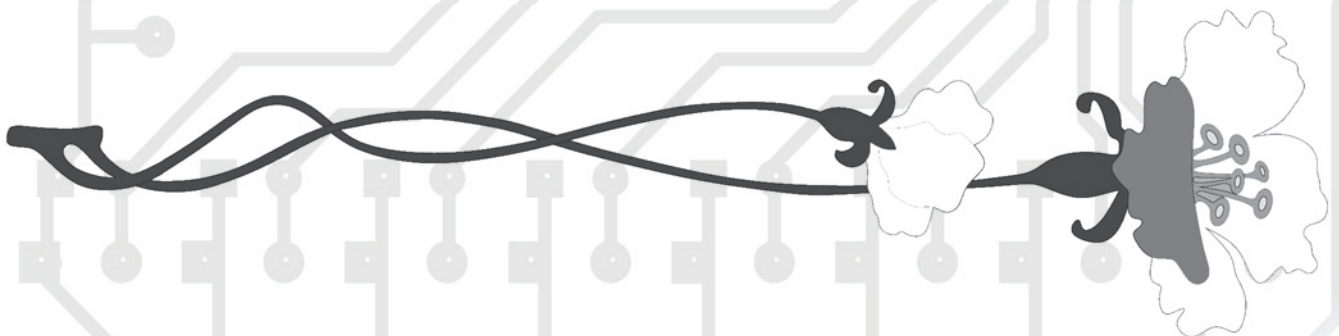
Dembury: The Demburys are sometimes mocked for the story of their origins, but they are rarely mocked in their earshot as they are a hot-blooded and courageous family. They claim that the founder of their family, Sir Richard Embers, was a dragon rider. Such a claim is ludicrous to many, but the Ebbsfords seem to give it credence. For that alone the Demburys are loyal vassals. They are also noted for being great lovers of the ancestral lands that they rule and fierce protectors both of it and the people in their charge. Could it be that there is something hidden beneath those lands, something they protect, which could prove the outrageous story of their origins? (if so, it would be a very major event, but being descended from the Captain of a downed spaceship would explain the dragon links in the family history. It is this possibility that intrigues the Ebbsfords).

Bowridge: The Bowridges are descended from the leader of a mercenary company of archers formed during the exploration campaigns of Gawain X. The mercenary leader, Adam Redbow, was said to be a half-blood with Dark Folk ancestry, but instilled an intense loyalty in his men. So much so that the mercenary company became a generational endeavour, handed down to the sons and grandsons of the original company. The family formed around the mercenary company, and took contracts from almost every noble house before being raised to nobility by the Ebbsfords, who wanted to increase the number of fighting men they could call upon. Despite or perhaps because of their rumoured Stonedweller past, the family are also known for their piety and sometimes act as go-betweens in discussions that take place between the Seraphic Church and the Ebbsfords.

Tavestock: The Tavestocks are a family of engineers and specialists in the repair and maintenance of First Empire technology who are known for their disdain of nobles with no knowledge of such devices. They act as the guardians, builders and pilots of the zeppelins created by the Ebbsfords and are said to spend more time in the air than on the ground. They seem to have an innate genius for repairing these machines and inventing improvements to them, so the Ebbsfords continue to support them despite suspicions regarding their trustworthiness. The founder of the family, Peter the Cantankerous, was a drunkard who had a habit of getting into brawls, and many of his descendants seem to share the same character traits. On a more positive note, though, the Tavestocks are extremely loyal to the common people, and are always looking for peasants who might have aptitude for the kind of work they do to recruit or promote into the family.

Penbury: The Penburys are the descendants of an Ebbsford who became obsessed with a recovered book of First Empire magic known as The Tome of Numbers. The family retain this relic and jealously guard its secrets, but will share their eccentric belief that numbers are the key to unlocking the nature of reality. Their obsession with a form of mystical mathematics makes them excellent accountants and bookkeepers, so they often fill bureaucratic roles or are given control of Ebbsford finances. Their wild claims regarding the potential of the Tome of Numbers are considered humorous by most other noble houses, who often see the Penburys as pen-pushers rather than true nobles.

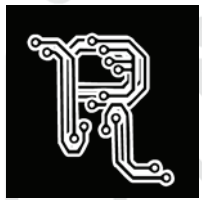
Foambar: The Foambars control the shipping of resources and artefacts that the Ebbsfords are unable to transport via zeppelin. They are often found on the expeditions sent by the Ebbsfords to recover First Empire artefacts, particularly if these take place on other continents or in flooded ruins. They also trade independently in items recovered from such sites. A large number of coastal peasants, even in the lands ruled by other families, owe some degree of loyalty to the Foambars as they often sponsor peasant fishermen with gifts and financing. It is rumoured however that they use these connections to smuggle goods illegally, or to transport persons who require swift, discreet transportation with no question asked. They are known as pragmatic, close-lipped and hard-working individuals, and have some family members secretly placed within the Thieves Guild.



Wakeley: The origins of the Wakeleys are shrouded in tragedy and mystery. Originally the wealthiest peasants in a small village, the Wakeleys supplemented their living by supplying equipment, lodging and food to adventurers drawn towards a nearby First Empire dungeon. That was until something escaped and slaughtered a large number of the villagers, including several Wakeleys. Appeals to the Seraphic Church for assistance went unheeded, something the Wakeleys still resent, until in desperation Simon the Younger, the last surviving son of the Wakeley patriarch Simon the Elder, entered the dungeon himself. When he emerged three days later the threat from the dungeon ceased and village life returned to normal, but the Wakeleys themselves had changed. Descending into several other dungeons, they emerged with resources of interest to the Ebbsford and were quickly ennobled. Other people often feel uncomfortable around them, noting that there is something strange about the Wakeley's, a quiet authority and a disturbing, anxiety-inducing stare.



Riversmeet Vassals



Riversmeet vassals are disliked by other Houses as they often adopt an unhelpful tone and manner towards them. Whilst never offering any obvious insult, they seem to react to others with surly disinterest or a formal, icy politeness that borders on contempt. They are however famed for their complete obedience and remarkable levels of deference towards their patrons. Many stories are told of Riversmeet vassals offering their lives in defence of their lords, an attitude which earns them respect despite their arrogance.

Ebbway: The Ebbways are descended from Wallace Ebb, the brother of the first Baron Rivers who was also his brother's chaplain and confessor. Wallace's proud boast was that he had never spilled the blood of another Seraphic believer, although he was noted for accompanying his brother into battle and for his great physical strength. His favourite method of killing opponents was by using his great strength to hold them underwater until they expired, this trait earned him the name 'the Drowner'. He also oversaw the construction of Castle Ebb, the three towered fortress which is still the family seat and which is surrounded on all sides by a diverted river. The Ebbways are uncommunicative and surly even by the standards of Riversmeet vassals, but still noted for their stubborn indomitability and ties to the Seraphic church.

Riversmeet Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Ebbway	Three white towers on gold	"Endure and conquer"	Ties to the Church	Faultlessly loyal to the Rivers	Exceptionally well defended castle	Hungry for glory	Dour
Drydale	Crossed black spears on gold	"No challenge unanswered"	Exploration	Resentful of the Church	Good warriors	Tendency to risk taking	Violent
Townley	Three black crowns on gold	"Let gold flow"	Land grant from the Rivers	Resentful of the Crown	Popular with merchants	Tendency to cowardice	Coward
Fangbury	Black lion on gold	"We claim our place"	Land grant from the Rivers	Resentful of the Sweetwaters	Good warriors	Tendency to treachery	Proud
Kingsdell	Black stallion on gold	"We never rest"	Ransom	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Good schemers	Hungry for glory	Manic
Kingsferry	Three black ships on gold	"Guard the waves"	Land grant from the King	Secret Traders	Exceptionally wealthy	Secret Enemy	Slaver
Granely	Gold knight on black	"Strength through Purity"	Trade	Resentful of Stonedwellers	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to financial corruption	Racist
Oakley	Black flame on gold	"Not one shall fall"	A powerful artefact	Secret cultists	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Cursed
Ashton	Black fist holding eleven gold arrows	"We triumph together"	Crime	Faultlessly loyal to allied families	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency towards foolish love affairs	Lecherous
Bargebourne	White unicorn on gold	"Nothing is hidden"	Trade	Secret mages	Ties to the Mages Guild	Tendency to risk taking	Wizard

Drydale: The Drydales are the descendants of Edward Drydale, a peasant knighted in battle after entering a berserk fury and slaying five knights whilst armed only with a broken spear. The Drydales seem to live for battle, and are always at the forefront of the forces of Riversmeet. They are still noted for explosive rages and are more often feared than respected. Even the Rivers rarely trust them with command positions as they disdain any tactic other than frontal assault, but they do make excellent champions for one-on-one combat and so often serve in this capacity or as bodyguards. They are fearless and like the wilderness so frequently also make a name for themselves as explorers or adventurers, though their love of violence can be counter-productive especially when interacting with the pacifistic Mountain Folk.

Townley: The Townleys are a mercantile family who built up an enormous fortune supplying goods to the Pendragon Legion, until it was discovered that many of the goods they supplied were inferior and their contracts were rescinded and given to others by the Crown. Almost ruined, Francis Townley, the founder of the family, was offered the opportunity to fight his debtors in a duel, as was his right as a noble, but refused. Somehow, however, he slowly built up the wealth of the family again until his grandson was able to purchase a title of nobility from the Rivers. The family have been known as canny merchants ever since, with a particular interest in luxury items and artworks. The family reputation for cowardice also haunts them, however, since no Townley ever serves in the Legion.

Fangbury: The Fangburys were originally sworn to the service to the Sweetwaters, but led a brief and ill-fated rebellion against them when one of the Sweetwaters seduced the daughter of Mortimer the Grim, then head of the Fangbury house. The seduction would have been forgiven, but ill-mannered japes about the girl afterwards pushed the family into an open revolt which was swiftly crushed. It was expected that the house would cease to exist, until the Rivers offered them sanctuary in return for service. The Fangbury's have been loyal to the Rivers ever since, but still burn with hatred for their ancient shame. They will do anything to reclaim their ancestral lands in the Sweetwater barony, and hold no loyalty more important than that task. At the same time, though they are known to be skilled warriors, particularly in the use of a type of mace unique to the house, so the Rivers often employ them as guardsmen and shock troops.

Kingsdell: The Kingsdells are unusual among the lesser houses in that they are one of the few to claim their descent from a woman rather than a founding male. Margaret of Ashen was an illegitimate daughter of the Rivers who used her beauty and intelligence to seduce and manipulate several of her cousins and even half-brothers into supporting her ambitions. She was known for a manic energy that has been passed down to her descendants, and also inculcated in them a need for total family unity. The family believe that everyone except themselves and the Rivers are against them, and they are determined to prove that are better than anyone else. They have specialised in taking battlefield hostages and ransoming them for large sums, but in periods of peace turn their hand to other schemes just as successfully. They often produce female warriors, since they consider women as equal to men and honour their founder above all other examples.

Kingsferry: The Kingsferry family have interests in both shipping and land caravans and supply horses and ships to others as well as trained retainers. They often work as ferrymen, ship's captains and caravan masters transporting their own goods and those of others, and are also known from finding work as harbour masters and officials in important ports. What is not known is that they have ties to the Slavers Guild and that their enormous wealth derives from secretly transporting slaves into the lands of the Morganites. They use the wealth gained from this activity to make themselves appear as respectable and dignified as possible.

