HERO GAMES

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CHAMPIONS® THE SUPER ROLE-PLAYING GAME®

#410

KINGDOM OF CHAMPIONS™



By Phil Masters

KINGDOM OF CHAMPIONS™

SUPERHEROIC ADVENTURING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

by Phil Masters

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Dedication: Much of the material in this book was inspired by games and campaigns played with a large number of people over an extended period. However, much adaption, re-working, and adjustment has been involved. Therefore, the authors would like to thank the following, without whom the interesting ideas would have been few and far between, but none of whom are in any way to blame for any failings: Alistair Archibald, Matt Baker, Steve Fearn, Jonathan Garnett, Karen Gilham, Steve Gilham, Richard Howe, Oliver Macdonald, Jon Marshall-Potter, John Mersh, Phil Pearce, Pete Piggott, and several contributors to the late lamented fanzine Supernero UK (ed. Jonathan Clark).

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Special Note: Throughout **Kingdom of Champions**, we have used the British form of spelling. This is not an oversight: we simply thought if appropriate to discuss "Armour" in a British sourcebook.

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HOPE AND GLORY?

Kingdom of Champions is HERO Games' guide to adventuring in the United Kingdom. In here, you'll find all the real-world facts and game ideas you'll usually need when your role-playing game plots visit the UK.

This book was written by British authors, so we know our subject — as well as most Britons, anyway. We talked to Americans, Canadians, and Australians while we were working on it, and *Kingdom* was then edited by Americans — so it should cover what an outsider needs to know. We hope you'll agree.

Anyway, welcome to a country which has been producing heroes for two thousand years or more, and which once ruled an empire where the sun never set (because, the joke goes, God wouldn't trust an Englishman in the dark). Many visiting Americans think that the natives speak their language, but they're wrong; the British speak their own languages, and America borrowed one of them. Which gives the British some hope for America yet. Is Britain a land fit for Heroes? Well, it depends how you like your weather...

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The story of *Kingdom of Champions* goes back a while. The original idea was for an article for the *Adventurers' Club*, but Aaron Allston, who was editing the magazine then, suggested that it would make a good full-sized supplement. Then the concept knocked around the HERO Games offices a while, not developing too fast, until Rob Bell picked it up as one of the projects that could be attached to the *Champions* revision. At which point I went back to Alison Brooks and Dave Flin, who'd shown an interest in the idea from the first, and we started talking. And talking...

But that's just personal history. The real reason we did Kingdom of Champions — apart from the money and fame — was a lot of comics. The superhero comic is an American invention, but it sells in Britain. And one of the great unintended jokes of the form is the game played by UK readers whenever a non-UK writer takes a storyline to Britain. It's called "spot the mistake", and most times, the list it generates is long. London looks totally Victorian, cars drive on the wrong side of the road, policemen are armed... And that's just the easy stuff. The hard stuff is very hard; we've learned a lot about the UK while writing this book, and all of it seems important once you know it.

There's one other thing about setting superhero stories in a country we know from the inside; we've tried to be subtle about the characters. We wanted to give you archetypically British figures, but we couldn't sink to joke stereotypes. There's no Captain Beefeaters here; sorry, if that's what you wanted.

But we're not here to lecture; we're here to help you expand your gaming. We like the UK; we hope you enjoy a visit.

— Phil Masters

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is for a lot of different people. It's for players and (especially) GMs; the GM is the best person to use the facts, ideas, and NPC descriptions it contains. However, players and their characters sometimes need facts and ideas too, so there's nothing wrong with players looking at this book. (It's all sales for us.) All we do suggest is that players refrain from using knowledge of which their characters would be ignorant, and from looking at ideas that their GM might wish to use.

Kingdom of Champions is written as a *Champions* supplement, but it's also designed for use in other games. Any game with a contemporary (or near-future or recent-past) setting can involve trips to the UK, and we've tried to keep the "real world" and "possible superhero game" ideas clearly distinct. The latter draw on the former, of course, but you should be able to see where cold hard reality ends and superhero fantasy begins. Furthermore, any sensible player of a non-Hero game should be able to adapt the Hero System stats we've included. So, if your spies or detectives are UK-bound, you'll find plenty to use in here.



WHAT'S INSIDE

No book can cover everything; this book is purely about the United Kingdom. This includes England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland (Ulster), and some smaller islands, some of them (such as Orkney) quite distinct culturally. (We can only manage passing mentions for the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.) We haven't included the Republic of Ireland (Eire), which is an independent nation, with its own unique culture.

The first section of the book — which you're reading right now — is an introduction, not just to *Kingdom of Champions*, but to "international gaming" generally. GMs should read through it, and decide how to apply it to their own games; these are guidelines, not gospel. After that comes the data on the UK, starting with the facts of geography (where you are), then history (how things got here), a view of the country as it is today (what you find), and lastly myth & magic (the "weird stuff" on the edges of the rest). Game suggestions are scattered throughout these sections — readers should be able to think of more for themselves from a quick scan.

The rest of the book is about characters and scenarios — game data. There's villains and fight scenes, of course, but also British heroes and opportunities for role-playing. GMs can explore all this as they choose; players who don't want to spoil the game should refrain. Finally, there are some notes and bibliographies, which should help readers pursue any ideas they like.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

In *Kingdom of Champions*, you'll find the terms "United Kingdom", "Britain", and "Great Britain" used interchangeably. Well, strictly speaking, the "United Kingdom" is a country, but the "British Isles" could be several things. After all, Ireland is as much linked to England as is Orkney — but citizens of the Republic would be offended to be called "British"; in practice, the words mean the same as "the UK". One error we've tried to avoid is using the words "England" or "English" when we mean "UK" or "British". (Much as the English may enjoy needling the Scots, Welsh, and Northern Irish, there are considerations of courtesy. And personal safety.)

ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL



"...That strange blend of the commercial traveller, the missionary, and the barbarian conqueror, which was the American abroad."

— Olaf Stapledon, *First and Last Men*

So you are thinking of going abroad for your adventures?

Fine. You should be in for a lot of fun, and a change is as good as a rest, right? You know about the place you're planning to go, or if you don't, your GM does, or if no-one does, well, that's why you've bought this supplement. You've packed travellers' cheques, clean underwear, and your towels.

There's just one question left.

WHY?

Well, sometimes the answer's easy. Doctor Exterminator is threatening the world, and he operates out of a castle in some highly implausible Balkan state, so that's where you are needed. Your Secret ID has to go on a business trip, so you might as well fight crime while you're there. The authorities, who never have understood you, are getting too close, and you'd like a break somewhere without an extradition treaty. Your nearest and dearest have been kidnapped while on holiday, and have to be hauled out of some damp Transylvanian castle or mismanaged Central American gold mine. Maybe you've been kidnapped, and your kidnapper has dragged you somewhere without an extradition treaty.

That's "going where the action is" (or "tourist-style" adventuring), and there's nothing wrong with it at all. A lot of great scenarios work that way, and any GM who wants to run a story set anywhere in the world — or off it — can use these ideas to get the PCs in place. The approach works perfectly well as a way of getting a party into, say, Britain for a game-session or two. Britain isn't in the Balkans, but it has its share of castles, suitable for occupancy by stylish supervillains. The UK does plenty of importing and exporting. There's only a very few, rather small gold mines, but there's plenty else for rich characters to have investments in. Britain does have extradition treaties with other countries, but hey, some superbeings are stupid enough not to notice this, and anyway, it's a nice long way away, by some standards. However, there is another approach.

CONSCIOUS INTERNATIONALISM

This is what you get when player-characters, wherever based, take the whole world (or solar system, or galaxy) as their "home ground". This may be because of pure idealism; or politics, for those who are persuaded by their government to join a supra-national force that fights some international problem; or employment, for those who take a job that involves a lot of travel; or something else, or, most often, a mixture of all of these. (A simplified variation is to give the heroes a friend or acquaintance who can persuade them that

there is an urgent reason for a trip. For example, a non-combatant but wise old witch who sometimes detects signs of demonic incursions might turn to the heroes as the only people who can defeat the demons. But be careful; players resent their characters always being told what to do.)

Of course, there's a number of problems with this idea. For one, superheroes with Secret IDs often have to tie themselves down to one location, or else the boss gets annoyed. For another, much of the point of being a superhero can be defending one's home, and (unfortunately) it's usually easier to feel loyalty to a town or country than to the world. For a third, if you don't have the backing of several governments (or even if you do), supra-national operations can be obstructed by national-level organizations who will quibble about sovereignty and passports and so on. Finally, even if you are working for a supra-national body, you may well find yourself tied down, especially if you are low in the hierarchy; agents, for example, tend to be assigned to a station, and only get to travel in unusual circumstances, or if they are assigned to a mobile specialist team.

There's another problem with supposedly internationalist set-ups, one more to do with writers and GMs than with the idea itself: they usually aren't done properly. How often have you seen stories about "International" hero teams or agencies which turn out to recruit 75% of their personnel from one country, have their HQ there, and behave like tourists when they are actually taken abroad? (Some enterprising starship crews have similar problems.) This is understandable; GMs and writers know their own homelands best, and players and readers are more comfortable with some consistency and familiarity of setting and style. However, it does rather invalidate slogans about supra-national unity.

All of which said, the internationalist approach to adventuring has a lot going for it; glamour, ideals, variety, language confusions, jetlag, customs hassles, and so on. This being a supplement about the UK, note that Britain is an interesting place for the internationalist hero; a centre of communications, a member of the UN, NATO and the European Community, with old imperial links still sometimes strong, but also an island, sometimes correspondingly insular in attitude...

READING MATTERS

Kingdom of Champions is designed to assist both tourist-style and internationalist campaigns. Along with other things, you'll find British-based characters and groups. If you use these as NPCs, they should be played as treating Britain as their home. These heroes will, within their own personal codes, defend it, and the villains will have their main bases in or around the UK. That said, villains are often the sort to go where the money or power is, and heroes are often idealistic types with broad views, so don't assume all the NPCs are rabidly parochial. Furthermore, some NPCs and groups have been included who fit very well into internationalist games. There is, for example, Mr Harry Mortimer, whose loyal work for Her Majesty's Foreign Office takes him all over the world, and also brief notes on L'Institut Thoth, a Swiss-based organization who may turn up anywhere that there are exotic talents to be investigated, and who employ small groups of "super-agent" investigators...

FIT FOR HEROES?

"Wherever you go — there you are."

— Buckaroo Banzai

FOREIGN SETTINGS AND THE GM

One reason that a lot of people enjoy role-playing games with modern-day settings — superhero or lower-power campaigns — is that the background is already known to all concerned; they live in it. That's different from the typical fantasy or SF game, where the GM may have to spend a lot of time working out details of the setting, and more time explaining them to the players. The real danger is that any failure of communication could damage the game — if, say, players don't realise that some spell or gadget is commonplace in society, and it becomes important in a scenario. The trouble is, leaving "home" destroys much of that useful familiarity, more than many people realise. This doesn't only apply to Americans leaving the USA; many of the American states have variations in laws, customs, and climate that even Americans may not fully appreciate.

This should remind anyone that international travel can really lead to culture shock. To take some (fairly minor) examples; British policemen do not (usually) carry guns, so immediate police responses to violence in a public place may differ from the "American norm"; in fact, gun ownership generally is rarer in the UK than in the USA (there is no "Constitutional right to bear arms"); much slang, and the implications of certain terms, differ across the Atlantic (so communications in an emergency may be slowed); British traffic drives on the left (so an American in a car chase in Britain may make catastrophic errors); popular sports (and public attitudes to them) are different in the USA and the UK, and so on, and on, and on.

SOLUTIONS

GMs might simply reckon to bluff through on what they know. The trouble with this, apart from its arrogance, is that what the GM knows and what the players know may differ, leading to confusion as the players show up the GM's areas of ignorance; anyway, it removes a lot of challenges and "tourist effect" entertainment. So how can a GM deal with this? One answer is, of course, to buy this book, but this is one book about the UK alone; what to do for more information?

To start with, GMs can use places they've actually visited, which can be very effective; if the players have also been there, the GM has less describing to do, but if they haven't they can role-play ignorance better. Otherwise, there's tourist guide books, and Embassies and Travel Agents often have lots of information, while magazines such as National Geographic may have something useful. These should give the basics for visitors; currency, traffic laws, shop opening hours, places to eat. They will also give landmarks and places of interest — good for "colour" and traditional for fight scenes — and probably some maps. Of course, it's certain that building a scenario round such a guide book will lead to a very cliche-ridden story, working mostly in stereotypes; this is a perfect simulation of comic stories with foreign settings.

Also useful are books that concern a country or area. GMs may find lots of ideas emerging from good maps; pay attention to the scale (the distance between a strange event and the nearest town may be critical to a scenario), and note what the map specifically does and doesn't show. A motorist's atlas will give a lot of detail of roads, but won't convey the type of scenery, which could make for trouble if a chase switches from vehicle to foot; a tourist map will give most of the interesting settings, but may skimp on unremarkable but heavily populated areas. Histories of a place are often full of potential scenario ideas, particularly for "mystical" campaigns, but don't assume that a venue or law or fact mentioned as significant even fifty years ago is still the same today. (Many historical buildings in London were destroyed by fire over the years, or by World War II bombing; some major medieval ports are now minor fishing villages, or lost beneath the sea; the balance of power in British politics has evolved over the centuries, and so on.) Even geology or natural history texts can help fill in background colour, and if you can get hold of some newspapers, you'll make a considerable gain in "atmosphere" — otherwise, work through the foreign news pages of your usual paper.

THE SCENARIO

Given a foreign setting, complete with scenery, inhabitants, and entertaining trivia; what to do with it? The GM may already have a scenario idea, perhaps from this book. If not, there's always the old favourites — preventing a crime, pursuing a criminal, investigating a mystery. The trouble with these is that they aren't always very different from what can happen "at home". Banks — and bank robberies — are much the same in America and the UK. What's harder, but more interesting, is to create scenarios using unique local features. This could be as simple as a super-thief stealing the Crown Jewels, as obvious as a battle with demons from Celtic myth, or as complex as a manipulative villain group working through the power structures of British government.

AND SO...

The first obvious problem for travelling PCs is ignorance of local laws and customs. This is good for a few laughs, but there's more to "abroad" than that. The GM must consider how the locals — from superheroes through police to innocent bystanders — will react to the visitors, and should avoid imagining that the reaction must be awe and gratitude. For example, Americans have a reputation for arrogance in the rest of the world. An American hero who lives up to this may encounter hostility and obstructions. (Just to annoy some other inhabitants of the same continent; most Britons probably can't tell a US accent from a Canadian without practice, if at all.)

If recognised on arrival or subsequently spotted, "visiting heroes" can expect official attention. Government backed super or counter-super-forces (such as STOP or the New Round Table) will be asked to watch them. Even villains who are known as criminals may be able to exploit this conflict. Even if the PCs convince the locals of their honesty, the locals don't have to like their approach, which may be considered vigilantee activity.

Of course, if the visitors' foe is a power in the land (its ruler, perhaps) the PCs must accept that the mission is a raid into enemy territory, and the problem of survival comes before the pleasures of tourism. On the other hand, suppose the



visitors are in an ideal situation — backed by their own government, known to the locals, trusted by them, and opposing an acknowledged threat. This is all much easier, isn't it?

Well, up to a point. The local authorities may trust the PCs, but they'll want to know what the heroes are doing, even so. So they'll assign a "minder" or two — either government-backed heroes, able to intervene if the PCs bend the rules, or non-combatant bureaucrats, who'll get underfoot and probably get attacked by the enemy. (Ruthless "heroes" who let their minders get mauled are not only breaking the heroic code, they risk arrest and deportation by the host country).