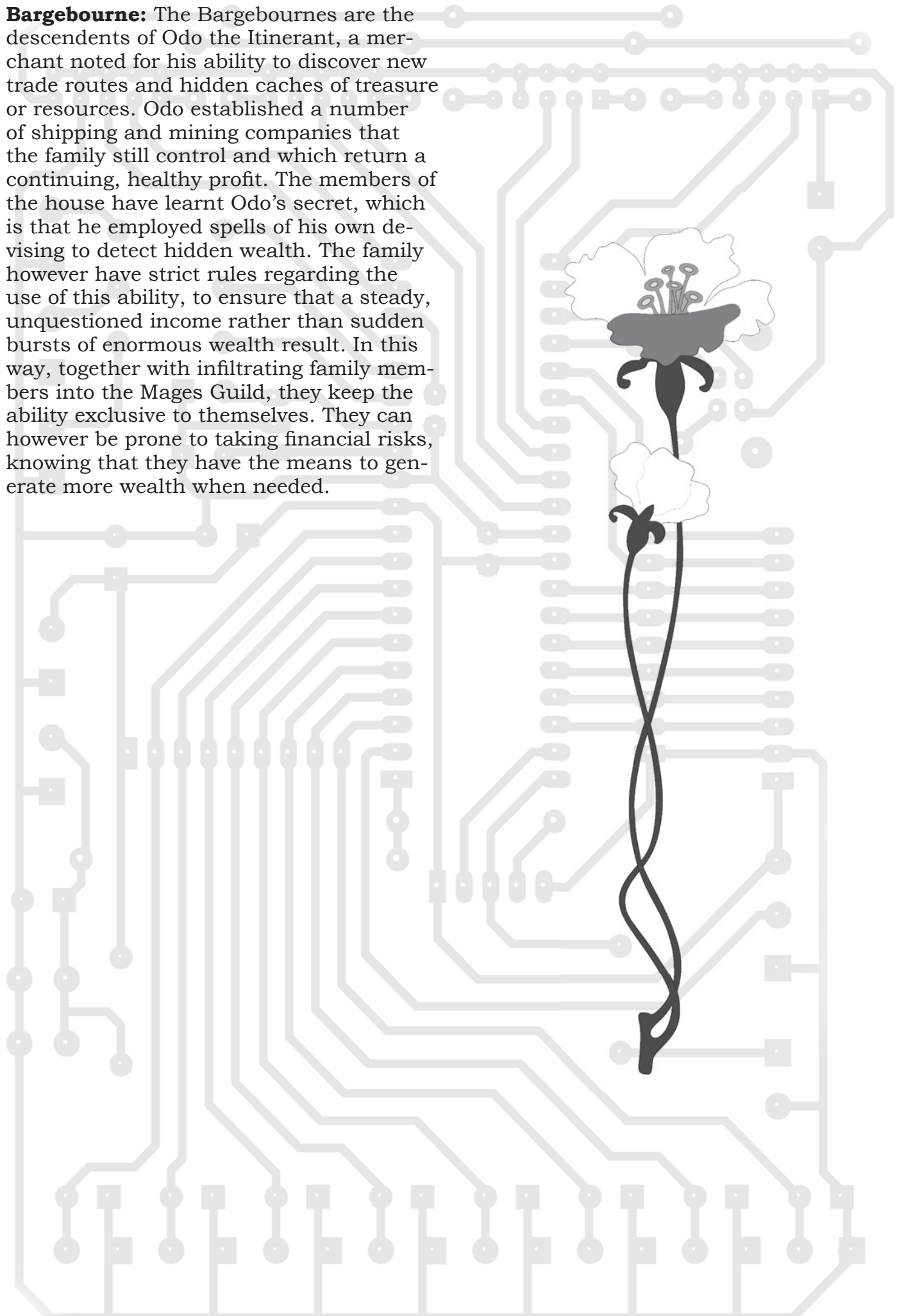
Granely: The Granelys are an ancient house, as old as the River themselves. In the days when the Rivers family were independent of the Gawainite monarchy, the Granelys were their stewards and managers of their estates, men who were trusted in this capacity after having made their own wealth by trading in corn and wheat. They still manage some of the largest farms in the Barony of Riversmeet, and are always pressing for more land to be taken from Stonedweller enclaves and put to 'good use'. They are quiet, softly-spoken, but utterly ruthless in regarding Stonedwellers as primitives who must reform or perish.



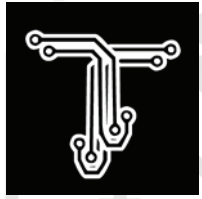
Oakley: The Oakleys are less aggressive and more diplomatic than other Rivers-meets vassals and are often used as envoys or negotiators with other houses. They are quiet and reserved with impeccable manners, but do not like to draw attention to themselves and spend a great deal of time on their own estates. They also seem to have a great interest in history and have something of a reputation as scholars. Many of them seem to die young, however, and the rulers of the House are often quite youthful in comparison to other leading nobles. This derives from the great secret of the family, which is that they possess a First Empire relic known as the Throne of the Ancestors. This is actually a pair of black basalt chairs which allows the transfer of a consciousness from one occupant of the chair to another. The original founder of the House, Ezekial Oakley, and his wife Elizabeth, have transferred their minds into their descendents' bodies for centuries, never relenting from their control of the family. Their descendents now secretly worship them, and any family member who objects is eliminated.

Ashton: The Ashton's are noted for their dark, saturnine good looks and their tendency to exploit these to sate their lecherous desires. Both the men and women of the house seem to take pride in having as many affairs and conquests as possible and regard such activities as a kind of sport, discussing them amongst themselves in a way that suggests that status within the family is based on how successful a seducer the individual is. This scandalous game does however have a serious purpose-the Ashton's are very good at blackmailing others into supporting themselves and their family, or of getting their 'friends' to perform various favours on their behalf. Despite this behaviour, they are consistent in supporting the rest of the Riversmeet vassals against any external threat...cynics assert that this is because their own bastard offspring are scattered amongst them.

Bargebourne: The Bargebournes are the descendents of Odo the Itinerant, a merchant noted for his ability to discover new trade routes and hidden caches of treasure or resources. Odo established a number of shipping and mining companies that the family still control and which return a continuing, healthy profit. The members of the house have learnt Odo's secret, which is that he employed spells of his own devising to detect hidden wealth. The family however have strict rules regarding the use of this ability, to ensure that a steady, unquestioned income rather than sudden bursts of enormous wealth result. In this way, together with infiltrating family members into the Mages Guild, they keep the ability exclusive to themselves. They can however be prone to taking financial risks, knowing that they have the means to generate more wealth when needed.



Tavelon Vassals



Tavelon vassal families are extremely competitive with each other and known for their ostentatious displays of wealth. All of them dream of amassing resources equal to or exceeding those of their rivals and there are instances of the pursuit of wealth leading them into acts of outright disloyalty. The Tavelons are well aware of this weakness, however, and skilled in playing off their vassals against one another and offering just the right mix of threats and bribes to maintain their own pre-eminence. Each of the minor Houses indebted to the Tavelons tends to specialise in a particular form of commerce and all are well represented in the upper echelons of the major Guilds.

Edgeby: The Edgebys are excessively proud of the fact that they came from common stock and earned their place in the nobility through combat prowess. They tend to scorn more courtly nobles and the men of the family are keen competitors in the Summer Tourney. They are the Tavelon vassals most likely to join the Pendragon Legion and also serve as a sort of informal police force and militia within Tavelon lands. They are known for their strict adherence to the law and for their support of the rights and freedoms of the lower classes, and are therefore popular with the peasantry. They do, however, abhor rebellion and consider any act of revolt as a kind of blasphemy to be strongly resisted and fiercely punished.

Tavelon Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Edgeby	Four gold swords on black	"By our own hand"	Battlefield promotion	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Good warriors	Tendency to doing the right thing	Strong
Goodridge	Black eight-spoked wheel on gold	"No step too far"	Trade	Resentful of Criminals	Popular with merchants	Tendency to cowardice	Cautious
Brasinghurst	Gold swan on white	"Our honour above all"	Land grant from Tavelons	Resentful of the Tavelons	Good schemers	Hungry for glory	Selfish
Garland	Four gold roses on black	"We see, we sow, we rise"	Land grant from King	Secret relations	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to gambling	Elegant
Southkeep	Black castle on gold	"To claim is to keep"	Adventuring	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Tendency to risk taking	Energetic
Longcastle	Gold tower on red	"We hold this ground"	Land grant from Tavelons	Secret mages	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Bound by a strict family code	Educated
Montlake	Fisherman casting a gold net on blue	"No net shall bind us"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to the Tavelons	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Bound by a strict family code	Quiet
Bellford	Golden bell on black	"Faith knows no fear"	Ties to the Church	Resentful of the Church	Good sages	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Bishop
Sallowbridge	Black griffon on gold	"Retribution for all wrongs"	Trade	Secret traders	Popular with merchants	Tendency to financial corruption	Gilded
Marsham	Two black dogs on gold	"To thyself be true"	Dungeon Clearing	Secret relations	Supported by a Secret Power	Tendency towards treachery	Cultist

Goodridge: The Goodridges are an old house who had slipped into obscurity and decline until they swallowed their pride and restored their fortune through trade, or rather by allowing rich merchants with pretensions to social status to marry into their family in return for large dowries. They are sensitive about this history however and respond poorly to it being raised by others. They are known for being extremely formal at all times and observing etiquette closely, again as a compensation for their mercantile links (the aristocratic women of the family are particularly frosty in this regard, whilst their merchant husbands are often unknowingly crass or provincial but much friendlier).

Brasinghurst: The Brasinghurts are descended from a younger son of the Tavelons who was disinherited after a botched attempt to kill his older brother. His son, however, conveniently saved his uncle from a wild boar during a hunting trip and was reinstated in favour. The family have ever since been loyal vassals, at least in outward appearances. They are known for their blonde hair and wide, innocent eyes that give them an almost childlike appearance, but are skilled schemers. They specialise in a kind of flattery that actually suggests at all times that the Tavelons are incompetent and not fit to rule. They are however efficient castle stewards and have quietly placed their own family members in several militarily important positions.

Garland: The Garlands are a family who originate from the King's court at Camelot, and still preserve a certain air of glamour and elegance due to their connection to the Crown. They are extremely wealthy and own several large estates of good farmland, granted directly by the King rather than from the Tavelons. Everyone knows that they are the eyes and ears of the Crown within Tavelon lands, but the Tavelons and their vassals all try to keep in their good graces in the hope that they will learn important information about the King. They are famous for hosting elegant balls at Garland Palace, their newly acquired but large, impressive and beautifully appointed mansion.

Southkeep: 'As still as a Southkeep' is a popular ironic phrase used in Tavelon lands, such is the reputation for restlessness that this ambitious and young noble family have carved out for themselves. The Southkeeps began as an adventuring party sponsored by the Tavelons to clear a dungeon unearthed on their land during the building of a new fortification. Having successfully done so their work impressed the Tavelons enough to make them the permanent custodians of the fortification, which they have held as their own ancestral seat ever since. The family are known for their internal unity but also a certain recklessness which is no doubt the result of passed down stories from their adventuring days.

Longcastle: The Longcastles are the most educated of the Tavelon vassals, and act as clerks, record keepers, teachers, historians, librarians and sages for their feudal lords. Longcastle Keep, their impressively well-defended home, also contains a large library consulted by many scholars. The trade that comes from the visits of learned men supports a surrounding village and gives the family an unusual additional income. Longcastle Fair, held every three months, sees book traders from all parts of Pendragon offer their wares. The Longcastles are known for their seriousness and a worried, melancholy disposition, and it is rumoured that their studies have taught them truths they would rather not know.



Montlake: The Montlakes are a phlegmatic, reserved, quiet family who were originally wealthy peasant fishermen. Over centuries they quietly and patiently built up their control of the lake whose name they bear, and turned it into a fashionable resort for noble families. They also discreetly helped those noble families with anything they needed or were unable to do themselves, building up contacts and favours until they could claim noble status themselves. At the same time they reported everything to the Tavelons, acting as an invaluable but entirely secret group of informers. They continue these roles today, and are bound by a strict family code of discretion and silence. Sometimes especially troublesome nobles, whose disloyalty to the Tavelons is clear, suffer mysterious boating accidents when visiting the Montlakes resort.

Bellford: The Bellfords are the priests and confessors of the Tavelons and their ambassadors to the Seraphic Church. Like the Longcastles they are also noted scholars and archivists, although they often seem more interested in suppressing rather than disseminating knowledge. They ascribe to a stricter version of the Seraphic faith than the mainstream faith and are strong advocates of a holy war against the Morganites. Sometimes, however, their eagerness in this regard can lead them towards dangerous theories and dark powers, and several of their number in past years have been burned as heretics.

Sallowbridge: The Sallowbridges are wealthy traders with interests in a wide range of goods. They are known for having a small build and there are rumours that they have some Stonedweller ancestry as they have the wide faces and dark hair of the Mountain Folk. They also seem to pursue a policy of peace that would be consistent with Mountain Folk philosophy, although they politely but coldly reject any such link. They seem able to obtain minerals that no other merchant can get hold of, and employ their own jewellers to work these into jewellery that is extremely popular and expensive. At the same time they supply goods in another direction, towards Mountain Folk lands, but none other than themselves know what these items might be or how the Stonedwellers pay for it.

Marsham: The Marshams are nicknamed 'the black dogs' as they hire themselves out as warriors noted for their ruthless devotion and complete obedience of any order, no matter how grim or cruel it might be. They are the family that other Tavelon vassals turn to when they have something violent or scandalous to do, something which even the Montlakes would not accept as a task. They are considered an unpleasant necessity because of this, as even the Tavelons have on occasion found their amoral service useful. When not working for other families they spend almost all their time dungeon clearing, travelling extensively in order to do so. They maintain ties with the Tomb Robbers Guild and the Dungeoneers Guild, but it is reported that they are looking for something specific on these dungeon quests, something that the Tavelons suspect it might not be wise to allow them to obtain.



Deepwell Vassals



Deepwell vassals are, like their patrons, steeped in a military tradition. The leaders of these houses run their families almost like military units and expect both obedience and deference from other family members of lesser rank. Scions of these houses are expected to serve in some military capacity and will be respected in accordance with their military prowess above all other considerations. The Deepwells even scout the Tourneys and the Pendragon Legion, offering marriage alliances to warriors of proven ability.

Farringham: The Farringhams are descendants of Walter Farr, a wandering hedge knight of the reign of Gawain VIII who saw his whole family starve during the Black Harvest. Farr's refusal to take any dishonourable work left him unable to feed his family when crops on his own land failed, but their deaths changed him to the point that he became a bandit. Years later he managed to capture and ransom a knight and establish a new family, but from that point on was determined that his own family would come before everything else. His descendants still follow this policy and have an unusual policy that reflects this, completely sharing all their resources and wealth under the guidance of their lord.

Deepwell Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Farringham	White axe on blue	"Family, Courage, Pride."	Ransom	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Good warriors	Tendency to financial corruption	Bandit
Toringham	Rearing white stallion on blue	"We serve with honour"	Battlefield promotion	Faultlessly loyal to the Deepwells	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to doing the right thing	Honourable
Goldfield	Gold man on blue	"Let our words be heeded"	Land grant from Deepwells	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency towards treachery	Charming
Abbotsleigh	Four gold crosses on blue	"Blood and faith"	Ties to the Church	Resentful of the Crown	Respected by the Church	Tendency to boastfulness	Calm
Eastby	Gold lion on blue	"Fear our wrath"	Land grant from the Deepwells	Faultlessly loyal to the Land	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Tendency to risk taking	Brave
Owlberry	White owl on blue	"For the King"	Adventuring	Faultlessly loyal to the Crown	Advisors to the King	Bound by a strict family code	Chivalrous
Smitherton	Black hammer on blue	"Our past sustains us"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Exceptionally charismatic to the common people	Tendency towards foolish love affairs	Muscular
Farreach	Black fist on blue	"Seize what we will"	Adventuring	Faultlessly loyal to Allied families	Good warriors	Tendency to risk taking	Tall
Bishopsburne	Three silver crowns on blue	"Faith is our shield"	Ties to the Church	Faultlessly loyal to the Church	Respected by the Church	Tendency to financial corruption	Pious
Darkwater	Black ship on blue	"Quick to the fray"	Crime	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Popular with merchants	Tendency to gambling	Nimble

Toringham: The Toringhams take great pride in being an honourable family whose word is their bond and who are known for their decency and loyalty. They are the descendents of a herald of the Deepwells and often still serve in this capacity. They also rear horses and act as grooms and squires. They are said to have a keener eye for good horseflesh than any other family, and their skill at riding ensures that they also work as swift messengers. The Deepwells know that they can trust them implicitly and this often gives them access to the secrets of their feudal overlords. They also serve the role of 'speaking truth to power' and give the Deepwells good advice, or at least moral advice, even when it is not appreciated or politic to do so.

Goldfield: The Goldfields act as representatives of the Deepwells in negotiations with other Baronial families and have become highly skilled at the kind of flatter and deference such duties require. They are well liked by other noble families and cultivate a reputation as genial and outgoing individuals with a reputation for fairness. In reality they are charming knaves, concerned almost solely with their own advantage.

Abbotsleigh: The Abbotsleighs are renowned for their calm in the face of danger. Sustained by a strong faith in the Seraphim, they seem oblivious to hardship and danger. They are noted for their large and imposing frames. The men of the family all grow long beards and tend to be fond of physical challenges and sporting contests, which they participate in enthusiastically whilst invoking the Seraphim in loud voices for their support. They have a tendency to boast about the level of their piety and frequently offer donations to the Church. They are however resentful of the Crown, believing that the Gawainite state would be better directed by men more in tune with the commands of the Seraphim. These feelings have never resulted in open revolt, so the Crown tolerates their grumbling.

Eastby: The Eastbys are cousins of the Deepwells and are often raised alongside them, a practice which inculcates a very strong and lasting loyalty. Their ancestral seat, Lionshold Castle, is the strongest castle other than Deepwell itself in all the Deepwell lands, and has been entrusted to their care as a place of retreat if Deepwell itself ever falls. The Eastbys take this responsibility very seriously and are known for continually drilling the troops under their command. They have a love of the landscape that surrounds their home and, surprisingly for such a military family, have produced several artists and poets inspired by that landscape.

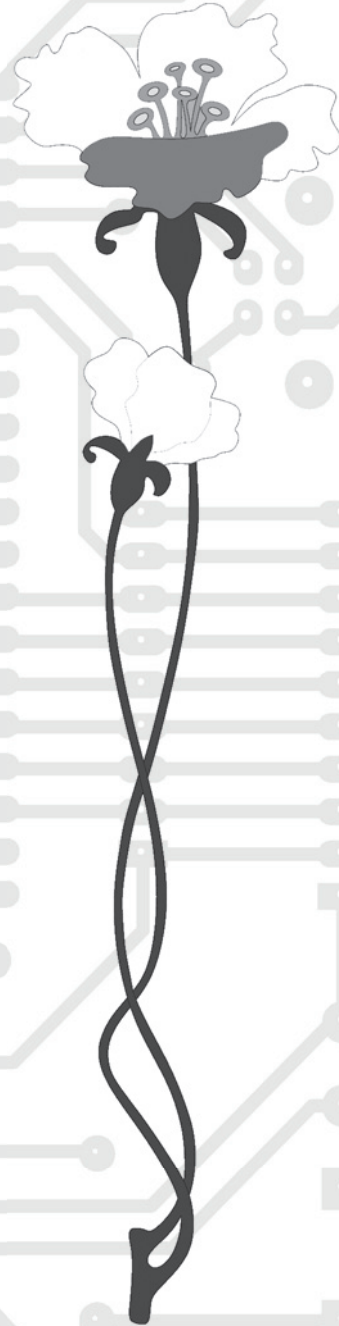
Owlberry: The Owlberrys maintain the Deepwell mansion at Camelot, and are therefore the most skilled courtiers amongst the Deepwell vassals. Due to the use of the Gate at Deepwell however they can quickly and easily return to their own lands and so maintain strong ties with it, unlike some other Camelot based families. They were originally from Tintagel, and maintain the Tintagen traditions of archaic speech and extremely chivalrous behaviour. Their loyalty to the Crown is well-known, what is less well-known is that they have ties to the Old Guard spy network and are prepared to secretly eliminate opponents of the King.

Smitherton: The Smithertons were, as their name suggests, originally blacksmiths, but they were elevated to the nobility after supplying huge quantities of arms free of charge to the battlefield on Castlekeep. Smitherton merchants sell weapons throughout Pendragon and even to other Gawainite realms, and their swords are famed for their durability and keen edge, traits dependent on a technique known only to the family. They tend to be burly and muscular, and many still work as smith still for the sheer pleasure of the craft. They reward the peasants of their own region well and are careful to never assume airs and graces over the common people. For this and for generous donations endowing schools and hospitals for the poor they are extremely popular with the lower classes of Pendragon society.

Farreach: The Farreach family are famed for their great height and are always an imposing sight when taking part in tournaments and military displays. They are the descendants of William the Tall, a Morganite knight who defected to the service of the Deepwells when the last attempted invasion of the Deepwell Gate was repulsed. Whilst many advocated his execution, the Deepwells were impressed with the knight's fierce resistance and calm surrender after barring the Gate whilst his comrades escaped. The family have proved loyal ever since, and have always respected any family that treats them well. They also argue that many Morganite citizens, if given a free choice, would reject their Queen and her evil ways.

Bishopsburne: The Bishopsburnes are a family who often ascend to the ranks of bishoprics and to being employed as cardinals in the service of the Archbishop of Camelot. They are as pious as the abbot-sleighs but far more urbane and cosmopolitan. They strongly support the Seraphic Church and serve within it in administrative as well as clerical roles, but do have a tendency of regarding the resources of any office they hold as a private income that they can dispose of as they please. They have, for instance, a noted love of finery and ceremony, and no compunction about funding these tastes from church coffers. They are educated, genial, cultured, but also often greedy and corrupt.

Darkwater: The Darkwaters are one of the more obviously criminal families to have gained a place amongst the nobility. They are descended from the Dark Waters Company, a notorious smuggling band that modelled itself not on the guild structure of other criminal groups but on First Empire companies. Their founder, Richard Dark, claimed to be a sleeper re-awakened from the Days of Gedd, although only his own descendants credit such an absurd tale. Unusually for a criminal group, though, they proved popular with the nobility and with merchants, as they acted as thief takers and privateers specialising in recovering already stolen goods for a reward, robbing and sometimes massacring other criminal gangs in the process.



Meadow Vassals



vassals of the House of Meadow are conscious of their lowly origins and maintain a deep concern for the peasantry and common folk from which even the highest amongst them ultimately derives. They tend to be uninterested in many of the pursuits favoured by other nobles, and it is rare for any of these families to compete in the Tournaments or develop power bases at Court. They much prefer engaging in the daily life of their own regions and are slow to stir themselves to action elsewhere.

Palgrave: The Palgraves were ennobled during the reign of Gawain IX as Geoffrey Palgrave, a hedge knight of mysterious origins, participated in the final charge led by the doomed monarch against the monstrous Burning King. Their heroism has been celebrated ever since and has made them popular with the common people, particularly since few other Meadow vassals can claim such an illustrious moment of glory. They chafe at the reserved and quiet nature of their feudal lords, and urge greater participation in the wider world of politics. Because of this, the Meadows are happy to allow them to represent their interests at Camelot, hoping that this peaceful task will meet their urge for more glory.

Meadow Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Palgrave	Red shield on green	"Accept no dishonour"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to the Crown	Exceptionally charismatic to commoners	Hungry for glory	Dignified
Stowebury	Gold eagle on green	"Own the horizon"	Trade	Resentful of Stonedwellers	Popular with merchants	Tendency to financial corruption	Guildsman
Brackenridge	White scroll on green	"The law binds us all"	Trade	Resentful of the common people	Good schemers	Tendency towards treachery	Clerk
Oldford	White oak on green	"Knowledge is the seed of virtue"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Good sages	Tendency towards cowardice	Druid
Westbury	Three white horses on green	"None shall bar our way"	Land grant from the Meadows	Faultlessly loyal to the Meadows	Good warriors	Tendency towards boastfulness	Groom
Newton	Apple tree on green	"The mind is the greatest weapon"	Invention	Secret Mages	Good sages	Hungry for glory	Alchemist
Batsepeake	White bat on black	"Our line unbroken"	Land grant from the Meadows	Secret Relations	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Bound by a strict family code	Spy
Neston	White cat on green	"We dare to win"	Battlefield promotion	Faultlessly loyal to Allied families	Good warriors	Tendency towards risk taking	Squire
Cloudsby	Green diamond on white	"Justice has its own power"	A powerful artefact	Secret Mages	Good sages	Tendency towards doing the right thing	Wizard
Valebourne	White portcullis on green	"Suffer no fool to live"	Exploration	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Good warriors	Tendency towards spiritual corruption	Taciturn

Stowebury: The Stoweburys control merchant companies engaged in the sale of lumber, and have cleared several forests in their pursuit of profits, although the present head of the family, Mortimer Stowebury, is careful to replenish the woods that remain within their lands by planting two trees for every one they fell. This has not prevented clashes with Stonedwellers forced from their land, which has made the Stowebury's vocal opponents of the tribes. Provided that this subject is avoided, they have a reputation as genial and pleasant hosts, who offer their hunting lodges for the use of other nobles.

Brackenridge: The Brackenridges are descended from a lawyer active during the War of the Hidden Faces in the reign of Gawain XIII, who specialised in finding legal means by which rival noble families could appropriate the property of others. The family are experts in the law and in manipulating it to their own purposes, and hire their services as consultants, judges and lawyers employed by other houses. For hefty fees or future favours, they can use their expertise in the law to obtain verdicts that are not always just but which are of great use to their clients. The Meadows dislike them intensely but the Brackenridges were born in this region and have given no outward sign of disloyalty.

Oldford: The Oldfords are renowned as sages who are able to maximise the productivity of any piece of land. They work as estate managers, rangers and wardens as well as farmers and shepherds. All are known for their love of the land and their good relations with Stonedwellers, so much so that they also serve the Meadows as representatives to the tribes, something which can bring them into conflict with the Stoweburys. They prefer to avoid confrontation and are one of the least military of all the lesser noble houses, seeing themselves as protectors of the people and the land by wise example rather than by the use of the sword. Their hair is prone to prematurely whiten, a curious physical trait which some say is the mark of Josiah Oldford, the founder of the family, having been blessed by the Druidim.

Westbury: The Westburys are descended from a Toringham who married the daughter of one of the Meadows and founded a new family with the blessing of both. The Westburys still maintain friendly ties with the Toringhams and all consider members of the other family their close cousins. They serve a similar role for the Meadows that the Toringhams serve for the Deepwells, acting as grooms, squires, horse traders and cavalry troops. Their loyalty can cause embarrassment however, as they are constantly praising the qualities of their feudal lords and boasting about their wisdom and courage. This is not done out of any scheming, but from a lasting gratitude instilled in them by their founder and his respect for his wife.

Newton: The Newtons are an eccentric house full of scholars obsessed with strange subjects of little interest to anyone save themselves. They are considered slightly mad by other houses, but in a harmless, impractical sort of way that leads to wry amusement rather than suspicion or hatred. The Newtons are fully aware of this reputation and quietly burn with the desire to shock the world with a display of pure power. In pursuit of this aim they are keen alchemists and secret wizards, and have strong ties to both the Dust Cabal and the Mage's Guild. Physically they are noted for their long, narrow faces and their gangly, slightly awkward frames.



Batsepeake: The Batsepeakes are sometimes called 'the silent house' due to their anonymity and the level of their withdrawal from society, which is extreme even by the standards of the generally reclusive Meadow vassals. Their lands are remote and they rarely seem to stray from them, but what other houses are unaware of is the fact that the Batsepeakes are skilled in disguise and often go abroad in the livery of other houses, which they freely mimic in order to gather information. What they are gathering that information for has never been revealed to anyone outside the house, but they do also spy for the Meadows when specifically requested to do so. If anyone investigated the house, they would find that they claim an unbroken back to an organisation that existed prior to the Days of Gedd (a First Empire company security service, to be precise).