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The local governments aren't the only worry. If visiting PCs make their presence known, the local public and press will take an interest. Obviously, a lot then depends on public attitudes to super-beings; some countries may be more tolerant of strangeness than others, and some have different attitudes to "private crime-fighting". If a country has few or no active super-beings, then a visitor can expect a lot of awe and respect, mingled with fear, depending how such matters have been reported locally; if, however, there are resident "paranormals", then the visitor will be compared with those — especially by the local press. Jingoistic locals may hope for conflict between the "home team" and the visitors — after all, national pride is at stake. Furthermore, in a country with a suspicion of private individuals enforcing the law, the visitors will be regarded with distrust; the police are not supposed to need help.

Incidentally, such suspicion is common in the UK. Although officials aren't supposed to bow to public opinion when enforcing the law, bureaucrats like quiet lives and politicians like popularity; visiting heroes would be well advised to avoid annoying the host country's public. Things can get particularly tricky if a fight scene occurs near or around some local monument, or if a popular local figure is threatened; even if everyone accepts that it wasn't your fault that the 500-year-old local institution got energy blasted, it's extremely embarrassing, and your character may be advised to leave the country as soon as convenient.

INDIVIDUAL REACTIONS

People's views of "foreigners" can vary; much may depend on the relationship between governments, but anything is always possible. Even in Libya or Iran, an American might chance upon a native who has fond memories of a trip to the USA, or who is just polite to everyone. Alternately, even in the UK, a close ally of the USA, the American might encounter someone who dislikes the US government, or who is just plain xenophobic.

Even "good" responses may not be helpful; a very friendly local may be more interested in discussing the visitor's home than in saying where the villain went. As a rule of thumb, the rich and powerful tend to be more cosmopolitan and tolerant than the less wealthy, who travel less and deal with fewer foreigners.

AND FINALLY...

By a mixture of tact, skill, charm, and brute force, the heroes have won through, or at least escaped, and made it home to lick their wounds, put their feet up, and write their memoirs. It's over.

Or is it?

Whatever country the heroes visited is still there (unless they really got carried away). One day, something may demand a return trip; if nothing else, the villain they've just foiled may have a poetic line in revenge plots. And then, the heroes may find that they are remembered in that place for just one incident. Whether they handled it well or badly could make a heck of a difference, and if they choose to learn from their travels, that can help a lot, second time round.

Travel really can broaden the mind.



RULES & THE INTERNATIONAL GAME

Hero System rules are designed for almost any setting or genre, and certainly any country. However, if you're GMing international travel generally and British settings in particular, there are a few things to consider.

SKILLS

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

Most widespread computer languages were designed by or for English-speakers, so codes and mnemonics tend to be universal and English-like; this skill won't take many minuses for "foreign systems". However, documentation, or dealing with super-high-tech "natural language" systems, could be tricky unless a character has fluency in the relevant language.

LANGUAGES & LINGUIST

The fluency levels are referred to in this book as follows:

1pt: Basic
2pt: Conversational
3pt: Fluent
4pt: Native, Idiomatic, Unaccented
5pt: Native w/Dialects

It is recommended that any game involving much foreign travel should use the optional Language Similarity rules. Languages spoken in the UK include English (dominant, near universal), Romany (the Gypsy language), Welsh, Scots Gaelic, and Irish Gaelic (much more in the Republic of Ireland), plus the native tongues of various immigrant groups (especially those of the Indian sub-continent). The Language Chart can be slightly extended; Gaelic and Welsh have two point similarity with each other, and with Breton, while the two forms of Gaelic have three point similarity. Various archaic and fictional languages (Cornish, Manx, "Lyonessean" from this book) also lie in this two-point group (but Lyonessean can't be learnt above "Conversational" by someone with normal human anatomy). Today, Celtic languages all use the same, standard "Roman" script as English; the ancient Celtic "Ogham" runic writing isn't fully understood by archaeologists. (If you use the game material in this book, note that it is used in Lyonesse, and may be learnt from Lyonessean characters for one point by anyone who knows an ancient Celtic language.)



Normally, it costs an extra point to go from native fluency with a language to full knowledge of its dialects, but GMs may modify this. All characters should, as an "Everyman" skill, have basic knowledge of the regional dialects and accents of the country in which they were brought up (ie, where they are spoken, whether they are fashionable or the sign of a hick, and so on); the same knowledge for any other country in which the same language is spoken costs one point, without which characters will have only a vague, patchy idea of local variations. Five points in a language, or use of Mimicry skill, should allow the character to emulate any common dialect or regional accent of the language, and to recognise common variant words, but full knowledge of all the variations and subtleties is a Knowledge Skill (which can be bought based on INT); without this, characters may have difficulty maintaining "deep" disguises for any length of time. Of the "native" British languages, probably only English has a wide enough spread to demand this complex treatment.

MIMICRY

See the "Language" notes above on accents. To Mimic the sound of a dialect is one thing; getting the grammar and turn of phrase right is another!

PRE-BASED SKILLS

These are all about dealing with people, and their use requires application of modifiers when travelling abroad — usually negative. GMs should use judgement here; if an NPC is always open and friendly to foreign visitors, Conversation skill can be used on him without restriction. Alternately, "low-lifers" are traditionally very suspicious of outsiders, so anyone who doesn't know anything about local conditions and who only has two points in the language could end up with -10 to his Streetwise roll (and a knife in the back).

In general, it's very hard to use a PRE-based skill if you don't speak the target's native language to at least "Conversational" standards; very crude and simple attempts at Bribery, Interrogation, or Seduction may be attempted at around -3 with extra time taken, but otherwise, reckon on a -5 or worse. Given accented fluency with a language, some things are easier than others; Oratory is hard, because it's too easy to sound funny, whereas, in some open-minded groups, foreign accents can be thought "charming" or exotic, and might even be worth a +1 to a first use of High Society or Seduction. Truly deceptive Acting obviously demands the absence of a give-away wrong accent. Some allowances may be made by natives for foreigner's "odd manners", so a High Society or Conversation roll missed by 1 or 2 may be forgiven, but that won't remove subconscious biases against "outsiders". Bureaucrats and crooks are much the same at heart the world over, but tend to have local conventions; an "Area Knowledge" or "Culture Knowledge" roll may allow Bureaucratics or Streetwise to be used normally, otherwise it's -1, -3, or worse.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

These may involve formal qualifications in a field, such as medicine or law. Such are usually recognised in other countries with similar systems, but details of the "ground rules" can vary — jargon may differ even if the language is the same. For some fields such as medicine, a 1-point Familiarity or just a few days or weeks of practice should provide the character with understanding of all the relevant differences, but others, such as law, may involve a whole new Knowledge or Professional skill. In fact, the British and American legal systems have common roots, and lawyers from each country can operate to a limited extent in each other's courts, but full-time work would require a 1-point Knowledge Skill Familiarity with the differences.

SURVIVAL

Knowledge of environments can be a very important complementary skill to this. Britain's small wildernesses are typical cool-temperate settings.

VEHICLE OPERATION SKILLS

Control designs on "standard" vehicles are much the same the world over, but subtle differences could take the edge off a combatant's skills — say -2 to rolls for the first hour or so in an unfamiliar design. One crucial fact for Americans visiting the UK (or Australia): cars drive on the **left**, and control layouts are accordingly reversed. (Not including foot pedals.) This could mean a -2 to control rolls in manual transmission cars for the first few weeks, but otherwise, most people seem quite able to adapt for normal purposes. However, under combat stress, inexperienced drivers on the "wrong" side could make silly or catastrophic mistakes; GMs could demand an INT roll at crucial moments. Also, ignorance of local traffic laws could lead to some problems.

PERQUISITES

FRINGE BENEFITS

Many of these relate to international travel, or don't work "abroad". For example, a Weapon Permit is usually only good in one country; licenses to own guns (other than shotguns) are quite hard to obtain in the UK, and don't generally extend to carrying them in public. (That right is usually only given to police officers on specific duties).

It is suggested that a Shotgun license (covering smoothbore weapons only) cost one point, a license for a rifle or pistol two points, and anything more extensive (such as a firearms dealers' license) cost three points. All firearms license-holders are liable to have their security arrangements frequently inspected by police. An International Driver's License is useful, but in fact, many countries (the UK and USA included) have agreements whereby each other's licenses are valid for short-term visitors. Although not all Britons have Passports, they aren't unusual or hard to obtain (foreign holidays are quite common), so they may not be worth points in British games — only a Passport with a full set of visas for foreign countries that demand them would be.

Britain doesn't distinguish between Local and National Police Powers; it's whether a policeman is on duty or not that determines the level of privileges. International Police Powers don't exist in the real world ("Interpol" is a co-ordinating office); if they do in a game, it's up to GMs to determine their significance and points value.

MONEY

Income levels and prices are close enough throughout Western Europe and North America for points spent on Money to have much the same effects. However, when designing characters from other cultures, do think about income. Someone with enough cash to live in luxury in the Third World may only rate as "Middle Class" in the West, while in an autocratic state, cash in hand may be less important than status; if "Party Membership" gets use of a big house and limousine and use of subsidised restaurants, the fact that the holder's cash salary is the same as a factory worker's doesn't mean much.

POWERS

END RESERVE

Characters whose Reserve charges off a standard AC socket may specify that the charger can be adjusted for varying voltages, and has various types of plug attached. If they don't, they could have a few annoying moments on arrival in the UK...

SWINGING

If there's one thing that proves that superhero comics were a New York invention, it's the idea that heroes can get around efficiently by swinging from building to building. This might work among New York skyscrapers, but anyone trying it in some towns would soon end up at ground level. Even in the USA, many cities only have tall buildings in a small business district; the same is true of London and other UK cities, which only have isolated skyscrapers. In such places, more than 5"-10" of Swinging will be useless. GMs who enforce this may simply point it out to players and leave the choice with them, but optionally, a -1/4 Limitation "Rarely Useful" might be given to Swinging over 10" by kind GMs



POWER MODIFIERS

CHARGES

See "END Reserve" above for one possible problem with some powers with Charges. For another; if a character "recharges" (say) her .44 Magnum RKA from a gun shop, she might have trouble finding a source in the less firearm-loving UK.

FOCUS

A logical part of this Limitation is that the power may be far more easily detected by customs officers and suchlike than an "innate" power. Of course, if your campaign-world has had exotic super-powers for years, "bio-energy scanners" or "mutant detectors" may be a standard part of airport security, but if not, remember that most airlines and countries object to travellers carrying dangerous equipment.

Example: *The Champions take a working holiday in the UK while their team jet is being repaired. Quantum has no worries, but Seeker has to leave his sword, shuriken, and triple irons behind, and Defender gets stopped by airport security because of the high-energy power cells in his luggage and has to come without them. Both these two are glad that they have some useful skills as well as ironmongery.*

DISADVANTAGES

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

These can be a major problem for characters seeking to travel incognito, especially if a Public ID is added. Of course, local cultures may have different ideas of the nature and significance of some features, such as great beauty or hideous ugliness.

Example: *Bullhide the Bruiser travels to a primitive area of the world. No-one wants to sit next to him on the plane, and the climate gets him down, but the local tribes are much taken with his appearance; anything that ugly must be tough! Bullhide quite enjoys the trip in the end.*

HUNTED/WATCHED

These may be limited by geographical area. If not, when the character travels abroad, the GM should consider what form the local "branch" of the Hunter/Watcher takes. A local VIPER nest may use different tactics; local police may be unarmed, and so less dangerous, but have the non-combat advantage of the right to get unwelcome foreigners deported; the local press may be bound by weaker privacy laws, and so on.

REPUTATION

This Disadvantage may be implicitly restricted to a character's base area; GMs may lower the dice roll required elsewhere. However, to compensate, the GM should be prepared to increase the number at times; PCs in "globe-trotting" games with strictly local reps should get fewer points for them!

Example: *The Bayou Prowler is the terror of the New Orleans undeentions in the "foreign news" sections of the press, and may be known on an 8-. The GM gives the Bayou Prowler 10 points for the Disadvantage.*



THE MATTER OF BRITAIN

THE UK AT A GLANCE

The United Kingdom: Independent Constitutional Monarchy (Queen as head of state, elected Parliament provides government including Prime Minister), comprised of islands off the west coast of Europe.

Racial Origins: Originally Western European, with numerous European immigrations; earliest settlement c.400,000-230,000 BC. Earliest stone shelters dated to c.5200 BC; megalithic burials in Ireland dated to c.3800 BC (oldest in Europe). Main racial origins Celtic & Anglo-Saxon (Germanic). Some recent large-scale immigration, from Caribbean and Indian sub-continent especially.

Political Origins: Celtic tribes partly conquered by Roman Empire; England developed as Anglo-Saxon kingdom in latter half of first millenium AD. Conquered by Normans, 1066; united with Celtic lands (Scotland, Ireland & Wales) over an extended period. Government evolved to modern form in 17th-19th centuries.

Climate: Mild and quite damp; north and east cooler and drier. Minor frosts common on winter mornings; summer heatwaves above 32 degrees Centigrade (90 Fahrenheit) considered remarkable. Total annual rainfall ranges from 650mm (26") in parts of England, to 2,000mm (79") in West Scotland. A wide variety of crops can be grown.

Geology: Varied, but very stable — earthquakes effectively unknown. Coal, iron, and other minerals are mined.

Nations Included: England and Wales (legally unified, but usually discussed separately); Scotland (including Orkney and Shetland); Northern Ireland. (The Channel Islands and Isle of Man are small independent territories under the British Crown.)

International Status: Member of the European Community (economic association), the Commonwealth (cultural and diplomatic forum, developed from British Empire), the United Nations (international diplomatic forum; UK has permanent seat on the Security Council), NATO (North Atlantic military alliance), etc. A major "second line" power, with nuclear weapons.

BASIC STATISTICS				
England	**Wales**	**Scotland**	**N.Ireland**	**UK (Overall)**
Population (millions)				
47.4	2.8	5.1	1.6	56.9
Area (sq.km)				
30,439	20,768	78,772	14,121	244,100
(sq.miles)				
(50,362)	(8,018)	(30,414)	(5,452)	(94,247)
Population Density (persons/sq km)				
363	137	65	112	233

Highest Point: Ben Nevis, Scotland, at 1343m/4406ft. Highest in England is Scafell Pike (978m/3210ft): the highest in Wales is Snowdon (1085m/3560ft). Longest River: The Severn, passing through Wales and Western England, at 354km/220 miles. (The Thames is 346km/215 miles.) (Note: All population figures are mid-1987 official estimates.)

THE LAND OF BRITAIN



A GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

"The country's looking very green, but, after all, that's what it's there for."

— Saki

The UK is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Although many people now live in cities, there is a network of towns and villages dating from medieval times; villages are within walking distance of each other, five miles or so, while towns are perhaps 20 miles apart. Farms occupy the intervening land, so that there are few places in mainland Britain more than two miles from a road or dwelling. Truly wild areas do not exist in Britain, although anyone lost in the Yorkshire Moors or Scottish Highlands in a winter snowstorm might disagree.

CLIMATE

The climate is temperate. Britain is warmer than Newfoundland and Labrador, at the same latitude, due to the Gulf Stream, a warm ocean current flowing northeast from the Bahamas.

Britain's weather is very variable, hence its perpetual interest as a subject of conversation. Serious storms are uncommon. Rain falls throughout the year, preventing predictably good summer weather, but ensuring that Britain's countryside is very green. The weather is generally wetter and milder in the west, with the southwest having the mildest climate of all. Ireland's climate is wetter and milder than in mainland Britain, and the land greener, hence its sobriquet of "The Emerald Isle". Even in Scotland, the climate on the west coast is mild enough to allow exotic plants such as palms to grow in sheltered gardens.

Morning fogs are a feature of autumn and early winter weather, but thanks to Clean Air legislation, the "pea soup" smogs of 19th Century London have been abolished.