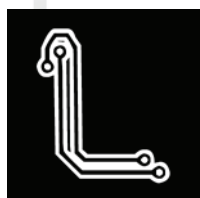
Neston: The Nestons are the strong right arm of the Meadows, the family most likely to provide military support or representation for their feudal masters and the only Meadow vassals to regularly serve in the Pendragon Legion. They are smiling, care-free hedonists who enjoy the challenge of combat and have an unusual family tradition of duelling to establish ranking within the family. They are noted swordsmen (and women) and sometimes work as mercenaries or adventurers. They proudly boast that once the friendship of a Neston is given, only death can end it.

Cloudsby: The Cloudsby are the descendent of a hermit called Simon the Purifier who denounced the Seraphic Church as corrupt and advocated a direct, personal communion with the Seraphim. The Meadows allowed Simon and some of his followers to establish a community of sorts in the mountains but there were fears that the Church would order a Crusade against them. These fears were allayed when Simon mysteriously disappeared, but not before he left his followers a secret tome supposedly containing powerful magical formulas. His descendents were at key times consulted by the Meadows, who eventually granted them noble status, and they are said to act as astrologers, navigators and engineers. They maintain the Meadows zeppelin but are also still suspected of continuing the religion founded by Simon the Purifier.

Valebourne: The Valebourne live in a secluded valley and are noted for their suspicion of outsiders and their taciturn, uncommunicative ways. They are a pragmatic family and are primarily farmers, miners and stonemasons. They are possessed of an uncomplaining physical toughness that proves very effective in combat, and they specialise in defensive forms of warfare. Their wealth originally derived from exploration under the Sailor Monarch, and their houses often mimic the shapes of boats, although very few of them now set to sea. Physically they are stocky with large hands and weather-beaten faces.



Goldenroot Vassals



Like the House of Meadow, the Goldenroots have humble origins. Their vassals, however, are not proud of these links and are notorious for claiming links to other Houses in order to assert a longer or more noble lineage than they actually possess (many employ genealogists or bards). They enthusiastically attend the Tourneys, and show a great knowledge of family links and ties, heraldry and noble legends. Many of them are employed as stewards or heralds by other houses due to this knowledge, although they do exploit this to spy for the Goldenroots. Goldenroot vassal families tend to possess larger estates than most other nobles as the Goldenroots are blessed with the best agricultural farmland of any House.

Melton: The Meltons are one of the wealthiest vassal families of Pendragon, with large estates and varied farming interests. They work primarily as dairy and sheep farmers and also control several factories in which industrial scale weaving takes place. This can cause negative issues for them due to the association of factories with the Morganites, but they attempt to allay this by being generous and fair mind employers. They are also known for their tendency towards romantic adventures, and are favoured targets of would-be courtesans due to their renowned generosity.

Goldenroot Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Melton	Black diamonds on gold	"Love guides us"	Trade	Secret Traders	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency towards foolish love affairs	Generous
Denton	Black bull on gold	"Our word is our bond"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to common people	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Secret Enemy	Honest
Haverly	Three black feathers on gold	"For family and crown"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to the King	Good schemers	Bound by a strict family code	Fat
Oakenheath	Gold oak on black	"We shield the weak"	Land grant from the Goldenroots	Faultlessly loyal to the Goldenroots	Good warriors	Tendency to doing the right thing	Stubborn
Coalsbee	Three black bees on gold	"The mind is a weapon"	Invention	Resentful of Mages	Popular with merchants	Tendency to risk taking	Brilliant
Adleby	Crossed gold swords on black	"Smite the foe"	Battlefield promotion	Resentful of the Goldenroots	Good warriors	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Violent
Tenderton	Black and gold shield divided vertically	"Blood will tell"	Land grant from the Goldenroots	Faultlessly loyal to the Goldenroots	Good sages	Tendency to risk taking	Herald
Balesby	Silver cup on gold	"Peace and prosperity"	Trade	Resentful of criminals	Popular with merchants	Tendency to gambling	Merchant
Deepvale	Black cat on gold	"Never in haste"	Land grant from the Goldenroots	Faultlessly loyal to the Goldenroots	Good warriors	Tendency to boastfulness	Peaceful
Cornford	Black cross-bow on gold	"We are unmoved"	Ransom	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to financial corruption	Calm

Denton: The Dentons came to prominence during an ancient scandal in which the family which previously ruled their land, the Gaunts, were exposed as Morganite cultists who were enslaved by a dark relic known as the Blood Grail. They were found to have been sacrificing peasants to power this relic, given to them by Queen Isabella during the reign of Gawain IV. The Dentons led a peasant uprising which stormed Gaunt Hall and held a trial in which the last Gaunt, Lady Margaret, was burnt as a witch. The Dentons, baked by the Seraphic Church, were then nominated as a new noble family ruling the Gaunts former estates. They have been known ever since for their bullish directness and their continued strong ties to the peasantry. In recent years, however, the Dentons have suffered several tragedies and unexpected deaths at their base Denton Keep, built on the ruins of Gaunt Hall.

Haverly: The Haverlys are descended from Jacob Haverly, a common born physician and healer who became a trusted confidante of the Goldenroots. Haverly founded a hospital which was one of the earliest such institutions to be controlled by someone other than the monks of the Seraphic Church. The family are still known as doctors and healers and many still work as the administrators and physicians of the hospital. They also control several charitable institutions founded by the Goldenroots. They have schemed their way into the equal good graces of the Gawainite monarchy by offering medical advice without charge to members of the Royal family, and are trying to discover the secrets of the Progressors. They have their own sense of honour, however, which is based upon the ancient First Empire oath taken by medical professionals.

Oakenheath: The Oakenheaths, along with the Adlebys, are the most militant of the families pledged to the Goldenroots. They often serve as castellans or guard commanders, and a troop of thirty of them, known as the Oaken Band, serve as personal bodyguards to the Goldenroots. They take great pride in the trust shown to them by the Goldenroots and are noted for their fierce devotion to their feudal lords. They are an extremely honourable family and on the whole are more concerned with fulfilling their duties than with personal advancement, which can lead to them being somewhat withdrawn from noble politics.

Coalsbee: The Coalsbees are a family of miners and engineers who result from the marriage of a Goldenroot and an Ebbsford. They combine Goldenroot wealth and pragmatism with the spark of genius common to the Ebbsfords. They press for a wider application of First Empire technology and are constantly tinkering and inventing new applications for existing devices. They have even developed a more technologically focused version of the Seraphic faith which priorities First Empire devices as holy relics, referring to this private belief system as Newtonianism. Their most famous role, however, is as advocates and engineers of the Golden Rail, the only surviving First Empire trainline on Pen-dragon. They resent efforts from the Mages Guild to restrict access to this and similar technologies. Physically they are noted for their dark, glittering eyes and heavy black beards, a look which can make the males of the family almost indistinguishable from each other.



Adleby: The Adlebys are sometimes referred to as 'the addled' but never in their presence. The family has a history of being involved in brawls and feuds and are famed for their hair-trigger tempers, an unusual feature amongst the generally plaid and contented Goldenroot vassals. They have however served with distinction in the realm of Castlekeep where their love of conflict results in honours rather than embarrassment. They are descended from a Flay who married into the Goldenroots before the Flays fall from grace, but seem to take pride in their dark antecedents. The Goldenroots are frequently exasperated by their vassals violent ways, but appreciate that they also represent a military asset. The Adlebys in turn resent the fact that the Goldenroots trust the Oakenheaths more and often put them in command of the Adlebys.

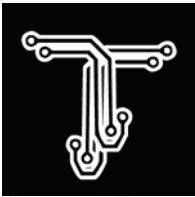
Tenderton: The Tendertons are the best and most dedicated genealogists amongst the Goldenroot vassals, and possibly in all of Pendragon. They are often consulted as scholars and experts in land disputes or in cases of disputed ownership or identity, and as such have a great deal of unobtrusive 'soft power' from the fact that no family would like to see their founding legends or origins disputed. They sometimes chafe at their scholarly role however and have an idealistic devotion to knightly ideals that sees them get along very well with Tintagen knights. They have the blonde hair and pale complexions of Tintagens so they may have more than merely sympathetic associations with the realm of courtly love.

Balesby: The Balesby are the foremost grain and wine merchants of the Goldenroot, and maintain a friendship with the Coalsbees as they use the Golden Rail to transport goods. They are also prominent members of the Merchants Guild and always support mercantile interests vigorously. They are noted for their good manners and hospitality, both of which they use to advance the interests of their family. They have a hidden ruthless streak however which comes out in their attitude towards criminals and those who disrupt trade, and have known to bribe or cajole others into acting with harsh measures to punish those who threaten their interests.

Deepvale: The Deepvales are a family of contradictions, a house of warriors who despise conflict and strategists who always work for conciliation and peace. Their attitude stems from the fact that they were ennobled during the Stonedweller Purge and were deeply shamed at following orders during that conflict that they found dishonourable. Since then they have tried to expunge the memory by secretly sponsoring Stonedweller tribes and interests, something which if more widely known would bring them into conflict with many other noble families. Their passivity is sometimes mistaken for cowardice, but anyone who knows the family becomes aware that they do in fact train continuously and are far more skilled warriors than their attitudes might suggest. They are particularly talented swordsmen (and women) but never engage in duels.

Cornford: The Cornfords founded their wealth on ransoming captured knights, and are known as efficient, cunning fighters who do not despise the use of tactics which others might consider dishonourable. They were founded by a rebel Lower Tintagen who was a former Captain of the Black Guard but defected from King Mark's territory when his financial corruption became too extreme even for that realm (he was due to be executed, not for the corruption, but for refusing to give Mark his cut). The Cornfords were already a minor family in place in Goldenroot lands, but the Captain (Sir Malagarde) used his illicit wealth to secure a marriage alliance with them and soon stamped his rule and personality on the family as a whole. They are noted for their fearlessness and internal unity, and remain phlegmatic and unconcerned in almost any situation. Due to these qualities they are often hired as experts or assistants by other families who require competent warriors who don't ask questions.

Appleford Vassals



he greatest tension within the Appleford vassals stems from the resentment of the Pikes, the former Baronial family who are now reluctant servants of the Applefords.

The Pikes continually seek to stir trouble amongst the other vassal families but have never been able to persuade any of them into open revolt. Most are making too much money (and having too much fun) serving the gregarious and cunning Applefords. Most Appleford vassal families are lovers of life, great hosts and entertainers with a dubious edge, and are often considered frivolous by other nobles, though without the decadence and corruption associated with the Hilhams.

Dedingham: The Dedinghams are the descendents of a troupe of actors sponsored by the Applefords to perform historical plays based on major events of Pen-dragon history, all of which coincidentally expressed the importance and inherent goodness of various Appleford ancestors. This form of entertainment became popular enough to tour other Baronies, allowing the troupe to spy on rival noble houses when invited to their homes and castles. The Dedinghams supplied so much useful information that they were eventually ennobled, but still own many theatres and have the loyalty of a large number of actors and theatre performers. They are noted for their mild manners and air of polite reserve, something which comes in handy when soothing artistic tempers. What is not known by anyone outside the family is that they are in fact a bastard branch of the Pikes, infiltrated into the Applefords service and still loyal to their hidden masters.

Appleford Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Dedingham	Black mask on grey	"All men wear masks"	Land grant from Applefords	Faultlessly loyal to the Pikes	Supported by a secret power	Tendency towards treachery	Restrained
Waterbridge	Black anchor on grey	"Master the wave"	Exploration	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to risk taking	Sailor
Halebury	Black fist on grey	"In the name of the King"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to the King	Good warriors	Bound by a strict family code	Imperial
Pike	Three black fish on grey above a black crown	"We do not kneel"	Ancient Land Grant from the King	Resentful of the Applefords	Good warriors	Hungry for glory	Rebellious
Brockdon	Grey deer on black	"Swift is our claim"	Adventuring	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Good schemers	Tendency to risk taking	Manic
Portsby	Blue and grey checks	"Better gold than blood"	Trade	Resentful of a Rival Family	Popular with merchants	Tendency to gambling	Gilded
Eagleton	Black two-headed eagle on grey	"Nothing is hidden"	Crime	Secret Relations	Supported by a secret power	Secret Enemy	Spy
Redwood	Red tree on grey	"Our faith alone"	Crime	Resentful of the Church	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Secret Enemy	Forest Lore
Bargesby	Reclining mermaid on grey	"In unity, strength"	Shipping	Faultlessly loyal to the Applefords	Exceptionally charismatic to the common people	Tendency to financial corruption	Charming
Pipseed	Grey octopus on black	"One hundred skills"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Respected by the Church	Tendency to doing the right thing	Humble

Waterbridge: The Waterbridges were founded by Alfred Waterbridge, a merchant sea captain who, after his ship was seized by pirates, was influential in forming a naval component of the Pendragon Legion. He is famed for having had all the pirates who captured him later hunted down and executed. The Waterbridges have since had several admirals in their family, and they tend to be extremely prominent in government affairs relating to military matters at sea. Their commercial ventures have however declined and the family has grown increasingly impoverished. In recent years they have begun looking for ways to restore their fortunes, and are said to be contemplating increasingly desperate measures. They are noted for their tall, lanky frames and cold blue eyes, and for an extremely loyal set of family retainers who are skilled swordsmen all descended from Alfred's original crew.