SEAS

The continental shelf extends to about 50 miles west of Ireland, so most of the seas around Britain are shallow — less than 300' deep.

Stormy weather is a traditional hazard for shipping off the coast of Britain. Gale force winds are relatively common. In addition, mist, rain and poor visibility often make conditions difficult, and the weather is frequently very changeable. It is quite possible for a ship to find itself in a severe gale with little warning. Because of this, shipping forecasts are given regularly on the radio. The funneling effect of the English Channel on swells coming in from the Atlantic makes 30'-60' waves standard. The gradually shelving sea floor ensures, however, that waves reaching the shore are lower: 20' waves are produced only by exceptional storms. Surfing is limited mainly to the north coast of Devon, and true "rollers" of the Californian type are all but unknown.

THE COUNTRY YEAR

Oh to be in England, now that April's there

— Robert Browning

This is a typical year for southern Britain; individual years vary considerably, while in northern parts, spring may come a fortnight or even a month later, and autumn (fall) set in correspondingly earlier.

January: Mix of overnight frosts, usually the first snows, and milder weather (snow usually melts within a week of falling in lowland areas).

February: Usually the coldest month, often snow or freezing weather; first flowers: snowdrops, and catkins on hazel trees. Lambs born.

March: Early spring flowers, bluebells in woods, in gardens daffodils and the like. Weather beginning to warm up. Traditionally the windiest month.

April: Traditionally the month of "April Showers", brief rains. Trees beginning to leaf. Tree blossoms start.

May: Last frosts, trees in full leaf, early summer flowers.

June: Beginning of summer, may be very hot, or rather chill, but rarely frosty.

July: Full summer, highest temperatures in the range of 60-80 degrees.

August: Often less good weather than July, traditional holiday time, main harvest for farmers.

September: Nights beginning to get cooler. Leaves on trees start to yellow. Sometimes first frost; sometimes foggy mornings.

October: Usually first frosts; trees losing leaves; some fogs.

November: Trees nearly leafless. Straggling remnants of summer flowers still to be found (may hang on until December in mild years).

December: Beginning of winter. Rather dull all round. Rarely snow, often frosts at night. A white Christmas is almost unknown south of the Scottish Highlands.

THE BRITISH ISLES



Wales

47. Clwyd
48. Dyfed
49. Gwent
50. Gwynedd
51. Mid Glamorgan
52. Powys
53. South Glamorgan
54. West Glamorgan

Scotland

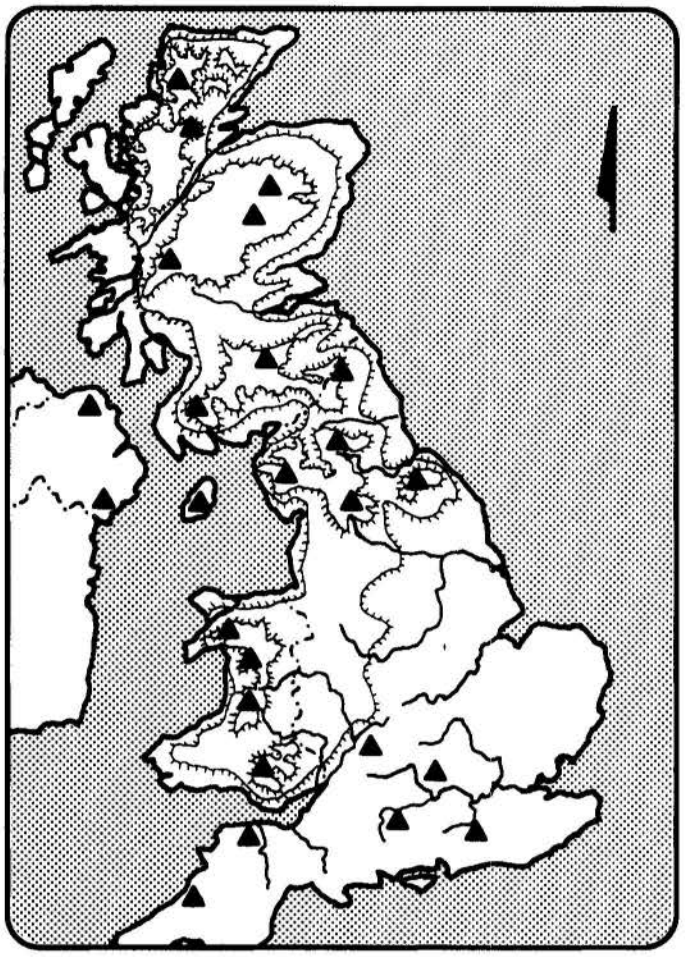
55. Borders
56. Central
57. Dumfries & Galloway
58. Fife
59. Grampian
60. Highland
61. Lothian
62. StraThclyde
63. Tayside

Nothern Ireland

64. Antrim
65. Armagh
66. Down
67. Derry
68. Fermanagh
69. Tyrone

England

1. Greter London
2. Greater Manchester
3. Merseyside
4. South Yorkshire
5. Tyne and Wear
6. West Midlands
7. West Yorkshire
8. Avon
9. Bedfordshire
10. Berkshire
11. Buckinghamshire
12. Cambridgeshire
13. Cheshire
14. Cleveland
15. Cornwall
16. Cumbria
17. Derbyshire
18. Devon
19. Dorset
20. Durham
21. East Sussex
22. Essex
23. Gloucestershire
24. Hampshire
25. Hereford & Worcester
26. Hertfordshire
27. Humberside
28. Isle of Wight
29. Kent
30. Lancashire
31. Leicestershire
32. Lincolnshire
33. Norfolk
34. Northamptonshire
35. Northumberland
36. North Yorkshire
37. Nottinghamshire
38. Oxfordshire
39. Shropshire
40. Somerset
41. Staffordshire
42. Suffolk
43. Surrey
44. Warwickshire
45. West Sussex
46. Wiltshire



The sea temperature is low, although not as cold as in the Arctic. Icebergs don't sail down the North Sea. Adventurous folk quite often swim in the English Channel, which shows two things: that such exposure need not be fatal, and there are always people ready to do stupid things because they are looking for a challenge. The big danger in falling into the sea is not freezing to death, but exhaustion caused by the battle with the waves. The low temperature drains energy reserves rather than killing outright.

GEOLOGY

The scenery of Britain is variable, reflecting the underlying geology. To the north and west are older (and harder) rocks. The highest parts of the country are Exmoor and Dartmoor in Cornwall, the Welsh and Scottish mountains, and the Pennines, which run down the northern part of England. Most of the rest of country has gently rolling landscape, and there are plains in the vicinity of Oxford, London and East Anglia.

Economic minerals tend to be concentrated in the north and west. Oil and natural gas are found in the North Sea; minor petroleum reserves on the mainland are basically untouched due to public resistance. Coal is mined in south Wales; northeast England; the north Midlands of England (South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and thereabouts); the midland valley of Scotland and a small area of eastern Kent. The main ironworking areas are Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. A little tin is still mined in Cornwall and Devon, (upland areas are scattered with deserted tin mines dating from Roman times on).

SCENERY

The natural vegetation of most of Britain is mixed with deciduous wood. Britain's landscape, however, is far from natural. 80% of Britain is farmland, woodlands make up 10%, and everything else, including roads and houses, is fitted into the remaining 10%. Nowhere has escaped human influence, even the woods are used for grazing animals, the trees used for charcoal or felled for timber. In England, individual woods often have names and boundaries dating from medieval times. These days, many "woods" have been replaced by conifer plantations.

The highlands have been smoothed by time and glaciation; the hills are rounded, the valleys usually broad with steep sides. Typical scenery in these areas includes small fields (often with traditional "dry" stone walls built with stones fitted together without mortar) in the valleys, while the valley sides have much larger fields, for sheep. The moors and mountain tops are usually open, and may be peat bogs or heather moor. They are used for sheep or grouse. The mountains are largely devoid of trees, due to grazing. Scrubby trees colonise the small, steep-sided gorges created by streams. Conifer plantations are common on uplands.

Britain's mountains are unimpressive in international terms; the highest mountain in Scotland is Ben Nevis (c. 1200m); in Wales Snowdon (c. 1100m); while the English Lake District and the Northern Irish Mountains of Mourne are lower than 1000m. British mountains can usually be ascended by a stiff walk (there is also a mountain railway up Snowdon).

The typical lowland landscape is fields bounded by hedges or fences, often mixed with small woods. In particularly heavily-wooded areas, squirrel could travel for miles without touching the ground, but even so, roads and houses and fields pocket the woods. Most woods are less than a few hundred miles across.

Only a small part of the countryside is classed as "common land", where people can go where they want. Most of it is owned, and the only rights of access are footpaths. These are often signposted, and landowners have an obligation (sometimes ignored) to ensure that they can be walked.

Because Britain is such a crowded country, most building around towns is strictly controlled by "Green Belt" laws. This keeps house prices high, and prevents the whole south of England becoming a single metropolis.

ARTIFICIAL FEATURES

The British landscape is littered with the signs of millenia of use, from pillboxes built (but never used) during World War II to neolithic barrows.

Many of the types of archaeological sites are described in "History and Archaeology", and "Sites and Sights", but not all will be signposted, or marked on any but the largest scale Ordinance Survey maps. Many a Bronze Age round barrow (there are some 20,000 of them) sits unremarked in the midst of farmland. Similarly, standing stones, smaller stone circles, and even much larger castles which may consist of nothing more visible than a lump (the remains of a motte) or a moat, perhaps with fragmentary walls, scatter the landscape. The earlier (Pre-Roman) remains are more likely to survive in the north and west of Britain than in the southeast, and are correspondingly less likely to be regarded as tourist

attractions. In the Scottish Borders, many of the local farmhouses are attached to small fortifications which may still be in use (but not for defense!)

In much of lowland Britain, field boundaries date back centuries, but the older medieval communal field systems can still be seen as corrugations, called "ridge and furrow".

NATIONAL PARKS

There are ten national parks, covering about 9% of the area of England and Wales. These are not of international standard, but building and other developments must be in keeping with the area. Public access to the countryside is allowed by farmers in these areas.

The national parks are: North York Moors, Lake District, Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons, Peak District, Dartmoor, Exemoor, Yorkshire Dales, Pembrokeshire Coast and Northumberland.

ROYAL FORESTS

After the Norman Conquest of 1066, around a quarter of England was set aside as Royal hunting reserves. These "forests" were not always wooded, but trees eventually grew over deserted farmlands and villages. Most of the Royal Forests were eventually reclaimed for agriculture, but a few survive.

One is the New Forest in Hampshire. Local inhabitants retain their traditional rights to graze their animals. The New Forest ponies roam freely, except for an annual round-up for identification and sale. The New Forest area is a network of woodland, heather and grassland.

Sherwood Forest, reputed home of Robin Hood, once covered about 100,000 acres north of Nottingham. Most of the area marked on maps as Sherwood, however, is now farms and villages. A total of about 15,000 acres of woodland in the area is owned by the Forestry Commission, but most of this is in the form of small plantations. A mere 400 acres makes up the remnant of the ancient forest. It is situated about 15 miles north of Nottingham, and is protected as a SSSI (see below). Even here, few of the trees date from the time of Robin Hood, as most of the trees have grown since the wood was felled in the 18th Century.

WILDLIFE

Unfortunately for game purposes, there are few large or dangerous animals left in the British Isles; most have been hunted to extinction. The wild bull disappeared in pre-Roman times, the bear in about the 9th Century, and so on. Wolves were hunted to death in the 15th Century in England, but managed to hold on until the 18th Century in Scotland. Today, badly-managed dogs are the only really dangerous animals in the UK.

The remaining animals have either managed to survive somehow, or have been preserved for hunting. Some animals have been introduced in the last couple of centuries (there are, for instance, groups of wallabies in Sussex and Derbyshire). Many woods are used for game animals, especially deer and pheasants. Gamekeepers tradtionally control poachers and predators.

LAND ANIMALS

The largest wild land animals are deer: the red, roe, fallow and sika deer (the fallow was introduced in Roman times, the sika more recently). The largest predators are the fox, wildcat and badger. The fox is found everywhere; it has adapted well to life in cities, but it owes its survival partly to deliberate preservation for hunting. The wildcat (slightly larger than a domestic cat and coloured like a tabby) is rare and very shy; it is found in the highlands of Scotland, northern England and Wales. The badger remains widespread in rural areas.

Otters are uncommon, but making something of a comeback since they are legally protected. Mink are not native to the UK, but have escaped from fur farms, and, in recent years, been released from farms by animal rights campaigners. Stoats and weasels are common, but other members of the family, polecats and martens, are very rare.

There are a few species of lizard and snake. They are small, shy, and only the adder is poisonous. Even if it is persuaded to bite, adder venom is unlikely to kill a healthy adult. Ireland has no snakes. There are no dangerous or large spiders. A number of insects sting (bees, wasps, hornets) or bite (midges) painfully, but unless the victim has an allergy to the venom, they present little danger to life.

BIRD LIFE

The largest bird of prey is the golden eagle, which is found in Scotland, but it is rare. Most of the other hawks and falcons are fairly rare, except the smallest, the kestrel, which is commonly seen hovering along motorway verges. Several species of owls are reasonably common in rural areas. All of these species are protected by law. A very few pairs of ospreys nest in Britain; their nests are heavily protected by bird conservation groups, and their locations kept secret, but even so, they are often robbed by egg collectors.

SEA CREATURES

In the sea, the biggest threat is probably the Portuguese Man O' War, which sometimes drifts into British waters from further south. The stinging tentacles can paralyse a swimmer; but fatalities are very rare. The basking shark can reach a length of 40', but it is a harmless filter-feeder. Other sharks are rarer: attacks have been known, but are very rare.

Atlantic grey and common seals can be found in British waters, although at the moment they are being decimated by a viral disease. The smaller whales such as porpoises are rarer, although larger whales occasionally beach themselves on British shores.

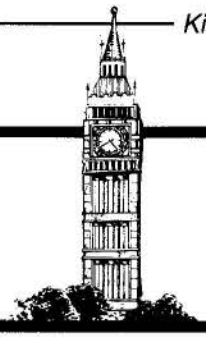
FLORA

Britain has a variety of wild plants, some poisonous. Many of the mushroom species are poisonous or hallucinogenic; others are edible — it is not always easy to tell the difference.

PROTECTION

Vulnerable species of animals and plants are protected by law: killing a single bat, for instance, could lead to a fine of up to £2000. SSSIs, sites of special scientific (i.e. wildlife) interest, are also protected.

THE CITIES OF BRITAIN



As citizens of an industrial country, most Britons live in or near cities or large towns. These range from pre-Roman foundations to modern, planned designs, but the pattern was mostly set during the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th Century.

City	Population
Greater London	6,770,000
Birmingham	998,000
Glasgow	716,000
Leeds	709,000
Sheffield	532,000
Liverpool	476,000
Bradford	463,000
Manchester	450,000
Edinburgh	439,000
Bristol	384,000
Coventry	309,000
Belfast	304,000
Cardiff	282,000

(Total UK population: c. 57 million.)

London is dealt with at greater length below, but there are others to look at. The UK obviously has quite a number of significant cities apart from the capital. However, old as some may be, many are not much older than most in the eastern states of the USA. There are some Roman-founded cities in Britain; York, for example, was effectively the capital of the Roman empire at one date, but the modern population is a little over 100,000; Leeds is the industrial and population centre of that area.To be fair, even industrial towns can go back a way.

Birmingham

England's second city had a name for metalworking in medieval times; in the nineteenth century, it started growing towards its present size. Today it is very much an industrial city, with a complex of fast roads looping round its shopping centre and a sprawl of factories beyond, but like many industrial cities it prides itself on its art galleries, its parks, and its world-class symphony orchestra. A particular feature is the number of Victorian industrial canals that run into the heart of the city. Some way out from the centre is the National Exhibition Centre, a modern construction that houses major motor shows and other large trade exhibitions, with its own railway station and a high-tech link to the city airport.

Glasgow

This too is what an American would call a "blue-collar" town, its medieval roots almost entirely buried now, save for its cathedral and the history of its university. It grew from a major port to a ship-building and industrial city with an appalling reputation for urban poverty, which may explain its subsequent (occasional) problems with crime. The once-great shipyards have decayed, but Glaswegians can be fierce in defence of the place, with its museums and its acres of parkland. Communal rivalries between Catholics and Protestants (and their respective soccer teams, Celtics and Rangers) are another feature of Glasgow life. The city dominates the banks of the river Clyde, but visitors may be struck most by the heavy local "urban Scottish" accent.

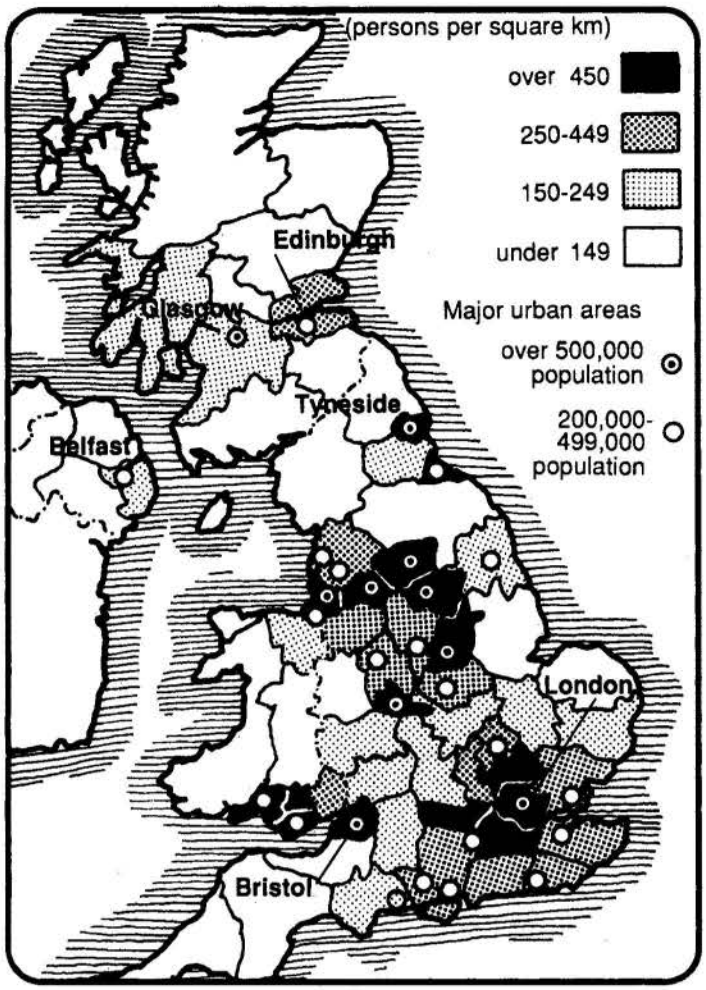
Leeds, Sheffield, and Bradford

These are the great industrial towns of Yorkshire; their growth in the industrial revolution again built on earlier bases, as Sheffield had for centuries produced steel and cutlery, and the other two, being sheep-country towns, started with woollen mills. Each lies among the rolling hills of the Yorkshire uplands, close to farms and coal-mines, with a very few old or interesting buildings among the grey brick terraces. Bradford has a large Asian Moslem community; Leeds is the most picturesque of the three, with sweeping parks, well-preserved Victorian buildings, and a major modern university.

Liverpool and Manchester

These are, similarly, Lancashire's workshop-towns; Liverpool (of Beatles fame) was a fishing village on the banks of the River Mersey that grew into a port (partly thanks to the slave trade), and later absorbed a large number of Irish immigrants; its large Catholic population worships in a huge, "funnel-shaped" modern cathedral. Birkenhead, across the estuary, can be reached by two tunnels or a ferry.

Manchester was an old weaving centre that became a city of cotton mills (with conditions that inspired Karl Marx's detestation of industrial capitalism), and is now noted for its mass of Victorian gothic architecture. The town hall is a particular Gothic spectacle. A three-quarter-mile overpass crosses the city and keeps the central streets fairly quiet. The Manchester public library system is very old-established, and includes fine collections of early books.



Edinburgh

The capital of Scotland may seem a remarkably long way down the list, but Edinburgh has grown from old-but-poor roots into a striking and spectacular city. As a centre of government rather than industry, it may be considered snobbish by other Scots, and it certainly has a traditional rivalry with Glasgow, but its "tourist interest" is considerable. It is dominated by the castle mound, a plug of hard volcanic rock; during the last Ice Age, this screened the softer stone to its east from the glaciers, so now the castle has steep slopes on most sides, but a long, smooth slope in the one direction; on this lies the "Royal Mile" of old streets, leading down to Holyroodhouse, the old royal palace of the Scottish monarchs; near to that is Arthur's Seat (nothing to do with King Arthur!), an 823 ft. hill (more volcanic rock) set in parkland. North of the castle are the Princes Street Gardens (a more cultivated sort of park), which form one side of Princes Street itself; beyond is the elegant Georgian New Town, and beyond that, eventually, the sea. The city is dominated by granite crags and gothic spires; its inevitable tourist appeal is boosted every summer by an international arts festival (with many unofficial but popular "Fringe" events).

Bristol

Another older port, where ships could come up the river Avon from the Atlantic and the Bristol Channel. While larger modern ships cannot reach the city, it remains prosperous. The Avon Gorge is spanned by Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Coventry

This was the setting of the original legend of Lady Godiva (much distorted by the Victorians, as usual). Its later importance as an industrial town made it a target for World War II bombers, and forty acres of the centre, including the old cathedral, were wiped out in one night in 1940. Thus the city centre is now very modern, and dominated by a famous new cathedral and the preserved fragments of the old.

Cardiff and Belfast

The capitals of, respectively, Wales and Northern Ireland are both Atlantic ports developed into industrial cities. At one time, the coal of South Wales was the fuel of British industry, while Belfast had the country's largest shipyard. Both industries are much decayed, but both cities remain very industrial; Cardiff still has seven miles of docks. Belfast, struggling with the ultimate city image problem, is actually a famously pretty Victorian port — incorporating half a square mile of bomb-scarred slums.

A final note on city buildings; British cities vary in architecture, but in all cases, there are few skyscrapers. Birmingham has some large developments, and residential tower blocks are quite common, but New York cityscapes are not found in Britain.

LONDON

"When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford."

— Samuel Johnson

"...gone, obliterated by Heinkel and JCB, laid to rest under the tarmac-tacky tires of the gleaming tourist coaches..."

— Iain Banks

So the UK has a number of cities — but its capital is one of the world's greatest; a vast sprawl of business, shopping, and homes, with nearly seven million inhabitants, the world's largest underground railway system beneath the streets, a thousand years of history in its buildings, and the traffic of four international airports in its sky.

Of course, like most cities, it's more complicated for people who actually live there. The superhero genre involves a lot of city living, so the first thing to say is that no two cities are quite alike, and London is categorically not New York — or Washington, or Los Angeles, or Olde Londonne Towne. It's old, and in its time it has spread out more than up, but it's evolved enough in its centre for its age not to show. Modern London has suburbs as well as centre, but it has a centre; the suburbs know what they are built around.

HISTORY

The centre, the City of London, goes back a while. It lies at the lowest bridging point on the Thames, Britain's second longest river, so as to form a river-port for traffic from Europe. The site was probably occupied from prehistoric times, and the Romans found a Celtic settlement there when they invaded; they made it into "Londinium", a market town. After it was sacked by Queen Boudicca (Boadicea) in 61 AD, they rebuilt it with two miles of defensive wall, which survived to be adapted by the Saxons and later by the Normans. A few fragments of the wall have been exposed and can be seen amongst the buildings of the modern City.

In the Middle Ages, London was a fortified capital city, while Westminster, a little upstream, had the royal palaces. As populations grew, the two ran together and expanded. Earlier, there had been broad marsh-lands south of the Thames, but climatic shifts and deliberate drainage made that area more habitable — the "South Work" (Southwark) was notorious for vice in Shakespeare's time. In the 16th century, fashionable society moved out of the City towards Westminster, creating the "West End", which even today remains the centre of entertainment and shopping.

In 1666, the Great Fire of London devastated much of the old City, destroying the vast old tumbledown St Paul's cathedral and many other buildings. Although his megalomaniac plans for re-building the entire city were rejected, if only for lack of money, the great architect Sir Christopher Wren was able to create an elegant new domed St Paul's, nowadays rather engulfed by the modern city but still a landmark.

London went on growing, but cramped medieval architecture was replaced by more open Classical and Georgian styles of terraces, parks and squares, much of which survive. In this time, Southwark was increasingly developed, but London really exploded in the nineteenth century; improved transport enabled people to work in town and live in the suburbs, while the working-class population crowded into the "East End" around the port. This was the London of Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper. The Empire was run from Westminster by men who commuted in from respectable suburban villas, while a couple of miles away, the Empire's trade came through docks in the heart of a teeming, dingy, often violent mass of slums and sweat-shops.

The pattern of growth continued into this century, but the creation of a "Green Belt" 20-30 miles in diameter around the city limited the sprawl. Then, in 1940, London was bombed heavily ("the Blitz"), damaging or destroying many old buildings. After the war, much was re-built, but modern laws wouldn't allow intensive development, and a number of new towns were built in neighbouring counties to absorb population growth. Meanwhile, the growing size of merchant ships reduced the importance of the Port of London, and trade shifted down-river to Tilbury. In the '50's, a series of appalling smogs (with associated deaths from lung disease) brought the century-old problem of the London "pea-souper" to a head, and clean air laws were introduced. Today, although its air isn't clean, London isn't prone to smog.

London is still evolving, but within limits. Commuters accept longer trips as transport improves; the Channel Tunnel may even bring commuting from France. Conversely, the City's continued success as a financial centre has led yuppies who want to live centrally to buy into the traditionally working-class docklands of east London, and a new community is being developed in the river-side area of "Thamesmead", eleven miles down-stream. New buildings are planned and built, but meet strong conservative resistance. London isn't tired of life yet.

MODERN TIMES

Life in London today is much like many modern cities; hectic, sometimes difficult, but with many advantages that only a great metropolis can offer. As in other cities, the difference between "private affluence and public squalor" can be striking, with gleaming modern buildings overlooking shabby streets and homeless vagrants, but the contrast in central London is still less severe than it is in, say, New York; the streets are imperfect but usable, the skyscrapers rarely run to marbled exhibitionism. London embodies British reserve when compared to American cities; there are some showpieces in the "Square Mile", the banking area that is the "City of London", fair-size office blocks and plush hotels around the West End, and some expensive shops, but Londoners rarely build to over-awe.

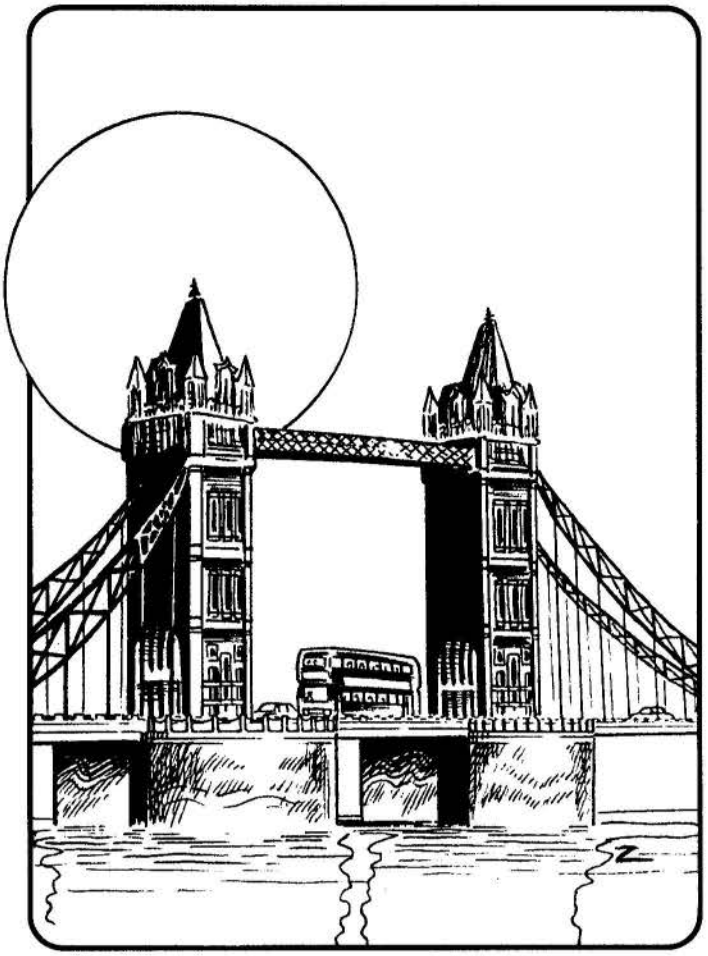
Prices of many things are higher in London than elsewhere in the UK, mostly because of the higher rents for businesses and shops. Because of this, employers have to pay their staff more — many have a "London weighting" built into their pay scales. Higher costs make some businesses think of moving out of the city, but the range of services, the closeness to customers and competition, and the vast, varied labour pool are incentives to remain.

The government of the City is unusual, as it still has places for many medieval trade guilds, now effectively senior businessmen's clubs, and a lot of pomp and ceremony. Other districts have simpler elected bodies. However, the Margaret Thatcher's government closed down the Greater London Council after policy disagreements, and there is now no city-wide elected government in London.

CITY SCENERY

In the eighteenth century, Edward Gibbon called London "Crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure", but he wouldn't have liked any modern cities. Crowds there still are, on foot and now in cars. The dissipation is mostly behind closed doors, apart from the "social" drinkers spilling out of crowded pubs on warm afternoons, the full-time alcoholics wandering or sitting slumped, and some visible signs of vice in a few places.

Physical dirt is also quite widespread. Britons are worse than Americans about dropping litter, and street cleaning is irregular, but the average small London building is probably less grimy and shabby than its New York counterpart.



These are the streets of a low-rise city. London grew out while New York grew up; only in the last thirty years have a few skyscrapers appeared. One landmark is the Telecom (formerly GPO) Tower (1965), a combined microwave mast and office block, 620ft including mast, that dominates north central London. More recent are some of the office blocks in the city (the tallest being the National Westminster Bank's 600ft, 49-storey tower — the world's tallest cantilevered building). In the East End and inner suburbs are post-war tower blocks, often unpopular with residents and anyone who has to look at them. Mostly, however, London buildings are four to eight stories high, built of brick, stone or concrete. The brick terraced workmen's housing found in so many older British towns appears in the East End and throughout the inner suburbs.

Incidentally, few buildings are particularly old. With fire, bombing, and re-development, London's medieval and Tudor buildings are mostly gone now; there is one half-timbered building in the City itself. However, there are scattered antiquities; the Tower of London, some exposed fragments of the Roman wall — and in outer districts, palaces and cottages which the city has absorbed.

Buildings aren't all of a city. London is proud of its parks and squares, and while the place isn't all garden, they are plentiful and sometimes attractive; London has been claimed as the greenest of major capital cities. The City is rather too cramped, but in the West End, there are Georgian squares, and large parks in Westminster, while outlying districts include such spaces as the 790 acres of Hampstead Heath.