Halebury: The Haleburys are universally noted as one of the most fanatically loyal monarchist houses in all of Pendragon. They serve as the Applefords ambassadors to Camelot but are in fact far more interested in representing the interests of the King to the Applefords rather than the other way round. Their sycophancy towards the monarchy can cause them to be the subject of mockery, but they are also noted as stubborn warriors who still take active roles in the Pendragon Legion and in the forces serving in the realm of Castlekeep. They are strong advocates of extending Gawainite land into Stonedweller regions and are bullish in the belief that anything that extends royal authority should be condoned.

Pike: The Pikes are a constant thorn in the side of their liege lords, but one which the Applefords for some reason refuse to deal with. They obey even direct orders with obvious moody reluctance, and speak soft courtiers words with a heavy inflection of sarcasm. Once long ago, they ruled all the land that the Applefords now claim, and they refuse to forget the fact. They distinguish between their continued loyalty to the Crown and their constant attempts to undermine the Barons they purportedly serve, but their simmering resentment is likely to lead them towards outright treason before much longer.

Brockdon: The Brockdons are a rare example of a Pendragon noble family to have their origin in a realm ruled by the Morganites. The fifth Appleford Baron led a disastrous expedition to the realm of Mordred which proved extremely costly in men and materials, and was in fact captured and held by Morganite forces for three years. A Mordred criminal subject to ecstatic visions deemed blasphemous by the Morganite authorities assisted in his escape and return to Pendragon, whereupon he was rewarded with land and a title by the grateful Applefords. The family are said to still be prone to visions, and have a nervous energy typical of the paranoid natives of Mordred. They are slim and small of build, but dextrous and vicious fighters.



Portsbys: The Portsbys are the most successful merchant house loyal to the Applefords. Much of their success has come at the expense of the Waterbridges, whom they once served as bankers before making their own investments. Dark rumours circulate that they used their knowledge of the Waterbridges business in order to steal contracts and resources from them, and there is tension whenever the two families meet. The Portsbys resent this slur on their character and claim that if their advice had been followed more closely the Waterbridges would still be prospering. The family have responded to the frostiness of their fellow nobles by maintaining strong ties to the merchant and trading classes, and have founded a School of Commerce specifically for the sons of wealthy, non-noble merchants. They are noted for their dark, somewhat oily complexions and their heavy lidded eyes, and for the peculiarity that many of the members of the house are skilled gamblers.

Eagleton: The Eagletons are descended from a senior member of the Thieves Guild who led a trade delegation to the realm of Old Rom. The family made a great deal of money from trading Romish wines and exotic products like dates and olives, and still maintain contacts with the other realm. They combined this wealth with an offer to the Applefords to use their roguish skills on their behalf, an offer the Applefords accepted. They now serve as spies and information gatherers and brokers, but also are engaged in a running battle with a rival Thieves Guild faction who resent their refusal to continue to pay a tithe of their earnings to the Guild. Secretly, the family are advised by a Romish Senator, an ancient creature who no doubt plans to use the family in some scheme of his own.

Redwood: The Redwoods were once bandits driven to the extremes of a criminal existence by the depredations of a former Bishop who seized their land on fabricated charges of heresy. Ironically, his action turned the family to the very crime of which they were accused. Whilst living as bandits they turned to the Old Way and began worshipping the Druidim, which combined with their growing familiarity with the wild made them formidable fighters in the woods they had retreated to. The Applefords, recognising these skills and the futility of sending men into the woods to hunt them, offered them nobility in exchange for acting as custodians of all the wilderness regions in the Barony, there to make sure that no trouble was brewing, to hunt and return fugitives, and to trade and negotiate with any Stonedweller groups remaining in these regions. These duties are ones the family has fulfilled very well ever since.

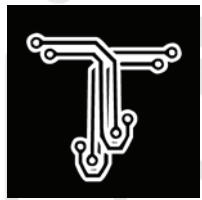
Bargesby: The Bargesbys are river traders, ferrymen and boat builders with ties to the River Folk Stonedwellers. They retain the somewhat larcenous attitudes of most River Folk but also benefit from their charm and gregariousness. Bargesby make friends often and easily, particularly with common folk who appreciate their ribald humour and boisterous ways. They were raised to nobility almost by accident after one of their number saved a beloved Appleford heir from drowning. Not having expected such a generous response, they have felt deep gratitude to the Applefords ever since, and act as go-betweens with commoners on their behalf, constantly defusing tensions, fostering compromise, and mitigating the excesses of some other noble houses. They so sometimes slip however and engage in smuggling or similar activities, usually to acquire funds which they then distribute to the poor.



Pipseed: The Pipseeds are a pious family who serve as chaplains, monks, and spiritual advisors to most of the other Appleford vassal families, and as confessors and personal priests to the Appleford Barons. They are known for their quiet humility and their refusal to engage in noble politics, offering their services to all houses alike and never breaking a confidence shared with them, no matter its source. They are primarily concerned though with the interests of the common people, running many charitable organisations and almshouses as well as speaking on behalf of the peasantry in any issue or debate that affects them. All of the family dress in plain, monkish robes and practice ascetic restraint, sometimes to the point of emaciation.



Hilham Vassals



he Hilhams, dubbed ‘the lords of song and shadow’ (by themselves), like to collect vassal families which reflect their own interests. Each of these families is famed for some kind of vice or alleged perversity, although most are also possessed of charisma and an indefatigable sense of their own worth. They are perhaps the minor houses most frequently found in the courts of other Baronial houses, as they are constantly visiting others in order to create, spread, or respond to some notorious scandal.

Gallows: The Gallows are the elite personal servants and advisors of the Hilhams, and no Hilham is ever found without a Gallow by his side. They act as pages, squires, bodyguards and major-domos, and often fulfil roles similar to that of a butler or valet. They are quiet reserved and efficient, and easy to overlook as they tend to keep to the background. They are however intense and sometimes frighteningly competent. The family was formed during a dark pact enacted by the Hilhams at the time of the War of Hidden Faces, and the first of their number were in fact Barbed Knights who were granted amnesty, protection and false identities by the Hilhams in return for their service. The official story is that they are a bastard branch of the Hilhams. In reality they retain the skills they had as Barbed Knights, and act as secret enforcers and assassins for their masters.

Hilham Vassal Table

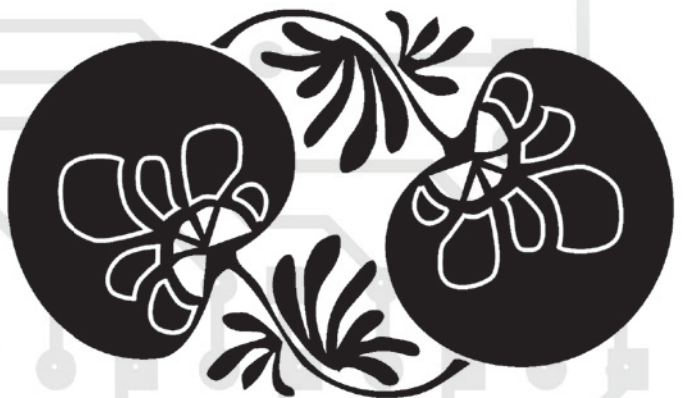
House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Gallows	White gallows on black	“Duty before all else”	Crime	Faultlessly loyal to the Hilhams	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to risk taking	Assassin
Silver	Three silver waves on black	“Defy all odds”	Dungeon Clearing	Resentful of the Church	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to risk taking	Tomb Robber
Lean	Black and white checks	“Make all deeds count”	Adventuring	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Tendency to doing the right thing	Dextrous
Nevermore	Raven on white	“Guard from harm”	Land grant from the Hilhams	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Addicted
Alansby	Three red butterflies on yellow	“Accept no insult”	Trade	Resentful of the Hilhams	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to financial corruption	Gilded
Queensbourne	Broken black crown on yellow	“We master adversity”	Land grant from the King	Resentful of the King	Good warriors	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Depraved
Candleby	Yellow candle on black	“We light the dark”	Land grant from the Hilhams	Secret relations	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency to foolish love affairs	Handsome/ Beautiful
Edgarton	White rose on yellow	“Beloved of fate”	Land grant from the Hilhams	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Good schemers	Tendency to treachery	Seductive
Winsby	Gold harp on black	“Truth is our song”	Land grant from the Hilhams	Resentful of a rival family	Exceptionally charismatic to the common people	Tendency to risk taking	Bard
Ravenroost	Two ravens on yellow	“Reflect and rule”	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to the common people	Supported by a secret power	Bound by a strict family code	Wise

Silver: The Silvers are descended from Antionette Silver, one of the most famous founding members of the Tomb Robbers Guild. Antionette built up a massive fortune after discovering several caches of First Empire relics on Arthur's Grave, and her family had seized lands in that realm until they were ousted by the monks who built Gravewatch Cathedral. The family still add to their fortune via strong ties to the Tomb Robbers Guild and the Dungeoneers Guild, and it is common for younger family members to still engage in adventuring pursuits. They resent the efforts of both the Seraphic Church and the Mages Guild to restrict such activities, and are noted for their casual blasphemies and flouting of religious observances. Their great wealth has thus far shielded them from accusations of heresy, but without the continued support of the Hilhams it is likely that they would be destroyed by the Church they so frequently offend. Men and women of the family decorate their bodies with protective mystic tattoos, a practice uncommon enough to make them instantly recognisable.

Lean: The Leans, like the Silvers, have their origins in an adventuring group, although one with a more exotic heritage. They were originally a family of exiles from Lower Tintagel, with ties to the Tyrant of Tintagel ousted by King Mark. Having experienced a violent overthrow of their fortunes, the family have responded by making their new home, Lean Hall, one of best defended castles on Pendragon. The house is said to be riddled with secret passages and traps known only to the family, and to possess stored supplies able to outlast any siege. They are determined never to lose their land again. This means that they are also faultlessly correct in their behaviour, with many working directly for the Hilhams or serving in the Pendragon Legion. The Hilhams use them in negotiations with the Crown since their reputation for law abiding ways tends to mitigate the Hilhams own darker notoriety. The family are also renowned for the olive-skinned beauty of their raven haired women, although Lean men are extremely protective of the honour of their sisters and cousins.

Nevermore: The Nevermores are a family who attract rumour and dark suspicion regarding all that they do, but who seem utterly unconcerned with any scandal that attaches to their name. They spend most of their time in seclusion and seem to cultivate an air of mystery that makes them remarkably attractive to other nobles. Despite their reclusive nature they maintain correspondence with many other families and the fact that they are the custodians of the Hilhams zeppelin means that they can receive news of far places or travel to them more swiftly than most. They also control large vineyards and sell some of the most expensive wines produced in the realm of Pendragon. The family derive directly from a second son of the Hilhams who married a lady in waiting who served the notorious Queen Isabella. They are noted for their weak constitution and tendency to die young.

Alansby: The Alansbys are the premier merchants of the Hilhams Barony, and come from common peasant stock, an origin detectable in their blunt, square features which contrast strongly with the delicate looks common to the Hilhams. They are noted for their bullish, pragmatic nature and their skill in all manner of business ventures, concentrating on general goods and foodstuffs rather than luxury items. Alansby cloth is worn by peasants in every Barony, and like its makers is noted for its roughness and durability. They resent their lieges as effete and useless, and secretly sponsor democratic and protest movements not only in their own Barony but elsewhere as well.



Queensbourne: The Queensbournes are descended from a Hilham beauty who was the abandoned mistress of Gawain VII. The family claim that the two were in fact married, and that the marriage was covered up for political expedience when the King wished to make a more advantageous match. It is certainly true that Gawain VII gave Lady Igraine Hilham a substantial grant of land and never punished anyone for using her nickname 'The Hidden Queen'. The family have produced several minor knights and military commanders, but are primarily renowned for their bards and involvement with the Bards College established by Gawain VII and the Hilhams. The current Chancellor of that institution, and several of the tutors, are Queensbournes.

Candleby: Many of the Hilhams vassal families are known for their charisma, but the Candlebys have a frail beauty that is all their own. They are noted for their deep green eyes and pale, almost white hair, which both the men and women of the family wear long and with multiple braids decorated with silver charms. The founder of the family was one Edgar Hilham, the seventh child of the seventh Baron Hilham, who was said to have dabbled in the occult arts. Edgar's mother was unknown and he himself died in mysterious circumstances. The Candlebys are, unknown to anyone save themselves, descended in part from a Seelie witch. They stay in contact with some of their 'cousins' and are secretly followers of the Druidim.

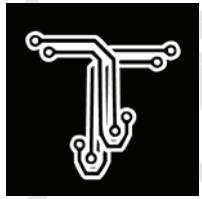
Edgarton: The Edgartons are consummate politicians and seekers of selfish advancement, although they maintain a public aura of pained innocence and serve as the chief apologists, priests and diplomats of the Hilhams. They are noted both for their sophistry and their eloquence and are able to find some moral or religious explanation for almost any act. They use the Seraphic Church as a means of expanding their power and influence, and subtly act against any attempt to remove nepotism or corruption from it. They are also noted collectors and custodians of religious artworks and are often placed in charge of building projects by the Hilhams or by the Seraphic Church.

Winsby: The Winsbys are descended from the first winner of the annual Bard's Battle held at the Bard's College. Beautiful singing voices are common in the family, and they maintain an interest in the college, although rarely as tutors, preferring instead to sponsor individual bards and act as patrons of the art. They are popular with the common people as they are known for funding spectacular entertainments, particularly tourneys from which they derive a regular profit. Their home, Summer-song Keep, hosts the first tourney of every year. The revenue from this event alone is equivalent to the income from a major estate. They are generally popular with other nobles too, although they have a prickly relationship with the Alansbys, whom they look down upon as 'unartistic' and 'dull'.

Ravenroost: The Ravenroosts are the descendants of a Hilham bard who married into a Tintagen noble family. They have dual holdings both in the realm of Upper Tintagel and in Pendragon, and have a steady if not spectacular income from the trade of luxury Tintagen items and exotic goods. As a family with a military background they often serve as guards and escorts for the Hilhams, although unlike other Hilham vassal families they dislike any dishonourable tasks and are thus used sparingly. They tend to be the advocates of sensible policies of benefit to the lower orders, and are easily the most respectable and sensible family serving the Hilhams. It is however an open secret that they act as the eyes and ears of Prince Tristram of Upper Tintagel and that this monarch provides them with more support than the Hilhams do.



Screeford Vassals



he Screefords are, like the very different Ebbsfords with whom they get along well, an unpretentious lot. This is reflected in the largely informal ties of friendship that exist between the patron Screefords and their vassal houses. Screeford vassals are noted for their independence and adventuring ways. They are often the most well-travelled of the minor houses, and the most likely to have ties to disreputable but influential groups like the Dungeoneer's Guild. Oddly, they combine this with strong ties to the Seraphic Church. An unusually large number of abbeys and monasteries are found within the lands of these vassals, and donations towards them from Screeford vassals are always generous.

Saltsby: The Saltsbys are of Romish descent, descended from Arrius Santinus, a Romish Black Fleet pirate who somehow managed to get to Pendragon during the reign of Gawain VIII. Given the financial crisis of that era, the injection of funds brought by the pirate with him proved extremely effective in establishing a new base and some respectability. The family still show obvious Romish features, being short ad olive-skinned with straight black hair. The men of the family shave their hair short in the Romish military style. They are also known as calm and efficient administrators with a genuine concern for practical improvements in the lot of the lower classes. The family hope to persuade other nobles and commoners to join them in a crusade to bring Old Rom within the Gawainite fold, but the huge logistical problems of such a campaign make it an unlikely prospect.

Screeford Vassal Table

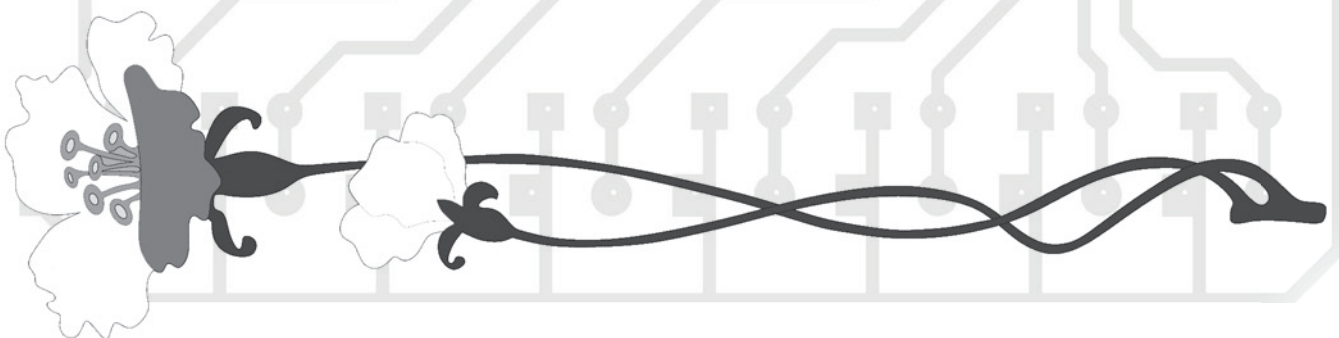
House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Saltsby	White Shark on green	"Defy all provocations"	Crime	Faultlessly loyal to common people	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to risk taking	Pirate
Elvesby	Green bowman on blue	"Loyalty above everything"	Exploration	Faultlessly loyal to the Screefords	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Hungry for glory	Scout
Coralton	White jester's cap on green	"Laugh at misfortune"	Land grant from the Screefords	Resentful of the Crown	Supported by a secret power	Tendency to risk taking	Dagonet
Ramston	Black ram on green	"Summon your strength"	Dungeon Clearing	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Good warriors	Hungry for glory	Dungeoneer
Ironbourne	Silver Boar on Green	"Judged by the sword alone"	Battlefield Promotion	Faultlessly loyal to the Screefords	Good warriors	Tendency towards treachery	Fighter
Blessingham	Crossed gold trumpets on green	"Ascend by virtue"	Ties to the Church	Faultlessly loyal to the Church	Respected by the Church	Hungry for glory	Seraphic Churchgoer
Bowsby	Black hawk on green	"Swift, strong, steadfast"	Battlefield promotion	Faultlessly loyal to the Land	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Tendency towards gambling	Archer
Badgel	Snarling badger on green	"Stout heart will show"	Land grant from the Screefords	Resentful of criminals	Good warriors	Tendency to boastfulness	Short
Goldson	Golden stag on green	"Grace in adversity"	Land grant from the Screefords	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Advisors to the King	Tendency to financial corruption	House Knight
Shale	Silver woman on green	"Always humble, never weak"	Ties to the Church	Secret Cultists	Respected by the Church	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Monk

Elvesby: The Elvesbys are descended from Edward the Changeling, an infant mysteriously adopted by a childless Screeford matron. Edward was known as a strange and almost feral child, but one who displayed an intense loyalty to his adopted family. Rumours persist that the family may have Seelie blood, but even the family themselves are unaware if there is any truth to the rumours. They make excellent scouts and trackers and are often employed in this capacity by the Screefords, patrolling Screeford woodlands and leading hunting parties as grooms, guards and dog handlers. They are known for their skill in training hunting dogs and breed a unique and popular canine, the Elvesby Hound, known for its high intelligence and snow white fur.

Coralton: The Coraltons are one of the oldest families in the realm of Pendragon, and also one of the very few with the temerity to claim direct descent from one of the Ascended. Legendary and unverified family records recount that the family is of the direct biological line of Dagonet, King Arthur's court jester. The family were at one stage far more powerful than they are today, but made the mistake of mocking Gawain XII during the Trade of Shame. Several Coraltons were tortured and killed, and the family was stripped of a great deal of their land and wealth. One, however, Hereward Coralton, was married to a wealthy Screeford who paid considerable bribes to preserve the line. The family have agitated for the return of this money from subsequent monarchs, but none have acknowledged the debt. Secretly, they have managed to establish tenuous contact with Dagonet himself, who is amused by their genuine belief that he fathered their line and has, in a way, adopted them as special representatives. Increasingly, the families inner workings are dominated by the trappings of an ancestral cult.

Ramston: The Ramstons were originally shepherds, but developed martial skills in defending their flocks from both thieves and predators. They still maintain extensive farming interests, particularly as sheep farmers, and Ramston wool is noted as a fine quality black wool popular throughout Pendragon. The family themselves are noted for dark eyes, high foreheads and curly hair, with the men often being bearded. They act as soldiers and adventurers, specialising in dungeon clearing on behalf of the Screefords. They are superstitious and taciturn, but warm quickly to anyone who displays a lack of pretension and practical skills. The family itself is strongly united, and keen to see individual members excel. If any of them display promise or ability, they are sure to be supported by the rest.

Ironbourne: The Ironbournes are miners who own a single but extremely productive iron mine and have ties to a number of weapons and armour merchants. They also have several members of the family in influential positions within the Blacksmiths Guild. They are known for their ruthlessness and double dealing in trade, an occupation in which they believe that the rules of honourable behaviour are suspended. Despite this, they are loyal to the Screefords and supply strong and competent warriors to man Screeford castles and keeps. They have large, blunt hands and narrow, grey eyes.



Blessingham: The Blessinghams regard themselves as having a special and unique connection to the Ascended, based on an obscure prophecy dating from the reign of Gawain VI which many believe to have been faked by the founder of the line (the family themselves are, however, fervent and sincere believers that it is genuine). The prophecy states that a 'Blessed General' will arise from the family and lead Gawainite forces to a final victory over the Morganites. Great debate occurs within the family however as to the nature of this triumph, whether it is purely military or based on conversion and miracles. The family act as chaplains and priests to the Screefords, who tolerate them for the religious prestige this confers whilst privately regarding them with some suspicion as fanatics.

Bowsby: The Bowsbys are consummate archers and masters of the longbow, with every member of the House training in bowmanship from childhood on. This has made them militarily strong but has also been mocked for its physical effect—even the women of the family are powerfully built with massive arm and shoulder muscles. Few dare to raise this mockery to their faces, however, since their ancestral seat, Hawk Hill, is bedecked with the captured flags and banners of those who did. The family love hunting and are also skilled at training hawks and birds of prey, many of which they can sell at a great price to other nobles. They have never been rich, however, since they engage in gambling at every opportunity.

Badgel: The Badgels are an offshoot of the Saltsbys but have a strained relationship with their relatives. This is based on the fate of Ceridwen Saltsby, who was abducted by a criminal gang who intended to obtain a large ransom for her. The Saltsbys paid and the lady was returned, but she had been the victim of an assault that left her pregnant. Most of the family elected to cover up this shame, but one brother gave her land and assistance. The Badgels are descended from Ceridwen, but retain a resentment at her treatment by criminals and her own family. They often serve as inquisitors, members of the Legion, or as lawyers, always looking for roles in which they can punish wrongdoers and restore their family honour. They boast of their good deeds as a means of challenging others to question them, and have a secret code by which they mark the houses of criminals and the nature of their crimes.

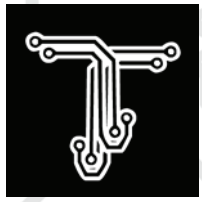
Goldson: The Goldsons, like the Ironbournes, are miners, but far wealthier as they possess several working gold mines. They disdain the source of their own wealth and employ managers to run the mines for them, but keep a careful eye on any employee and savagely punish anyone who seeks to steal from them. They are known for the lavish spending and gold cloaks, and are the Screefords principal representatives at the court in Camelot. They are skilled courtiers and are known for their smooth flatteries and charm, especially towards those they happen to be scheming against.



Shale: The Shales are the archivists, historians and scholars of the Screeford Barony, and control the Shale Record, one of the most popular news pamphlets throughout Pendragon. They run a primitive printing press somewhat inaccurately copied from a First Empire machine, and employ hundreds of writers who travel the land finding stories and items of interest. This effectively gives them access to an informal spying network, allowing the family to act as information brokers as well as self propagandists. Despite this hidden power, they pretend to a humility they do not in fact feel, and present themselves as pious monks when in reality their homes are stocked with expensive luxuries of every kind. Physically they tend to be wiry and lean, with sharp noses and bright green eyes.



Dalesham Vassals



he Daleshams have an unusual policy with regards to the founders of their vassal families. Whilst some are the product of younger sons of a Baron forming their own

House, just as many come from disposed, disgraced or exiled knights from other Houses. The Daleshams are referred to by their vassals as ‘the redeemers’ because of this policy of second chances. They do this because they fear a taint of madness in their own bloodline, although this has only manifested once in their entire history. All of the vassal families compete to show that they are truly reformed and asceticism is as common for these vassals as it is for their patrons.

Northdown: The Northdowns are descended from Sir Balan North, a knight who dabbled in sorcery and was an apprentice to Gawain XV. Balan was expelled from the Wizards Guild after refusing to share details of Gawain XV’s research, but the family have maintained an interest in the occult and First Empire magic despite the disapproval of the Guild. Their disagreement with the Guild has made them somewhat paranoid and overly cautious, and they are reluctant to become involved in any military endeavours. The Daleshams respect this family trait however and content themselves with requesting scholarly advice rather than armed service from the Northdowns. The family have ties to the Dust Cabal as several have adventured in the realm of Avalon. They are noted for their methodical and cautious approach to exploration, but have a habit of surviving against the odds due to their diligent preparations.