TRANSPORT

The London Underground

The world's oldest underground rail system (started 1863) has 250 miles of route, 100 miles of it underground (mostly in central areas), and 272 stations (wider set than on New York's subway, which has more on slightly fewer miles). It mostly runs north of the river; the soil to the south is less hospitable, and those areas have more surface-level British Rail lines. Unfortunately, the age of the Underground system means that it is now rather run-down; London Transport have limited funds for maintenance, and the government is strongly averse to subsidising it.

There has been one major fire tragedy on the Underground (at King's Cross, a few years ago), and there is concern about possible repetitions. With severe crowding at peak times, London Transport have raised "Tube" fares to deter passengers. In future, with roads increasingly crowded, the system may need an over-haul and more encouragement. Still, it remains a popular and busy network, with great potential for atmospheric game story-telling — stations now closed, with WW II posters on the walls, mixtures of Victorian and modern engineering, maze-like station tunnels, lines linking richest and poorest districts, and so on. There is a problem with crime on the system, including a few violent muggings, but overall, it's safer than the New York subway. (The London branch of the "Guardian Angels" focus their efforts on a few lines with bad reputations.)

Streets of London

Like other great cities, London found that increasing motorized traffic was stretching its through roads, and responded with the creation of a great "ring road", the M25 motorway, which forms a complete 120-mile loop around the city (including a tunnel under the Thames in the east and a bridge in the west). Unfortunately, despite its scale and three lanes each way, the M25 was overloaded from the day it opened, and traffic may slow to a crawl at busy times.

Other motorways run fairly close to the centre of the city, sometimes dominating neighbourhoods where they run over them on concrete fly-overs (overpasses). Central London's streets are busy; an average traffic speed in rush hours of about 12 mph is no improvement over the 1930s. (But there are exceptions; the City works a five-day week, and at weekends, this business district can become strikingly quiet, with barely a car or pedestrian in sight.) The traffic consists of a mixture of buses, vans, taxis, and private vehicles, although many people avoid the place who drive elsewhere. Commercial deliveries rarely use large trucks, due to narrow streets. Pedal-cycles may be seen, but the density of traffic can make cycling dangerous in the heart of the city.

Railroading

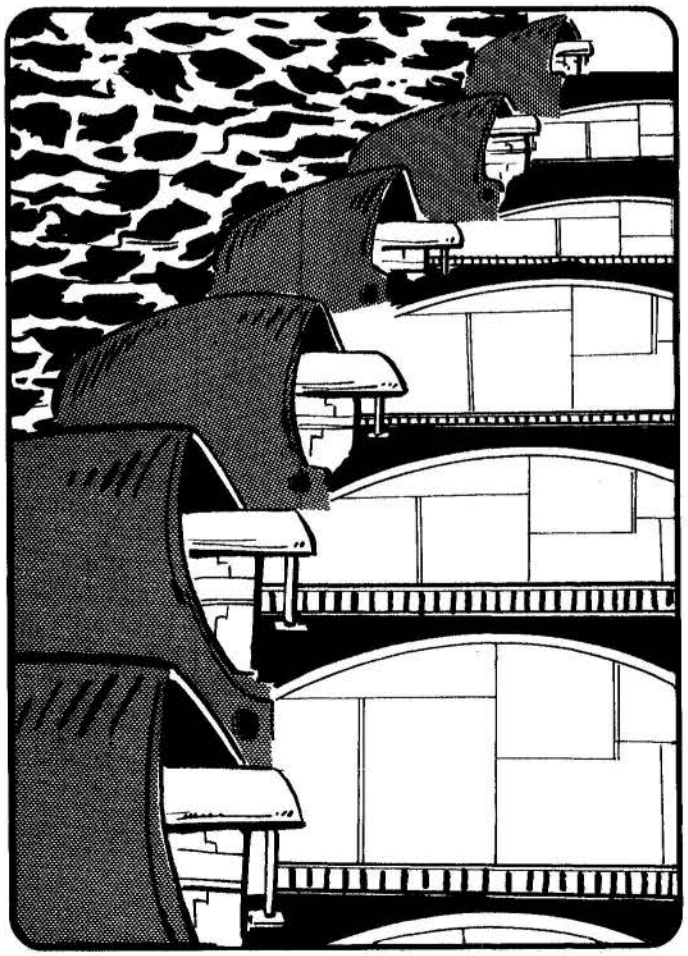
London is the great nexus of the UK railway system; many lines terminate here, a few pass through or underneath. See "Transport" for a list of stations; three are on the Euston Road alone.

Happy Landings

London's main airports lie some way out from the centre, but planes often fly over all parts of the city on their way to or from them. There is a small "STOL-port" (for short take-off planes) in the old "docklands" area.

THE THAMES

Someone once called the Thames (pronounced "Temms") "Liquid History". London's river isn't quite the highway it was in medieval times. 215 miles long, it is around 250-300 metres wide in central London. It has quite strong currents, less impeded by modern bridges than they were by multi-arch medieval structures and as British winters are now rather milder than they were, the Thames never freezes over today. It is worked by pleasure-boats (one was recently involved in a tragic accident) and small cargo-carriers, but modern ocean-going freighters can't reach this far up river.



The Thames used to be severely polluted, but stricter laws have made it less dangerous for fish, or people who fall in, today (although stomach pumping might still be advised, and it can be cold and deceptively fast).

There are over twenty bridges over the Thames where it passes through London, for both road and rail. Lowest is Tower Bridge, the elegant late-Victorian iron drawbridge near the Tower of London that is raised to allow larger ships up-stream, world famous from pictures; as American purchasers discovered a few years ago, this is not "London Bridge". The current holder of the latter title (next upstream) is the latest of several on its site; the medieval version was a 19-span affair with a multitude of occupied buildings on it, very vulnerable to fire, whereas the modern structure has just three low concrete arches. Others include Waterloo and Westminster bridges, and various ornate nineteenth-century suspension structures further upstream.

The south-east of England is very slowly sinking, and London especially is settling on its clay base; a combination of high tides and storms might raise the Thames enough to flood the city. To guard against this, a barrier was created downstream at Woolwich in 1972-82 — a set of curved gates that can be rotated out of the way onto the river bed or raised as necessary. The largest gates are 61m (200ft) long and weigh 3300 tons; the whole is a major engineering feat. Moored along the banks of the Thames are many craft, some on temporary business, but some permanently in place. These include the WW II cruiser HMS Belfast, moored near the Tower and Tower Bridge and serving as a museum.

The banks of the Thames in the city are well-reinforced; on the north side especially, the raised river-side roads, the "Embankments", are a major part of the pattern of London. (Incidentally, other, minor rivers that were once part of the London scene, such as the Fleet, are now submerged into the hidden drainage and sewer system.)

CENTRAL AREAS

1. The City (also known as the "Square Mile", because it is one, approximately); a business district, mostly consisting of office buildings.

1A. The Bank of England.

1B. The Stock Exchange.

1C. Lloyds of London — a society which acts as the world centre of insurance dealing.

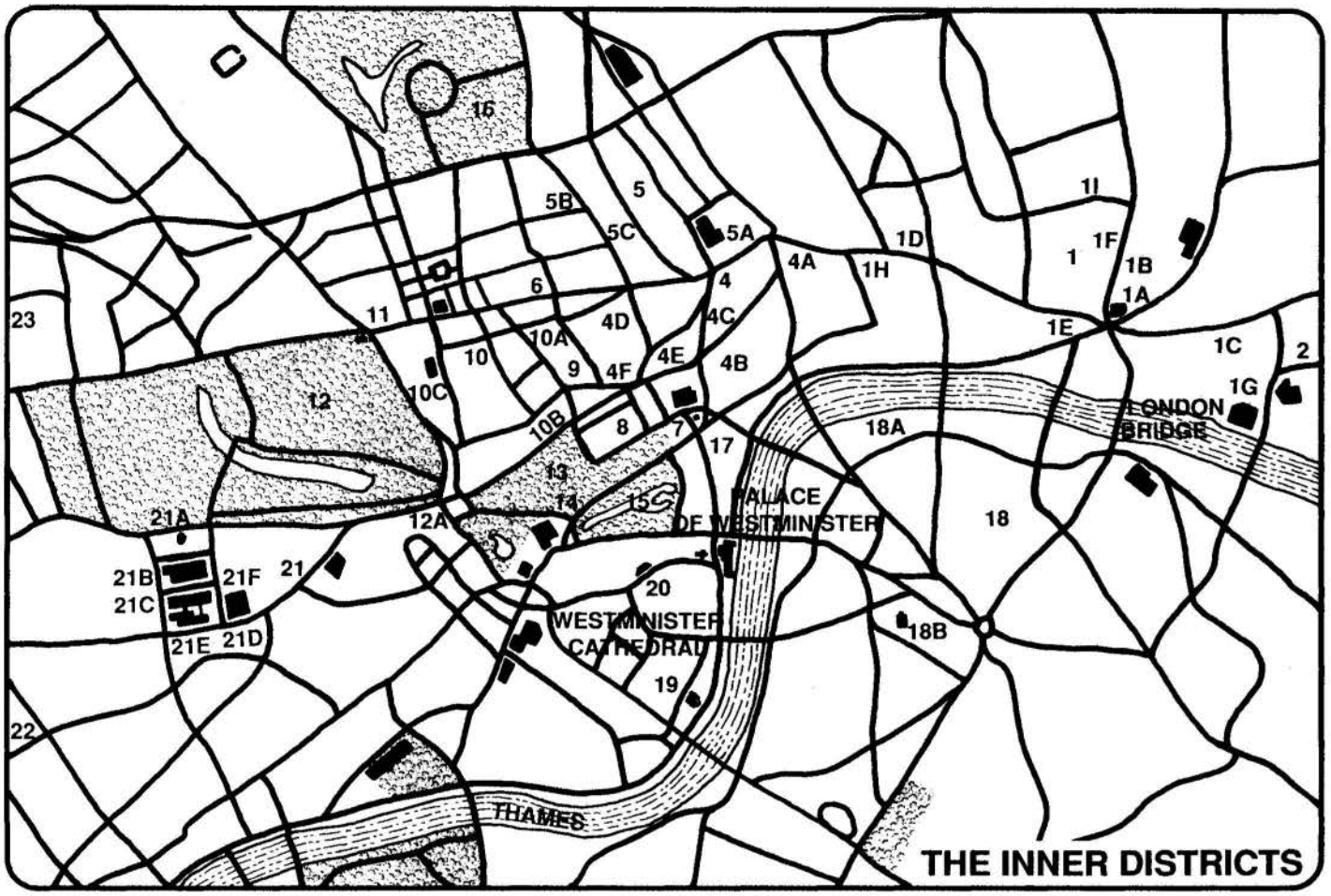
1D. Hatton Garden — Centre of the UK diamond and jewelery trade.(Note: Some of the world's most important commodity markets are in this area, and most of the national press used to be based in the City, in Fleet Street — until a recent series of moves to new, cheaper sites further out.)

1E. St Paul's Cathedral. (The City also has many Wren churches.)

1F. The Guildhall (Tudor; scene of City ceremonies).

1G. The Tower of London (see below).

1H. The Inns of Court (where Britain's barristers are based).



1I. The Barbican — a modern development, housing about half of the City's resident population of 8,000 (the daily workforce of the whole area is in the millions), the home concert-hall of the London Symphony Orchestra, the London base of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and other arts venues — in a legendarily maze-like layout.

2. The East End, the old docklands and manufacturing area.

*(**Note:** The docks were created by digging channels outward from the river on both banks. Today, the "Docklands" areas nearer to the City are being developed to house City employees who don't want to commute, with old warehouses being converted to flats [apartments], and a fast automated rail link.)*

3. Greenwich has a long association with British sea power; today, it is mainly noted for three building complexes in parkland that adjoins the river. The Royal Naval College is a naval university for NATO personnel, using buildings designed by Wren in 1703 as the Greenwich Hospital. Behind it is the National Maritime Museum, some of whose buildings are seventeenth century; attached to this are dry docks housing the Cutty Sark — once the world's fastest China clipper — and the Gipsy Moth IV, a 53ft ketch in which Sir Francis Chichester circumnavigated the world solo in 1966-7. The Royal Observatory, at the high point of the park, is part of the museum; the astronomers moved out in 1950, but the Observatory still marks the zero meridian of longitude (and gives the name to Greenwich Mean Time — GMT).

4. The West End.

4A. Holborn.

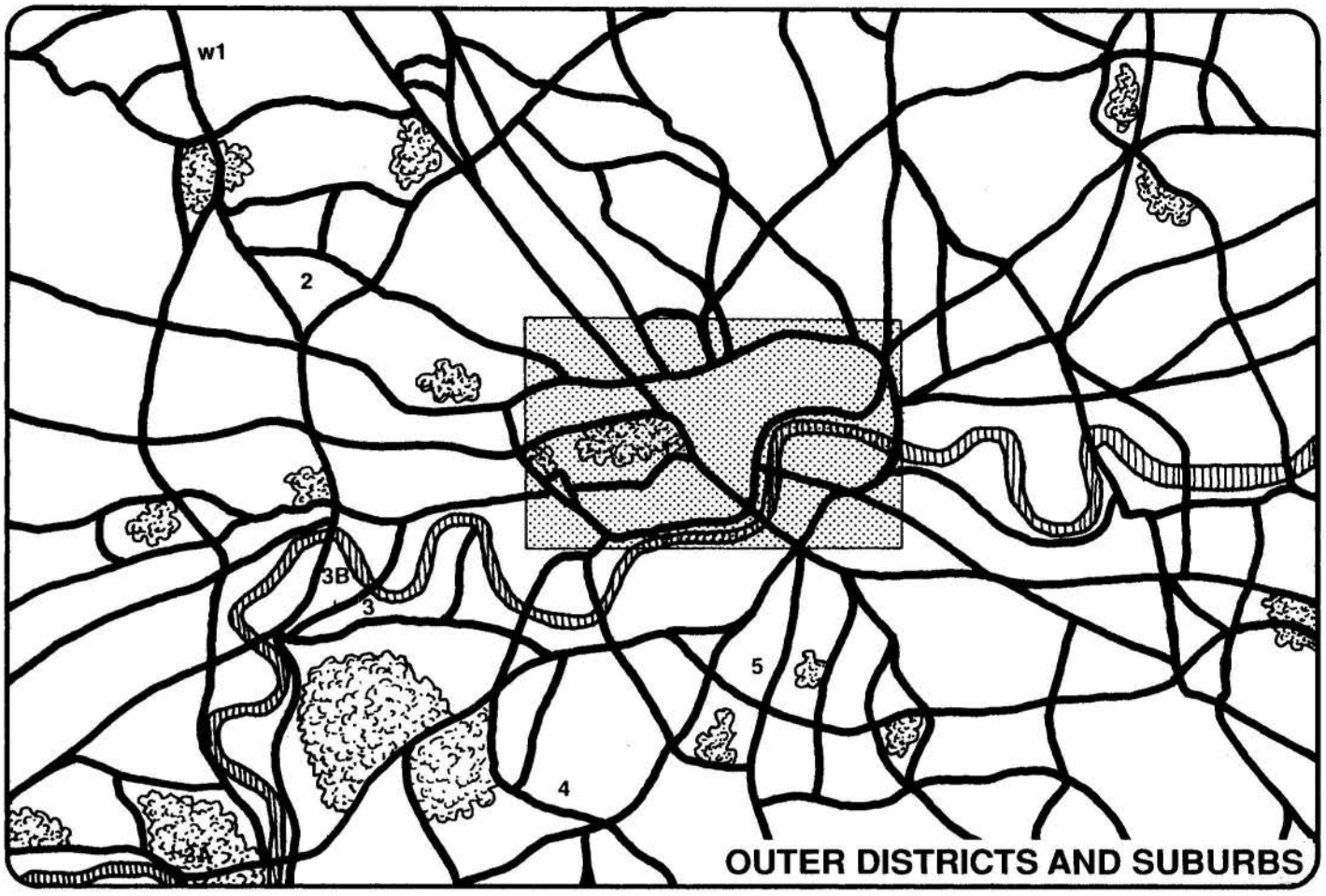
4B. Covent Garden — the former site of London's fruit and flower market, which moved out a few years ago; the old buildings are now used for shops, mostly aimed at tourists and better-off Londoners, and the London Transport Museum. Also in Covent Garden is Britain's largest opera house, hosting world-class productions.

4C. Charing Cross Road, noted for many large and small bookshops.

4D. Soho (Nothing to do with New York's Soho; the name comes from an old hunting cry, from when the area was the City's rural edge.) This area used to be London's centre for strip shows and porno theatres, but a clean-up campaign has mostly driven those out; includes London's fairly small but thriving Chinatown, an Italian community, a wide variety of good restaurants, and dozens of cinemas, theatres, and shops.

4E. Leicester Square — includes some very large cinemas.

4F. Piccadilly Circus — a frequently traffic-jammed interchange with the famous statue of "Eros" — actually the Shaftesbury memorial, with the Angel of Christian Charity on top — in its centre, all lit up by neon signs at night.



5. Bloomsbury, an elegant area of squares and 18th century houses with early 20th century literary associations. Today, Bloomsbury holds much of London's scattered University.

5A. The British Museum (see below).

5B. The Telecom Tower.

5C. Tottenham Court Road, site of many electrical goods and furniture stores.

6. Oxford Street, London's greatest shopping street, fallen into tawdriness today but still holding Selfridges and several of its rivals, chain store flagships, boutiques, game shops, and SF bookshops. Packed solid on any day but Sunday (and the Sunday trading laws may change some day).

7. Trafalgar Square, commemorating Nelson's naval victory of 1805. At the centre of the square is Nelson's Column, 185ft tall including the statue of the admiral, with four great stone lions around the base, plus a lot of tourists and pigeons. On the north side, across the busy road, is the National Gallery (see below). Also facing the Square are Canada House on the west side, and the South African Embassy, with a permanent anti-apartheid demonstration outside, on the east.

8. St James's, traditional site of the London gentleman's clubs.

9. Regent Street. Another major shopping street, with an elegant Regency curved facade to the buildings along part of its length.

10. Mayfair, a traditionally upper-class area which includes Berkeley Square and Grosvenor Square. The latter may be of interest to visiting superheroes; its west side is formed by the American Embassy, a vast modern building. (The square's former occupants include John Adams, who was Minister to Britain before he became president, and Eisenhower's D-Day HQ; today there is a memorial to Franklin Roosevelt in the gardens.)

10A. Bond Street, with several expensive antiques and fine art shops and auction houses.

10B. Piccadilly, with more "classy" stores, and the Ritz Hotel next to Green Park.

10C. Park Lane, facing Hyde Park and largely occupied by more expensive hotels, including the Grosvenor House, the Dorchester, and the London Hilton.

11. Marble Arch, a Regency-period structure, adjacent to Speaker's Corner, where anyone can speak or preach — or heckle or argue; crowds gather to watch the fun, especially at weekends, under the amiable gaze of a very few policemen (in case political or theological debate gets boisterous).

12. Hyde Park has gardens, statues, walks, and water (the Round Pond, and the elongated "Serpentine" and "Long Water").

12A. Hyde Park Corner, a legendarily busy traffic interchange.

13. Green Park.

14. Buckingham Palace, with enclosed gardens (see "The Royal Family").

15. St James's Park, regarded as the most attractive of all with its central lake. (Incidentally, while these parks have some secluded spots that might be dangerous after dark, they have nothing like the reputation of New York's Central Park.)

16. Regent's Park, which dominates the Euston/St Marylebone area, surrounded by expensive Regency terraces. It contains both an open-air theatre and the world-famous London Zoo (or rather, its city site; it also has less cramped quarters out of town to the north, on the downs at Whipsnade); nearby is Baker Street (of Sherlock Holmes fame), Madame Tussaud's wax-works, Lord's Cricket Ground, and "Little Venice", a marina at the end of the Grand Union Canal. North is the upper-middle-class residential area of Hampstead, with its great green Heath.

17. Whitehall (see below).

18. Southwark.

18A. The South Bank Complex, a modern arts centre built of concrete in a style about which opinions vary; the buildings, linked by raised walk-ways, include the Royal Festival Hall (a major concert hall), the smaller Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery (for temporary exhibitions of modern art), the National Film Theatre (showing a huge variety of foreign, classic, and "art" movies), the Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI — a permanent display of the history of cinema and television), and the National Theatre, whose three auditoriums carry classical and modern plays, musicals, and more.

18B. The Imperial War Museum, housed in what used to be the "Bethlem Royal Hospital" — the origin of the word "Bedlam". Today, the 19th century building holds records and mementos of conflicts throughout British history, especially this century. (The museum carefully avoids glorifying war, but records the facts. In a game, a rather grim supernatural scenario could easily be set around a building that housed the insane for a hundred years, and relics of mass violence for the last fifty.)

19. The Tate Gallery of modern art.

20. New Scotland Yard.

21. Belgravia, running into Knightsbridge and then Kensington, and south of those, Chelsea. These are often considered rather "up-market" areas, but Chelsea is a varied residential area (whose football team doesn't exactly have an aristocratic following), dominated by the King's Road with its many boutiques. (This does incorporate Sloane Square, legendary haunt of the young upper classes.) In Belgravia is Harrods, the famous department store.

21A. The Albert Hall, a vast oval red-brick building facing Hyde Park and the Albert Memorial (Prince Albert was Queen Victoria's husband), a venue for boxing, conferences, classical concerts, and other events (despite the notoriously bad acoustics).

21B. The Imperial College of Science and Technology, a part of the University of London.

21C. The Science Museum has everything from early domestic appliances, through space-flight displays and a Foucault pendulum hung through several floors, to old cars, aircraft, and scientific instruments.

21D. The Geological Museum.

21E. The Natural History Museum has fossils, stuffed specimens (old!) and models, of most of the varieties of life on Earth.

21F. The Victoria and Albert Museum ("the V&A"), dedicated to art and design, with exhibits including sculpture, fabrics, musical instruments and silverware.

22. Hammersmith, an area of houses, hotels, and the great concrete "flyover" on which the M4 arrives in London.

23. Notting Hill, where a large West Indian immigrant community holds the largest annual street carnival in Europe.

OUTER DISTRICTS AND SUBURBS

If London is a "collection of villages", it got that way by engulfing a lot of genuine villages; the list of outlying areas and neighbourhoods could go on for pages.

W1. Harrow, with its famous school.

2. Wembley, site of both a large modern conference centre and Britain's main international sports stadium.

3. Richmond, a pleasant area of mostly quite expensive houses.

3A. Hampton Court Palace, favourite home of Henry VIII, said to be haunted by the ghosts of two of his wives, set in flower gardens which incorporate a famous hedge maze.

3B. Kew Gardens, originally the grounds of a royal palace; today, they form London's main botanical gardens, a centre of scientific research (and a very pleasant park), with large glasshouses holding exotic specimens such as giant palms.

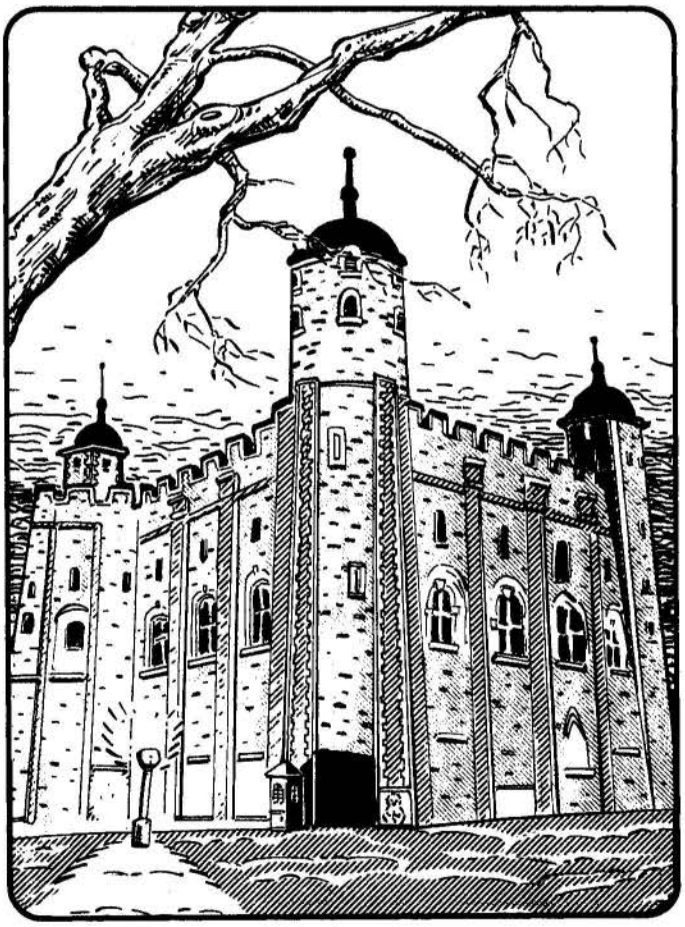
4. Wimbledon, scene of the lawn tennis championships.

5. Brixton, which has a legendarily varied racial mix (including a large coloured population).

Beyond these areas are the "commuter belt" towns; those south of London (such as Croydon or Bromley) are marginally richer and more staid than those to the north (such as Watford or Enfield) — but all these are towns in their own right. The sprawl hasn't totally swallowed them yet.

MAJOR LONDON SITES

London has a large number of locations that could be used for scenarios. The following is just a brief selection; readers should look at a good guidebook, such as the Michelin Guide, or other books about London, for more ideas, details, and maps.



The Tower of London

This is a major tourist attraction — rightly, given its long, varied history, and its current status as a museum and treasure-house.

It dates to 1066, when the conquering William of Normandy built it to control the city; since then it has been a palace, prison (with headsman's block), arsenal, records-house, mint, and zoo. Not surprisingly, it's now said to be haunted.

The original design incorporated parts of the Roman-Saxon city wall, but all that's left of William's fortress is the White Tower, the solid, square structure shown in so many pictures. (It used to be, literally, whitewashed, but not today.) Extensions over the centuries, fire, flood, and World War II bombs have left a site with buildings dating from almost every era from 1066 to the modern day. Well-known features include "Traitor's Gate", the river entrance in the days when the Thames was London's highway, and the "Bloody Tower", supposed scene of even more violence than the other parts.

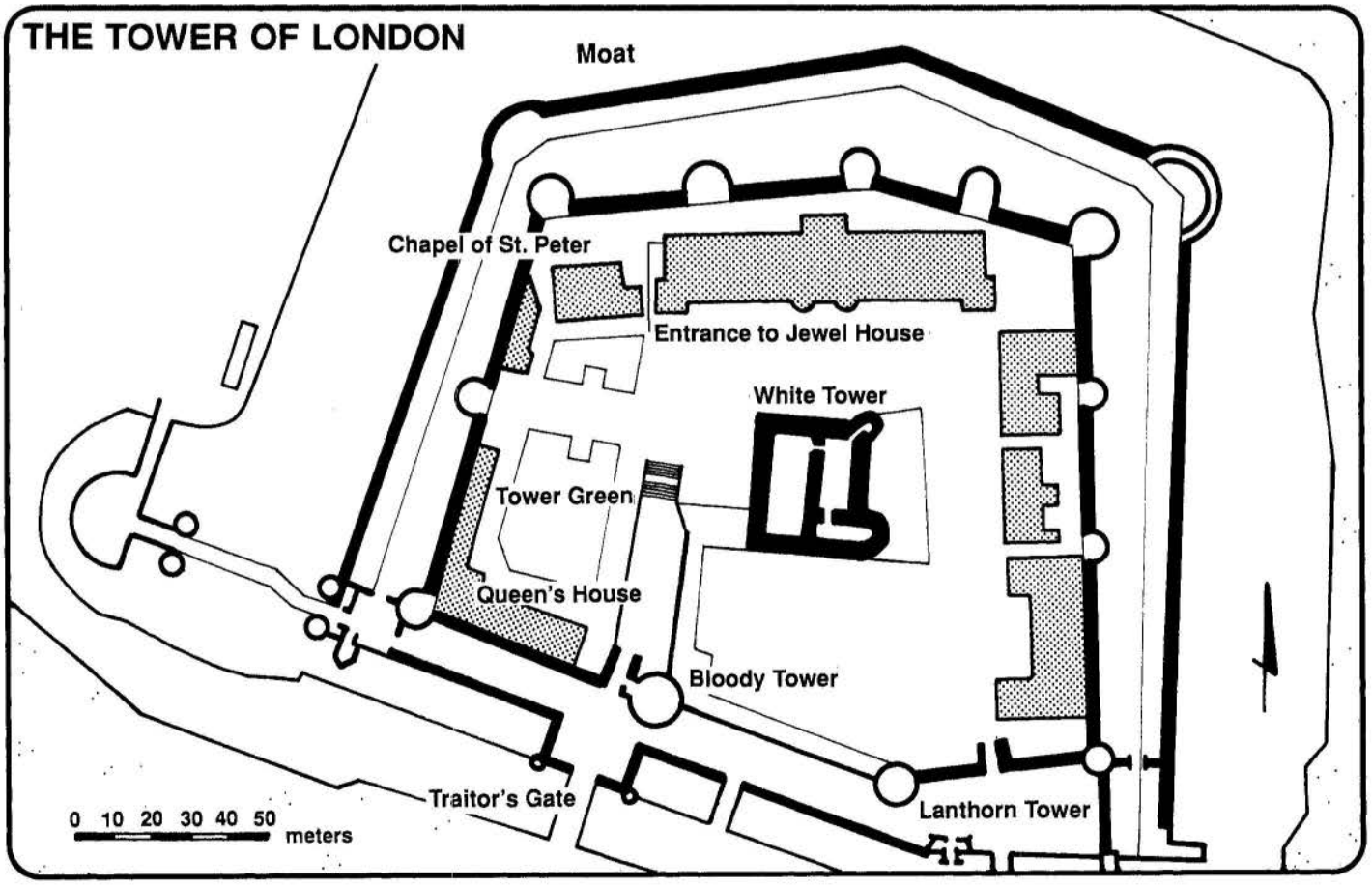
The nominal commander of the Tower is the "Constable", whose job, going back to 1071, held for five years, is a high personal honour. He commands the "Yeoman Warders", a body going back to Henry VII who are again mostly ceremonial today. (These honours go to old military men.) Tourists mostly see the Warders, in their sixteenth-century uniforms, but these are guides and night-watchmen; there are also army guard detachments (in parade dress, but armed for real), and always a few policemen around. An official ceremonial artillery unit fires salutes from the tower on big royal occasions.

The other famous occupants are the Tower's ravens; because of superstition, these large scavengers are kept (in comfortable conditions) with their wings clipped.

The Tower was never much tested as a fortress, and only kings with cause to fear their people liked it as a palace, but a lot of royal odds and ends were stored here over the years, including the zoo (until the nineteenth century), the Royal Mint and Public Records for short periods, and some important prisoners, including ex-monarchs, future queens, and (in 1941) Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy.

London's armoury was stowed in the Tower in case of attack; the collection remained even when it grew totally out of date, and today the Tower is a great museum of early weapons and armour, from tenth-century swords through Renaissance jousting armour to later Indian and Japanese masterpieces.