Dalesham Vassal Table

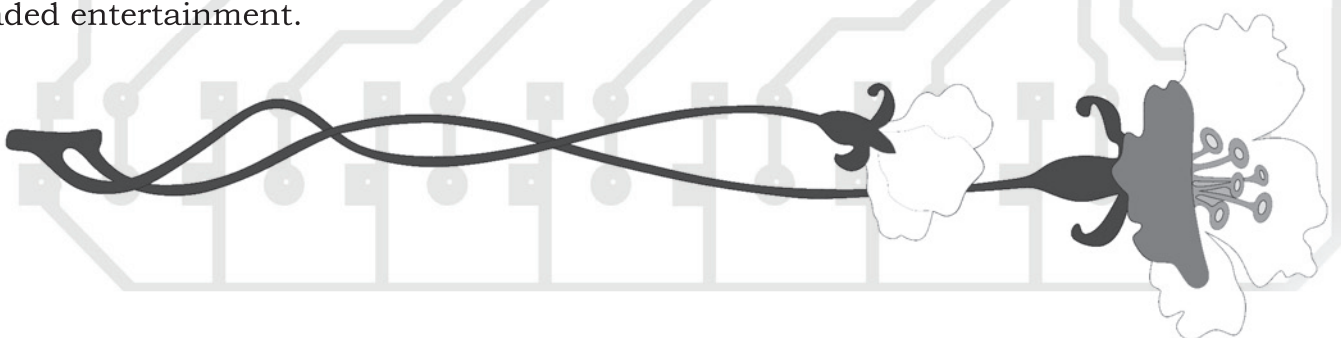
House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Northdown	Grey basilisk on blue	“Prudence and honour”	Adventuring	Resentful of Mages	Good sages	Tendency to cowardice	Non-Guild Wizard
Stenton	Green crocodile on blue	“We will be heard”	Land grant from the King	Resentful of a Rival family	Good warriors	Tendency to risk taking	Argumentative
Westdown	Red snake on blue	“Perception requires patience”	Land grant from the Daleshams	Resentful of the Daleshams	Good schemers	Tendency to risk taking	Apathetic
Lannerton	Two black keys on blue	“Hold to the faithful”	Ties to the Church	Faultlessly loyal to the Church	Respected by the Church	Tendency to boastfulness	Fanatical
Burrel	White winged serpent on blue	“Yield to nothing but desire”	Land grant from the Daleshams	Faultlessly loyal to the Daleshams	Exceptionally well-defended castle	Tendency to risk taking	Lecherous
Pale	White dog on blue	“None more noble”	Land grant from the Daleshams	Resentful of Stonedwellers	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Tendency to financial corruption	Dog Folk
Pine	Three green pine trees on blue	“Sure as stone”	Land grant from the Daleshams	Faultlessly loyal to the Daleshams	Supported by a secret power	Tendency to gambling	Mountain Folk
Gale	White skull on blue	“We do not break”	Battlefield promotion	Secret Trad-ers	Popular with merchants	Tendency to treachery	Military
Dunworth	Black Goat on blue	“Craft and courage”	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to the Daleshams	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Tendency to doing the right thing	Good
Willow	White willow tree on blue	“Accept no empires”	A powerful artefact	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Supported by a secret power	Bound by a strict family code	Sleeper

Stenton: The Stentons are an unpopular and belligerent House who are famed for their rude and confrontational manner. They were originally part of the Westdown family, each current noble House being descended from Alfred and Arthur Westdown, twin brothers who fought in the realm of Castlekeep on behalf of the Crown. Alfred Westdown, the younger brother, was captured and held prisoner by the Morganites for three years before his brother, Arthur, agreed to pay the ransom demanded. The delay embittered Alfred and on his release he used the grant of land given to him by the King to found a new, rival House. The Stentons today make it very clear that they retain a grudge against their relatives, and interaction between them and the Westdowns is always tense. What cannot be denied however is that they are gifted warriors, with an uncanny gift for quickly assessing the strengths and weaknesses of an opponent. It is for this reason that the Daleshams continue to tolerate them.

Westdown: When the monarch acknowledged the formation of a new House under the Stentons, the Westdowns appealed to their feudal masters expecting them to intervene in order to reverse the decision. Not wishing to antagonise the Crown, the Daleshams made only token efforts to do so, a lack of enthusiasm that was noted by their vassals. The Westdowns have always considered this a betrayal, and have resented their Barons ever since. They take every opportunity to signal their disdain by performing any assigned duties in a shoddy manner and by interacting as little as possible with their masters. They have been doing this for so long that a sort of cynical malaise has taken hold of the family, and most fritter away their time in apathy and self-indulgence. Despite this lifestyle, they make good courtiers and schemers, engaging in deception not out of any great desire for gain, but merely as a jaded entertainment.

Lannerton: The Lannertons are the chaplains and spiritual advisors of the Daleshams, descended from Leonora Dalesham, the sister of the Dalesham Baron who died during the outbreak of the Burning King. Leonora was permanently psychologically scarred by this experience, and became a fanatical mystic after turning to the Seraphic Church for comfort. The family follow an extremely harsh version of the Seraphic faith which they term the Burnt Path and are known to indulge in strange practices such as fire walking and burning themselves with heated religious icons as a mark of their devotion. This fanaticism might cause suspicion were it not for the regular and excessive tithes the family pay to the Church, so much so that their ancestral seat, Lannerton Palace, is in a state of crumbling disrepair.

Burrel: The Burrels are the stewards and chamberlains of the Daleshams, and often officiate at receptions and functions in place of their masters. They are extremely competent managers and faultlessly loyal, which causes the Daleshams to overlook their known flaws. There is a tendency towards lechery in the family, and several Burrels have been forced to fight duels or been arrested by the Legion after exploiting their influence to sate their desires. It is a rare Burrel who does not have a host of illegitimate children amongst the peasantry, but they will offer no special status or support to such children unless they show themselves to be especially competent and daring. Physically the mark of their ancestry is easily detectable, as the Burrels all have a distinctive widows peak and midnight black hair. They also tend towards a swarthy complexion.



Pale: The Pales are a rare example of a Dog Folk family who have been successful enough to fully integrate amongst the noble families of Pendragon. They are descended from a warrior called Ghost Knife who was a half-breed product of a forced union between a kidnapped Dalesham maiden and a reckless Dog Folk brave called Hand of Stone. Ghost Knife was raised among his father's tribe during his childhood but secretly taught by his mother to hate his father and all Stonedwellers, awaiting the perfect opportunity to kill his father and return his mother to her people. Ghost Knife took the Pendragon name Gawain and, despite having a Stonedweller bride, taught his children to share his distaste for the Stonewellers. The Pales make excellent scouts and rangers but also make it clear where their loyalties lie. They often serve in the Pendragon Legion.

Pine: The Pines are a poor but resilient House whose lands consist mainly of forested mountainsides on the borders of Mountain Folk territory. They have flat faces and golden eyes, and are rarely seen in metropolitan centres except when working on the Daleshams zeppelin, which they protect at their mountain retreat Blackpine Keep. The Daleshams use Blackpine as a summer retreat before the tourney season, and this indicates the trust and friendship that exists between the two families. The Pines love gambling and drinking and make a whisky called Pine Brew which is noted for its strength and smooth taste. They seem unconcerned with their lack of wealth and are known for their genial hospitality, but are also doughty fighters when truly offended. The family also secretly maintain contact with a group of Mountain Folk shamans known as the Dwellers on High, who are said to be followers of Hold Nikar and to possess secret but powerful defensive magic.

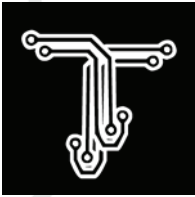
Gale: The Gales were originally pledged to the service of Queen Isabella. In a famous incident during the battles of Gawain XIV to recapture Pendragon from Morganite forces the Gales switched sides twice, eventually playing a pivotal role in securing victory for Gawain XIV, despite the fact that the Morganites held Prenderghast Gale, Lord Gale's eldest son and heir, hostage. Lord Gale's laconic reply when told his son would be killed was 'I have other sons'. This ruthless pragmatism is a family trait and continues in the line today. The Gales are noted for their cold assessment of where their best interests lie and their utter lack of sentimentality. They are proud of the fact though that they have never had their shield line broken, nor been scattered by opposing forces on the battlefield. They have a strong military tradition and are noted for the gruesome and archaic habit of collecting the skulls of defeated enemies. They also see nothing dishonourable in looting battlefields and have several members within the Twilight Knights in the realm of Castlekeep and an interest in the black market of goods to and from that disputed realm.

Dunworth: The Dunworths are the leading merchants of the Dalesham vassals, specialising in manufactured goods. They have trading shops set up throughout the Barony and even in other major urban centres. Their goods are expensive but noted for their quality and reliability. The Dunworths themselves are conservative and placid, but know for their honest dealing and respect for the rule of law. They seek out leading and particularly skilled craftsmen in all fields and offer the best a place in the family. They are generous employers and their skilled staff are extremely loyal to them, but they often have to hire guardsmen or soldiers as military pursuits are unpopular in the family and considered boorish.

Willow: The Willows are a mysterious family whose origins remain obscure and who seem to have no interest in enlightening others concerning their background. Several generations ago a red haired woman with an exotic accent asked for a private audience with the then Baron Dalesham. Immediately after this the woman was hastily married to the Baron's third son, thus founding the Willow line. The family are still noted for their red hair and their reclusive, secretive ways, but have on several occasions also been granted private audiences with the Daleshams and clearly remain in their favour. They are experts on First Empire history and provide scholarly advice on topics such as the proper care and maintenance of relics, a service which many other noble Houses require.



Dantesham Vassals



he 'house of the witchhunters' gathers vassals that share their love of knowledge, their deep faith, and their hatred of magic in all its forms. The minor houses tend to gravitate towards roles which will be of use to their patrons, particularly as lawyers, judges, clerks and clerics, whilst seeking to uncover Nephilic threats. Those who live in the more obscure backwaters of the Barony specialise in more practical but equally useful skills, such as tracking and wilderness lore. The Newgates have perhaps the most unusual speciality of all, in that they act as jailors noted for their incorruptibility.

Mistley: The Mistleys are precise, eloquent, courteous and completely ruthless in their pursuit of those they consider to be enemies of Pendragon. The majority do not however use violent means to achieve their ends, they are one of the least military houses to be found throughout Pendragon. Experts in the law, they are highly skilled in finding ways to punish and imprison those they suspect of being agents of the Nephilim. A weakness of the family which is often not acknowledged however lies in the habit some members of the House have of seeking release from the boredom and intensity of the family through frequently disastrous love affairs.

Dantesham Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Mistley	Gold sun rising on green	"Our honour shines"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Tendency towards foolish love affairs	Lawyer
Hexingham	Three silver conch shells on green	"True to our own"	A powerful artefact	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Bound by a strict family code	Wisewoman
Hawthorne	Gold acorn on green	"Dignity, nobility, veracity"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to the Danteshams	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Dignified
Berwick	White unicorn on green	"We pierce the shadows"	Land grant from the Danteshams	Resentful of Stonedwellers	Good sages	Hungry for glory	Pure
Marsdale	White spider-web on green	"Spinners of fate"	Crime	Resentful of the Danteshams	Good schemers	Tendency to cowardice	Restrained
Bryn	White weasel on green	"Strike and seize"	Battlefield promotion	Faultlessly loyal to the Danteshams	Good warriors	Secret Enemy	Fast
Grey	Red fox on green	"Let none bar commerce"	Trade	Resentful of criminals	Exceptionally wealthy	Hungry for glory	Merchant
Newgate	Black chain on green	"Chained by duty"	Land grant from the Danteshams	Faultlessly loyal to the Danteshams	Good warriors	Tendency to spiritual corruption	Jailor
Falsby	Three white stars on green	"As the stars will"	Ties to the Church	Faultlessly loyal to the Church	Respected by the Church	Tendency to gambling	Priest
Covenham	Black dragon on green	"The first family"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to own family	Exceptionally wealthy	Tendency to treachery	Misanthrope

Hexingham: The Hexinghams are a matriarchal family dominated by the Dowager Lady Margaret Hexingham, who has ruled the family with an iron fist for over fifty years. Lady Margaret has had five husbands, all of whom have died in mysterious circumstances. Her sons and daughters dare not defy any command from her, and in fact compete to be the most dutiful towards her. They seem united by an intense family loyalty, so much so that they seem even to dress in an identical manner (sober black suits for the men and white dresses for the women). The family are the secret guardians of Pellahan's Shell, a device which is said to communicate directly with the Fisher King. The Fisher King sometimes offers the family advice or healing at urgent moments vital to the fortunes of the House.

Hawthorne: The Hawthornes are the Danteshams representatives at the court of Camelot, and are perhaps the only Dantesham vassals with the politeness and restraint necessary to make good courtiers. They are very much an old money family, with their wealth originally deriving from supporting Gawain III during the Brother's War and enhanced by shipping interests in the reign of Gawain X. They are noted for their exquisite manners and air of calm authority, and usually support moderate and reasonable actions sometimes in contrast to their more fanatical fellow vassals. Despite this they are popular with other nobles as they make a habit of being useful and charming towards anyone whose power equals or exceeds their own. Secretly, however, they are rather cynical about the Seraphic faith, using a fake piety to advance themselves rather than truly believing in the Ascended.

Berwick: The Berwicks are the direct descendents of Simon Theophrastus Bellinus, a Romish scholar who was part of the first delegation to travel from Old Rom to Deepwell after the Door had been discovered. Scholarship runs deep in the blood of the family and they are noted authorities in a range of subjects, many engaging in lifelong studies funded by the Danteshams in return for first access to any resulting discoveries. They retain a Romish distaste for Stonedwellers and specialise in investigating Druidim heresies as well as Nephilim ones. They closely research the bloodlines of anyone who enters the family and will not tolerate any trace of Stonedweller ancestry. A curious feature of the family is that they are prone to nightmares featuring visions of a slaughtered unicorn, but none have thus far discerned whether there is any prophetic meaning to this.