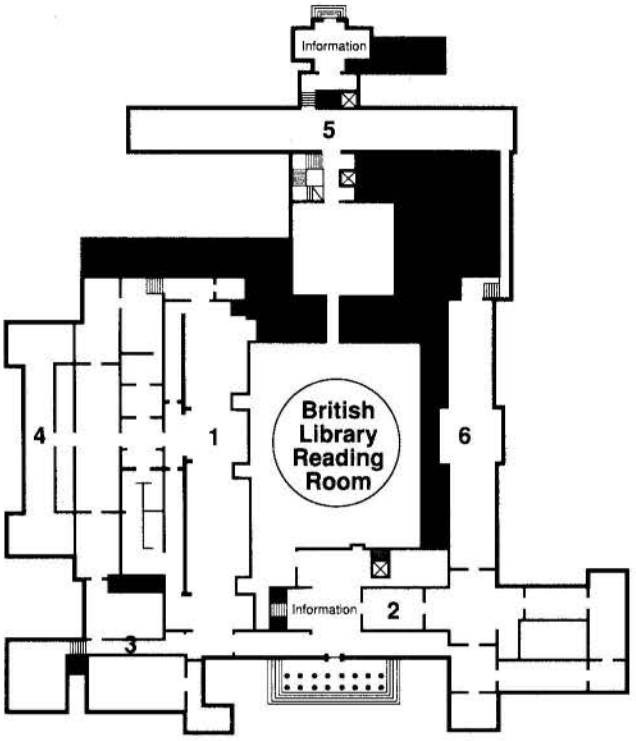
The Crown Jewels of England were nearly stolen from the Tower by the outrageous Colonel Blood in 1671, but they're still there today. The surviving jewels are mostly seventeenth century or later, Cromwell having melted down most earlier pieces, but Charles II had a crown refurbished that may have been Edward the Confessor's. There's also Queen Victoria's Imperial State Crown, complete with the "Black Prince's Ruby" (actually a spinel, worn by Henry V at Agincourt) and one of the "Stars of Africa", cut from the Cullinan Diamond, another crown incorporating the Koh-i-noor ("Mountain of Light"), an Indian gem with enough blood in its past to fuel stories of a curse, plus a sceptre with the largest cut diamond in the world (530 carats, another "Star of Africa"), and much more.



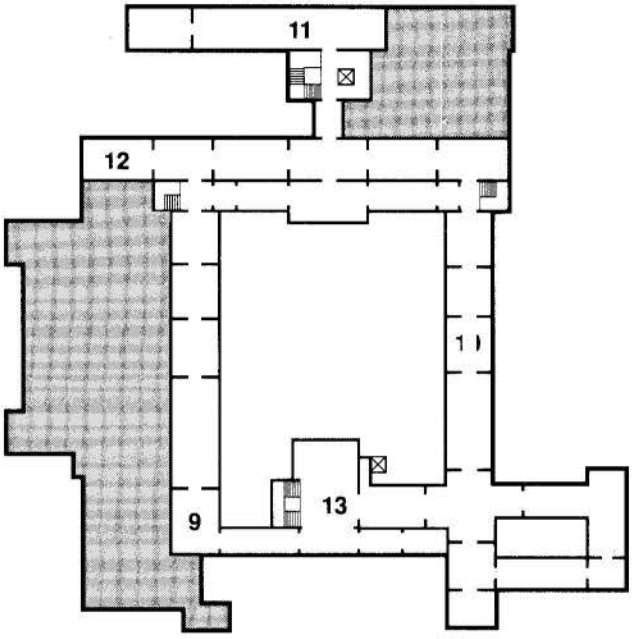
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

⊠ Elevator
Service/Storage Areas
Administration Areas

1. Egyptian Sculpture
2. Illuminated Manuscripts
3. Greek Bronze Age
4. Sculptures from the Parthenon
5. Art of Islam, South and Southeast Asia, China and Korea
6. King's Library
7. Roman Britain
8. Sutton Hoo Ship Burial
9. Greek and Roman Life Room
10. Coins and Medals Gallery
11. Prints and Drawings
12. Mummies
13. Prehistory and Roman Britain



Ground Floor



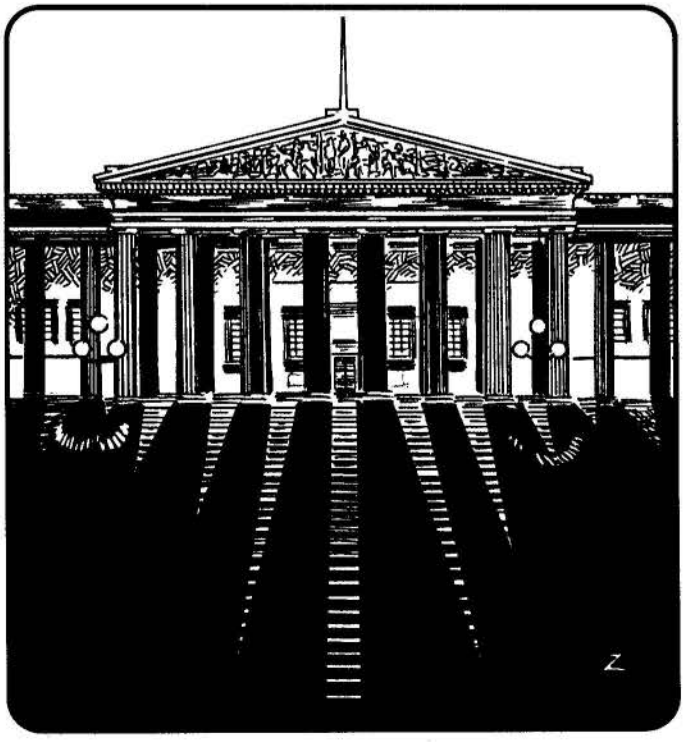
Upper Floor

They are, of course, displayed in an underground strongroom behind armoured glass. It's rumoured that anyone who somehow broke this glass would lose their fingers to armoured shutters; in a world with known supervillains, the heavy security would no doubt be augmented by the highest level of defensive technology, forming the "ultimate challenge" for one class of villain.

Plans of the Tower are included here; GMs should remember that, in daylight, it will usually be thronged with tourists.

The British Museum

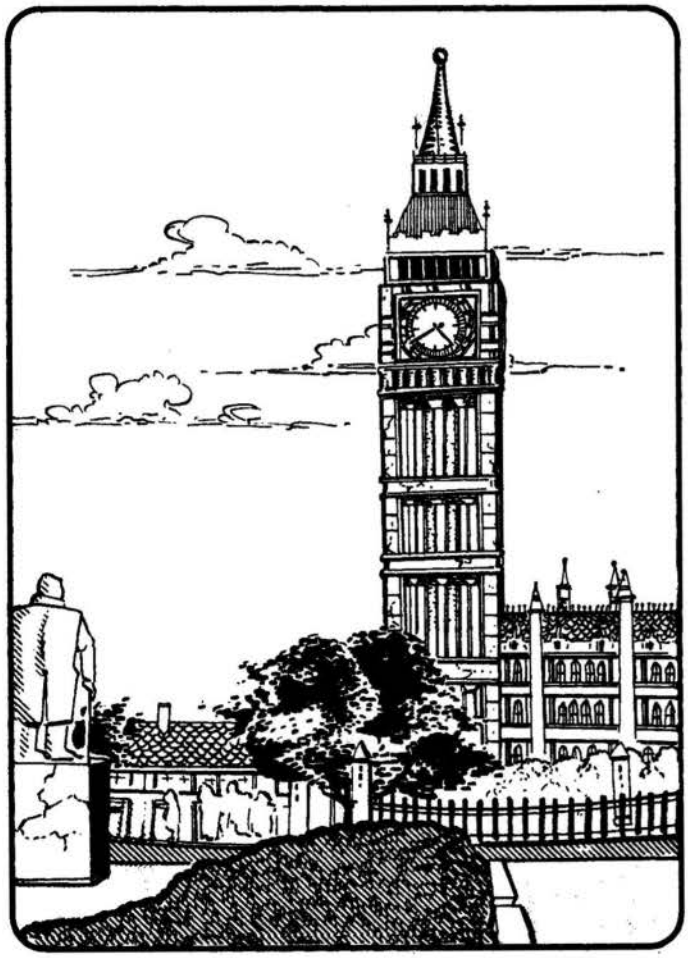
This is one of the world's great museums, occupying a large, early-19th century neo-classical building. Inside are collections ranging from prehistoric times to near-modern furnishings, from all over the world, including the Rosetta stone, the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon in Greece (which the Greeks now want back), the treasures from the Sutton Hoo ship burial, Assyrian winged sphinxes and Lewis Viking chessmen. Paintings, scientific displays, and the ethnographic collection are, however, elsewhere.

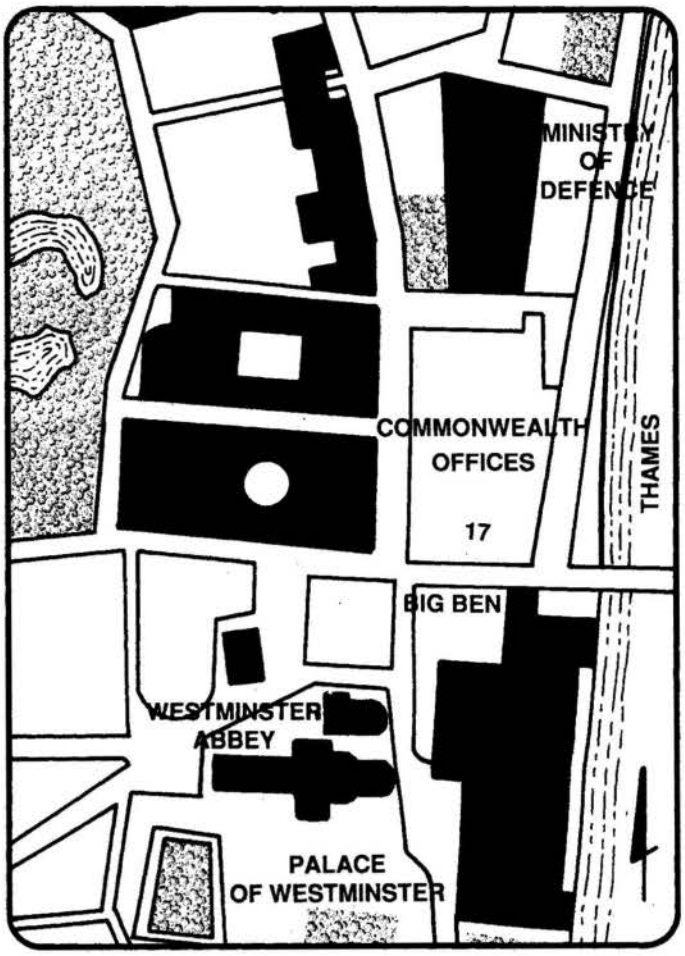


The British Library, which is a copyright library (and so receives a copy of every book published in Britain), long shared the building, but today, the growing size of its collection and storage problems have obliged it to have a new building constructed a little way north, on the Euston Road (between the three railway stations). The Library reading room was where Marx researched Das Kapital; its collections include two original copies of the Magna Carta.

The National Gallery

This is another great collection in another neo-classical building; it includes Leonardo's Virgin and Child (subject to delicate repair work after a vandalistic attack), van Eyck's Arnolfini Wedding, Constable's Haywain, a Van Gogh Sunflowers, and works by practically every other noted pre-20th century artist.





Whitehall

This is the centre of British government, with Downing Street (where no.10 is the Prime Minister's residence, and no.11 that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer), a narrow road to one side; several ministries and departments face the road or are nearby. At the end is Parliament Square, faced by Westminster Abbey — actually Britain's "state church" — and the Palace of Westminster, a gothic structure better known as the "Houses of Parliament", complete with clock-tower containing the 13.5-ton bell, Big Ben. The Palace faces the river, forming a landmark from all directions.



CROSS-COUNTRY

TRAVELLING

Getting from A to B in Britain is always possible, and sometimes simple, but the system suffers from having evolved rather than being set down in one piece. There are "planned" roads, railways, and airports, but there are also a lot of bodge-ups and quick fixes. On the other hand, what's evolved has evolved to work (and some of the plans have failed).

One point for dwellers in bigger countries; distances in Britain are usually much less than those in the US or Australia. The road distance from one end of the mainland to the other is around 850 miles, and very few journeys run to more than 4-500. Britons therefore regard distances in the hundreds of miles much as Americans regard those in the thousands, and are generally used to shorter journeys. This has certain practical implications, such as the fact that British soccer fans can always get to "away" matches within a day (and often do).

GETTING IN TO THE UK

British customs work is handled by HM Customs and Excise, one of the oldest-established branches of UK government, while immigration comes under the Home Office. The laws involved aren't as paranoid as the USA's can be, but they can be petty.

To begin with, a visa is not required to enter the UK, but anyone coming to Britain to work may need a Work Permit. This rule is, however, relaxed for some categories, such as priests, or journalists from the foreign press. Britain is a traditional destination for immigrants from poorer British Commonwealth countries, but immigration is quite strictly controlled, so the authorities watch out for people attempting to evade the limits; allegations of racism in the form and enforcement of these laws have been made, especially over the treatment of families. Because of the laws covering Commonwealth citizenship, some British passport holders (such as many from Hong Kong) do not have a legal right of residence in the UK. Having said all of this, however, "obviously legitimate" tourists and businessmen will usually get in with little trouble.

Limits on Luggage

Customs officials watch out for smuggling of "dutiable" goods such as alcohol and tobacco, and illegal shipments such as drugs, enforcing laws similar to those in the US and facing similar problems. When pursuing smugglers within the UK, they work with the police; due to rivalry between the two groups, there have sometimes been coordination problems. They will also watch out for live animals and guns.

Britain has strict quarantine laws, designed to keep diseases out of the country. There is no rabies in the UK, whereas there is in Europe, and publicity campaigns have emphasised the nastiness of the disease. (Animals are allowed in after six months in official quarantine.) Weapons are taken even more seriously.

Weapon control rules obviously serve to reduce the possibility of hijacking and terrorist bombing, despite past tragedies. But Britain has quite strict weapons control laws generally; anyone trying to carry weapons in secretly will be assumed to have violent criminal intentions. This is especially true of anyone trying to get guns into Northern Ireland, although with Irish terrorists sometimes operating on the mainland, and easy travel across the Irish Sea, the distinction is small; with counter-terrorist laws in operation and public contempt for terrorists, anyone caught running guns into Britain is going to be in serious trouble.

Game Considerations

These laws mean trouble for characters with focussed powers or animal companions — and here, UK public opinion is on the side of the law. Animal companions will probably have to be left at home; weapons may be, too. Clever characters can have the same chances as any other smuggler, but they must then avoid getting caught within the UK. Even non-obviously-offensive foci, such as magic amulets, may have problems if Customs officers suspect the owner of trying to smuggle valuable artworks in or out without paying appropriateduties. There is also the question of characters with innate powers, in worlds where such are recognised; such worlds may have laws treating the characters as "weapons" in themselves. However, this is left to the GM to consider in light of the campaign background.

FOOTPATHS

Unlike some Americans, Britons don't regard walking as strange. That doesn't mean that many don't prefer to use cars where possible, but most town-centre roads have pavements ("sidewalks"), and even recently-designed industrial estates have pedestrian underpasses. These are shared with pedal-cyclists; the bicycle is a minority taste, but a perfectly sensible form of town transport. However, cycling in major cities such as London, while done, is risky, and bicycles and pedestrians are banned from motorways.

By old laws, regularly-used cross-country footpaths are public "rights of way", and walkers are entitled to remove obstructions, while land-owners shouldn't (for example) graze dangerous animals on the land they cross. However, walkers aren't entitled to cause damage to crops or property. Country walking ("rambling") is a popular hobby. In recent years, many longer footpaths have been re-surveyed and even extended; some of these follow ancient (pre-Roman!) trade routes, but the main point is that they give access to attractive countryside.

Finally, many (not all) British footpaths are also open to horses; riding is a very popular hobby in rural Britain, and there are more horses in the UK now than in the nineteenth century. Some footpaths are legally roads, and so of interest to the small group of hobbyist "off-road" motorists, whose enthusiasm isn't popular with ramblers.