Marsdale: The Marsdales are a family of highly skilled glassmakers who perfected the techniques necessary to recreate telescopes and spyglasses. They established a glass making factory and produce sculptures and windows that only the very wealthy can afford, whilst also using their skills to increase their ability to spy on suspects on behalf of the Danteshams. Few people know however that before they worked as glassmakers they were early members of the Thieves Guild and, whilst long since inactive in that regard, still maintain cordial relations with the leadership of the Guild. They are however a family that plans for the extremely long term and the nature of those plans remains obscure, even to their own junior members.



Bryn: The Bryns act as bodyguards and enforcers for the Danteshams and it is common practice for every Dantesham to be accompanied by at least three Bryns. The family train specifically in techniques that protect their charges from attack, and they are very good at their job. They seem to be naturally blessed with great speed and swift reactions, and they also make deadly duellists and will champion the Danteshams if any challenge is issued to them. They are partially descended from River Folk however and are therefore distrusted and opposed by the Berwicks. Both men and women of the family wear their hair long and braided and favour light armour that does not restrict their movements. They also favour the use of two swords or two half-sized spears in combat, a style which seems exotic and strange to many.

Grey: The Greys are the second wealthiest vassal family pledged to the Danteshams, and act as the bankers and investors of the Barony. They have a permanent seat on the board of the Barboli Bank and small, discreet bank branches in several cities. They also invest in other businesses, usually as silent partners drawing a considerable return on their investments. Whilst they are very good at these means of generating wealth, they also crave the pride that comes from military success, and therefore enthusiastically enter the tourneys and volunteer for duty in the realm of Castlekeep. They also have contacts in the Fighters Guild and individual members have worked for the organisation in the past, though usually under assumed identities.

Newgate: The Newgates are jailors and guardians. They oversee prisons for the Danteshams, particularly the notorious Silent Hall in which those suspected of unlicensed witchcraft and other magics are contained. They also serve the same role on behalf of the Pendragon Legion and other noble families, often being called in to supervise the restraint or transportation of particularly difficult prisoners. They further act as executioners when called upon to do so. They are competent warriors but trained primarily to subdue rather than kill (specialising with nets, mancatchers and coshes). Whilst extremely loyal to the Danteshams they have been known to become obsessed with Barbatos, Mordred and Lucifer, the Nephilim most associated with imprisonment and punishment. They tend to an extremely stocky build, and shave their heads completely bald.

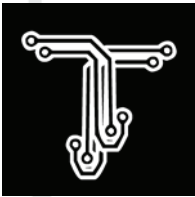
Falsby: The Falsby family are descended from a monk who assassinated a former Baron Sweetwater after insisting that his victim was possessed by the spirit of a Nephilim. The monk was spirited out of his cell by the Newgates on the orders of the Danteshams and replaced with a double, who was duly executed by the Sweetwaters. The monk's descendants are aware of this secret family history but for obvious reasons do not share it with outsiders. The Falsbys have strong connections with the monks of Arthur's Grave and own an island in that marshy realm as well as having several family members based at Gravewatch Cathedral. The family have a fatalistic, mystical attitude and are continually looking for signs telling them the will of the Seraphim. They have some income from sinecures granted by the Church and from a minor trade in goods from Arthur's Grave.



Covenham: The Covenhams claim to be the family with the longest history of all the noble Houses of Pendragon, tracing their ancestry back to the Days of Gedd. Dragon's Nest, the Covenham family Keep, is without doubt the oldest surviving stone structure on Pendragon, and was ancient even when the Gawainite monarchy was formed. The family have played the game of politics and power for so long that they no longer feel the need to hide their disdain for the other players and, indeed, for the whole human species. The family is large and extremely long-lived, it is rare to see a Covenham outside the Keep under the age of fifty winters and even these are referred to as 'youngsters' by the leaders of the family. It is age which confers respect amongst the Covenhams, and this applies to people, institutions and forms of behaviour in equal measure. The leader of the house is always referred to as either The Old Man or The Old Woman, the current incumbent, Lord Nestor Covenham, is 113 years old and barely able to feed himself, although his mind is still sharp and cruel and his control of the family unchallenged.



Tidesford Vassals



he vassals of the Tidesfords are poor but proud, owning lands that are often wild and uncultivated but deeply loved by the families associated with them. They are considered barely civilised by more metropolitan houses, but they are unconcerned by that and by the disapproval shown by many for their ties to the Old Ways of the Druidim. Many of them go so far as to have a totemic relationship with a particular animal that the house believes embodies qualities that they admire. They have a fierce loyalty to each other and to their patrons.

Mardell: The Mardells are an ambitious family on the make, whose poor lands cannot sustain the cost of their desires. They know that they are skilled fighters and chafe at the fact that their prowess has resulted in little reward. The family are fecund and the current Lord Mardell has nine sons, all of whom bitterly regard the others as rivals for the families meagre resources. They are constantly thinking of ways to increase the prestige and wealth of the House, and will resort to schemes of a criminal nature if these will turn a good profit. A Mardell ancestor is supposed to have buried a considerable treasure in a hidden private crypt, which each of the nine brothers is fanatically searching for. Lord Mardell's authority alone prevents his sons from digging up the whole of Mardell Manor in the fruitless quest for these legendary riches.

Tidesford Vassal Table

House	Shield	Motto	Wealth	Attitude	Strength	Weakness	Aspect
Mardell	Three blue daggers on white	"Glory is ours to claim"	Battlefield promotion	Resentful of rival families	Good warriors	Tendency to treachery	Poor
Ellingham	Blue Peacock on white	"Pride without malice"	Land grant from the King	Faultlessly loyal to Allied families	Exceptionally charismatic to other nobles	Tendency to doing the right thing	Courtier
Forge	Black Forge and hammer on white	"Forge the world in our image"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to own interests	Very loyal or skilled retainers	Tendency to financial corruption	Smith
Elmstree	Green Face on white	"Protect the wild"	A powerful artefact	Faultlessly loyal to common people	Exceptionally charismatic to commoners	Tendency to doing the right thing	Druid
Frohill	Green wolf on white	"The hills re-sound"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to allied families	Good sages	Tendency to boastfulness	Shaman
Doseby	Red Heron on white	"We do not stint"	Adventuring	Secret Cultists	Supported by a secret power	Tendency to treachery	Friendly
Houndsly	Red hound on white	"None more true"	Land grant from the Tidesfords	Faultlessly loyal to the Tidesfords	Very skilled or loyal retainers	Tendency to doing the right thing	Loyal
Fallow	White horsehead on green	"No field fallow"	Trade	Faultlessly loyal to the Tidesfords	Popular with merchants	Secret enemy	Country Lore
Edgesmith	White boar on green	"By force of arms"	Trade	Secret relations	Good warriors	Tendency to gambling	Strong
Woodbridge	Red fox on white	"The fox will find"	Exploration	Resentful of the Church	Good sages	Tendency to risk taking	Scout

Ellingham: The Ellinghams are unusual amongst Tidesford vassals in that they are a metropolitan and cultured family, who spend far more time at Camelot than they do in their own lands. They are great patrons of the arts and are particularly associated with painting, most of the family learn drawing and draughtsmanship at an early age. They specialise in wild nature scenes, particularly the rugged lands of the Tidesford Barony, and these images are surprisingly popular. Each member of the family is however expected to develop their own unique style. They represent Tidesford interests in Camelot, but always work as court painters throughout Pen-dragon. Their artistic training makes them observant and gives them reason to travel, so they also supply information to the Tidesfords regarding other noble houses. They are noted for their genial and friendly manners, and are remarkably unpretentious for artists and courtiers.

Forge: The Forges are of peasant stock, and are descended from Edgar Blackhand, one of the greatest armourers to have ever lived, whose skill at crafting plate and chainmail armour is legendary even four hundred years after his death. Blackhand mail is of the highest quality and pieces are passed down through families for generations. The family retain several unique techniques of smelting and ironworking that are used solely by craftsmen in their employ, and are one of the leading traders of luxury armour. They are known for driving extremely hard bargains and for using underhanded means to deal with competitors. They have taken the black bear as their personal totem and the animal features heavily in the decorations and banners of their houses. They are also noted for their short tempers and bluntness, a combination which makes their preference for isolation (often dealing with clients through intermediaries) both understandable and sensible.

Elmstree: The Elmstrees are a small family whose holdings consist of a single wooded valley. Their ancestral home, Wild-fell Hall, is a rambling, huge, decaying wooden palace overrun with vegetation, several parts of which fall into complete disrepair. This is because the family spend little time there, instead acting as itinerant druids, tending to the land, advising the common people, and spreading word of the Druidim. It is likely that other Baronies would not tolerate such obvious devotion to the Old Way, and the family have a tense relationship with the Seraphic Church, but the Tidesfords seem unperturbed by the Elmstrees activities. This tolerance is no doubt helped by the fact that the Elmstrees are venerated as unusually holy by the common people. Men and women of the family wear green robes and silver torcs set with a single emerald. All of these torcs are linked to an artefact known as The Heart of the Wild, which is said to give the family magical powers to increase the fecundity of crops and vegetation.

Frohill: The Frohills are the scholars and archivists of the Tidesford vassals, and are descended from Dark Folk shamans who became fascinated with the tales of the Seraphim related to them by Pen-dragon missionaries. The family are engaged in the mammoth task of preserving and recording all the myths and legends of the Stonedweller tribes. They tend to be rather arrogant about their collective store of knowledge and can be tiresome in their need to relate to others their latest academic successes. Their intellectual curiosity is genuine however and they are happy to buy and sell information with anyone who asks. They also trade in Stonedweller curios and religious artefacts, and have good relations with several tribes. They retain the dark complexion and appearance of the Dark Folk but dress in conservative suits of good quality. They take the wolf as their totem and the family claim to be able to communicate with wolves, although this ability has never been tested or verified by others.

Doseby: The Dosebys are a popular family who are far more welcoming to strangers than most Tidesford vassals. Their hunting lodge, Heron Hall, is a well-appointed, luxurious residence that sees frequent visits from nobles and influential peasants from other baronies.

Houndsly: The Houndslys pride themselves on their devotion to duty and their strict loyalty to both each other and their feudal masters. They are descended from Robert Houndsly, a retainer of the third Baron Tidesford who was master of hounds and huntmaster for the barony. The Houndslys still act as wardens and land agents for the Tidesford, managing the wilder parts of their estates and collecting rents from other vassals. They are also dog trainers and breed a hunting dog known as a Tidesford Hound which is noted for its glossy red coat and fighting spirit. The family have a strong sense of honour and are also the Tidesford vassals most likely to serve in the Pendragon Legion. The current Lord Houndsly lost an arm in battle in the realm of Castlekeep but is still an active figure who leads the house by example.

Fallow: The Fallows are a dairy farming family who control the best land in the Tidesford Barony. They are descended from a native of the realm of Vortigern who grew sick of the greed and corruption of his native land. Escaping to Pendragon he founded a family who gave invaluable advice and assistance to the Tidesfords, but it is said that the enemies of their founder would still dearly love to destroy them. The Fallows love the land they manage and show a deep concern for both the landscape and the local peasantry, but are wary and reticent around strangers, always fearing that their old enemies have found them. They share the physical trait of all being large and powerfully built, with very pale hair and sunburnt skin. They spend a great deal of time in the open air managing their estates and have little or no interest in politics. They trade milk, beef and grain and host an annual Farmer's Fair that attracts farmers from all the neighbouring baronies.

Edgesmith: The Edgesmith family are an offshoot of the Edgebys of Tavelon, and result from a split which occurred in that family when Balin Edgeby, against his family's wishes, supported a peasant uprising in Tavelon. When the uprising failed Balin was granted sanctuary by the Tidesfords. This family history is not known outside of the House however, as it would result in strained relations between the Tidesfords and the Tavelons if revealed to outsiders. Instead the family pretend to have descended from peasant smiths serving the Tidesfords. They retain the strength that is a family trait of the Edgebys, but have very different attitudes. They see themselves as progressive and vigorously support any movements that involve social change and a rejection of tradition. This has led some family members to flirt with dangerous groups, little suspecting that the revolutionaries they encourage are not just social reformers but agents of the Morganites.

Woodbridge: The Woodbridges are descended from the widow of a knight whose lands were seized during the Seraphic Church's campaign against the Blade Brothers in the Orderic Crusade during the reign of Gawain VI. The widow remarried a fur trapper who made a fortune by obtaining a monopoly on supplying furs to the troops in the realm of Castlekeep. The family were instilled with a deep resentment towards the Seraphic Church and are defiant and blatant followers of the Druidim, with a close friendship with the Elmstrees. They often accompany Elmstrees on their travels, acting as protectors and guardians of the druids. When not defending the druids, they work as explorers and dungeon clearers, whilst also retaining links with the Fighters Guild. Their belligerence and disdain for more cultured nobility mask the fact that many of them are also accomplished scholars of esoteric disciplines, learning from both the Elmstrees and from First Empire documents recovered during their travels.