THE OPEN ROAD

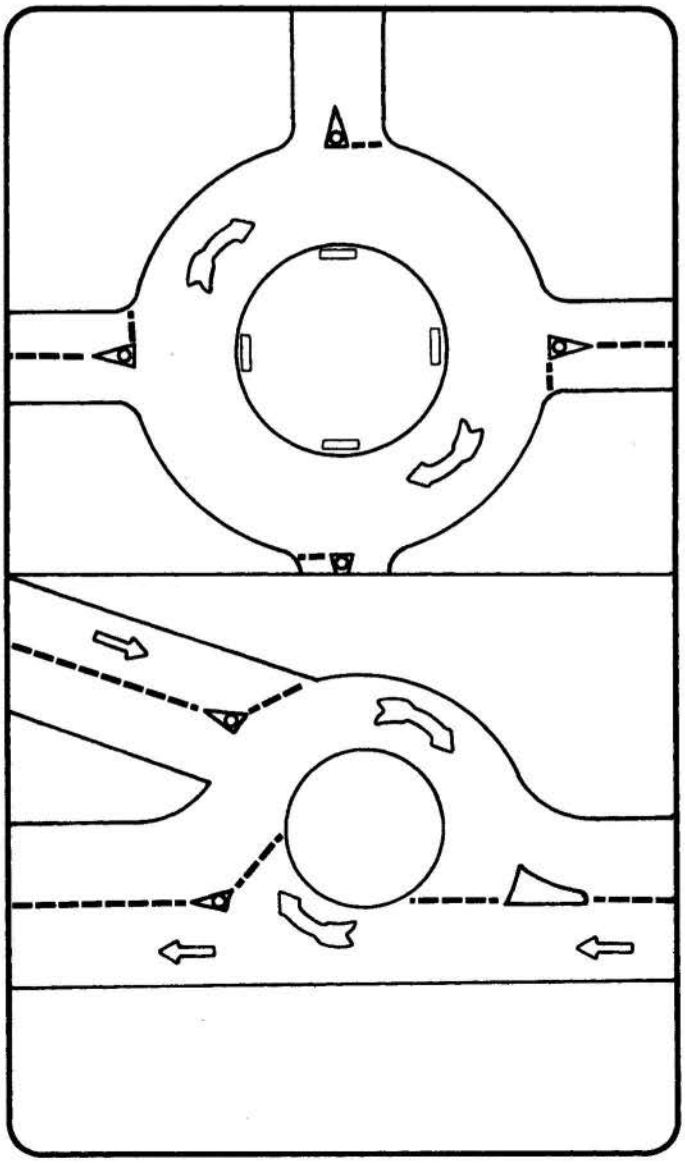
The UK road system is a mixture of old and new plans and ideas, systems and conventions. Some road layouts follow medieval or Roman patterns; others are new. Traffic laws verge on the medieval (blocking the road is legally "Obstructing the Queen's Highway"), but the country has a full body of laws covering motor vehicles. All but a very few "private" roads are freely open to the public, although some major bridges have tolls, and there have recently been suggestions for more private toll roads (US "turnpikes"); minor roads are maintained by local authorities, trunk roads are the responsibility of the national government.

American motorists notice a number of differences in the UK. Most obviously, the British drive on the **left** — so the driver sits on the **right** in a British car. A small difference, but crucial for street scenes, and it could make for problems for a newcomer. Left-hand drive cars (special imports or tourists) are rare.

By international agreement, Americans and Britons are entitled to drive on each other's roads for up to a year with their own countries' driving licenses, after which they are obliged to take a local test. The British test concentrates on town driving techniques, and includes a short verbal quiz but no written component. Separate tests are required for large motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles, and so on. Learner-drivers must carry an "L-plate" (a white square with a red "L" on it) on the car, and aren't allowed on motorways. The legal age to drive a car in the UK is 17. (For a small motorcycle, it's 16; for a small truck, 18; for large trucks and buses, 21.) Another significant detail; all new cars in the UK have to be fitted with front seat belts, and all drivers have to wear them. (The law may eventually be extended to cover rear seats too.) Similarly, all motorcyclists in the UK have to wear crash-helmets of an approved design.

British roads range from "single carriageway", through "dual carriageway" (ie multi-lane, divided in the centre), to "motorways" (equal to American "freeways"; two or three lanes a side, rarely more). Maps and signs show "unclassified" roads (city streets and the smallest country lanes), "B-roads" (usually single-lane), "A-roads" (fairly major or fast routes), and motorways. Roads have code numbers, such as "B1234", "A10", "M25", or "A1(M)".

Roads in the UK are fairly well maintained, depending on remoteness and local government finances, but their age may show in their indirect routes or narrowness. Because Britain gets ice and snow, local authorities keep trucks equipped with grit/salt spreaders, which go out in winter, and many town roads have large bins beside them filled with salt in winter. Only in mountain districts are snowfalls regularly deep enough to block main roads, but heavy snow can cut off small lowland villages reached only by narrow lanes. Salted roads often produce salty spray, which can ruin the bodywork of cars; this is the reason why older cars are rarer in the UK than the warmer states of the USA.



Motoring laws and conventions are similar the world round, but "emphasis" varies. For example, British roads make heavy use of "Roundabouts" — circular junctions. The rule on these is that traffic moves clockwise, and vehicles entering must give way to those already on. Roundabouts regulate traffic flow, not just at vast "Spaghetti Junction" intersections, but almost anywhere where several streams of cars meet. Newer town plans incorporating fast through-roads will also involve roundabouts of say 10-50 yard diameter (the centre areas usually being grassed over, sometimes with flower beds); the more cramped centres of towns, especially where old layouts leave little space, may have small "mini-roundabouts", marked in paint and a few feet across. Of course, some junctions work otherwise; traffic lights (with a red-amber-green sequence) are also commonplace. Left (or right) turns at red lights are not permitted unless specifically indicated, and U-turns on major roads are frowned on and often prohibited.

Road signs follow standard European conventions, using symbols more than words. Rectangular distance/direction signs (various colours) have distances in miles (shown as a number only). Warning signs are triangular, and have a white background, with a red border and black symbol; signs giving orders are round, with the same white/black/red for prohibitions and white-on-blue for "positive" instructions (such as "Ahead Only"). "Zebra" crossings (black and white stripes on the road) give pedestrians right of way; yellow lines show parking restrictions.

Many British drivers stretch speed limits, but dangerous driving is not respected. For cars on most town roads, the limit is 30 mph; single-lane (undivided) roads have 60 mph by default, dual-carriageway roads (including motorways) have the national absolute maximum of 70 mph. variations include many 40 mph limits on fast roads in towns.

Traffic laws are enforced by the police; parking regulations are also enforced by "Traffic Wardens", supervised by the police force. In uniforms with caps with yellow bands, traffic wardens have an inevitable unpopularity. In London and other towns, parking problems have led to wheel clamping (the "Denver Boot"); "clamping" is sometimes contracted out to private firms.

UK drivers' attitudes are better than some, but not as courteous as some Americans. British drivers are rarely obscenely rude or psycopathically aggressive, but they don't always show tolerance. However, things aren't too bad; Britain has some of the best road safety figures in Europe.

Roads include some built over neolithic trade-paths, and many that follow identifiable Roman routes. (Incidentally, one mark of a Roman road is its straight path; this remains when the physical foundations are long buried or replaced.) The motorway system links industrial centres; motorways "radiate out" from cities, especially London, and by-pass smaller towns; lesser, older roads pass through towns. Roads carrying heavy traffic pass through villages laid out in the days of horse travel, dangerously close to buildings and pedestrians. This leads to specially-built "by-passes"; small-town life is punctuated by discussions of whether a by-pass is needed, what route it should follow, and so on. The system is stressed by increasing traffic — the M25, which circles London, was over-capacity from the day it was finished — leading to plans for more roads, which in turn have lead to conflict between environmentalists and road transport supporters.

Roads in towns — especially older towns — produce more problems. Many town plans are literally medieval, not designed for motor traffic; answers include one-way systems, and the banning of vehicles from some areas ("pedestrianisation"). This can make trouble for local businesses (Britain still has shops in town centres, unlike much of the USA). New towns have efficient planned road-systems, good car parking, and pedestrianised shopping areas, and seem stark and wind-swept to Britons.

Having evolved rather than being designed of a piece, all but the newest British street-plans are haphazard and fragmentary, nothing like the American grid model; streets have arbitrary and sometimes confusing names (an area may have "Rawlston Street", "Rawlston Avenue", and "Rawlston Close", all adjacent or a mile apart), and house numbers remain low. A street with a hundred (numbered) houses is unremarkable, more than 150 or 200 would be very unusual, less than ten not unknown; a Briton would be surprised to hear of a British house with a number in the high hundreds, and maybe disbelieving of one in the thousands (though there are a few).

UK petrol is more expensive — currently around £3.80-£4.10 ($2.40-$2.60) a gallon. So cars are smaller and more manoeuvrable than their US counterparts. Engines are substantially smaller, only going over three litres for the larger "executive luxury" models, but higher tuned, so performance is comparable to that of US vehicles; pollution control regulations are perhaps less stringent, which helps, but so does lighter weight. A quirk in the tax system makes a car a common perk of white-collar jobs, although Britons do not regard wheels as quite so critical to life as do Americans; not all teenagers "have" to have cars, for example. Cars have slightly fewer luxury features than in the US; air conditioning is an extravagance, while automatic gearboxes are limited to luxury non-performance models and drivers who want a quiet life. Similar comments apply to commercial vehicles as to cars. Big trucks ("lorries" in the UK) aren't as big as in the USA; the legal limit is forty tons. Although some travel overseas by ferry, most British lorry-drivers are limited to British distances, and lack the mystique of American truckers.

Cars in the UK will usually have been made in Britain, Europe, or Japan; American models are rare, the preserve of hobbyists who import specially. British-built cars once gained a name for unreliability, which they are only now losing, but increasing "multi-nationalism" means that "British" cars include many foreign-made components, while foreign manufacturers open assembly plants in the UK for tax advantages. In fact, the British motor industry is heavily penetrated by American companies; the native industry reduced at one stage to one large concern and a handful of small specialists, although now the "one" has split into two. These are the Rover group (the old Austin, Morris, Rover, MG, Triumph, British Leyland, Land Rover, and other marques) — now amalgamated with British Aerospace and 20% owned by Honda — and Jaguar, specialising in luxury models and now partly bought out by Ford. American companies working in Britain include Ford, and General Motors (trading as Vauxhall-Opel); Chrysler sold their European operation (including the "Hillman" and "Talbot" names) to the French Peugeot group. The Japanese have several UK plants (under their own names).

Britain has been slower than the US to remove lead additives from petrol, but now, with heavy tax incentives, the idea is catching on. Catalytic exhaust filters should follow soon.

Foot, pedal, and motor power are the standards for Britain, but a few horses may be encountered (prohibited from motorways and other fast major roads); a very few are working beasts, as some are kept by junk-collectors and small breweries (carts are good at stop-start work on short urban routes), and one or two farms also find places for them. The classic British farm horse, the "Shire Horse", is a magnificent, huge and powerful beast, related to the heaviest knightly chargers of medieval times.

RIVERS AND CANALS

British waterway's time of glory was the early Industrial Revolution, when canals linked the country's great cities — such as the Grand Union Canal, between London and Birmingham. These were great feats for their day, but much smaller than modern ship canals; trade was run by horse-drawn barges and "narrowboats". Since World War II, economics have turned against canals, although some freight continues along the Thames. Today, inland waterways mostly carry holidaymakers in small motor craft and refurbished narrowboats. Some rivers have been deepened and "engineered" to take larger ships further inland, and the 36-mile Manchester Ship Canal, opened in 1894, converted an inland city into a port.

RAILWAYS

The UK rail system is another creation of the Industrial Revolution. In 1947, all four active UK rail companies were nationalised, and in 1962, the network was re-organised under the British Railways Board (today British Rail). In Northern Ireland, a separate company runs things. In 1963, the Beeching Report pointed out that much of the network was little used, leading to the closure of many lines and stations; a few have since been re-opened, and over 70 very minor privately-owned lines are run by enthusiasts, but the system is much less than it once was, and unused lines, stations, and tunnels are scattered around the British countryside.

Steam is no longer used, except on tourist-hobbyist lines; about 25% of BR's track is electrified, the rest carries diesel trains. Services are a mixture of fast "Inter-City", commuter, and local "stopping" trains. The system receives state money to cover the public benefits of its services, but Margaret Thatcher's government dislikes overt subsidies, and has been cutting them back and planning to "privatise" the system out of public ownership, as well as encouraging BR to sell off its subsidiary businesses (such as station catering). The result is the least state-supported rail system in Europe. Whether the slimming down is sensible in the light of strained roads and the new Channel Tunnel is widely disputed.

As with roads, London is the hub of the rail network, with major termini; Liverpool Street (in the City) for East Anglia, King's Cross for the east of the country all the way up to Scotland, and neighbouring St Pancras for the east Midlands; Euston for places north-west of London; Paddington for the west of the country; Victoria and Waterloo for the south, and Charing Cross for the south-east. All are a mass of commuters every weekday morning and evening, along with smaller city-centre stations such as London Bridge and Cannon Street.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

A number of services provide local transport in Britain. Apart from long-distance coach services, there are many buses in both rural and urban areas — the famous "London" double-decker is quite widespread, especially in towns. Most bus services used to be run by local government, but many have lately been sold off to private enterprise. Bus fares are reasonably cheap; reliability and frequency of the services vary. There are also many taxi and "minicab" services ("minicabs" use standard-design cars rather than purpose-built taxis). Of 45,000 licensed taxis, a third are in London, which requires that taxi services use purpose-built vehicles — diesel powered, with very tight turning ability. London taxi drivers have to pass an exam demanding detailed knowledge of the city's entire road network.

The long-established London Underground rail network (254 miles, 104 actually underground) remains crucial to London's transport system, despite problems; other local rail systems have also been built in Britain. In London, the new Docklands Light Railway links the City and the new Docklands developments; Glasgow has its own, relatively small Underground, and Newcastle has the Tyne and Wear Metro with 35 miles of track.

DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS

As an island, Britain needs good ports; 94% of overseas trade by weight, and a third of foreign travellers, go by sea. However, the locations have varied over time. Several major medieval ports are small seaside villages today, or completely disappeared beneath the sea or ended up inland as the coast they stood on changed; others, such as the port area of London, have lost out as cargo ships have grown in size. Meanwhile, small fishing towns in Orkney and Shetland have become centres of the international oil business. The short ferry crossings include large passenger hovercraft running to France. A disaster in 1987 (189 people killed) led to tightening up of ferry safety rules.

With such busy coastal waters as the Straits of Dover, the world's busiest seaway, traffic must be monitored and controlled. Port authorities handle local pilotage; lighthouses and buoys are run for the government by "Boards". The Coastguard Service has much more restricted duties than the US Coastguard, co-ordinating search and rescue work with the help of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution — a voluntary charity — and the Ministry of Defence for the Navy and RAF. (Anti-smuggling work is left to HM Customs and Excise.)

SKY HIGH

Air travel is important to Britain today, but for foreign trips rather than internal; services do operate between some British cities, but only as one of a range of options. Heathrow and Gatwick, London's largest airports, are the world's first and second busiest international terminals, although Chicago beats them for total number of flights (due to US-national traffic). Regulation, pilot licensing, and air traffic control is handled by the Civil Aviation Authority. Airports are run by local government, or (especially for the larger ones) by private companies. Other major airports include Stansted and Luton (for London), Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Prestwick in Scotland, and Manchester, Birmingham, and Belfast. Aberdeen handles helicopters flying to oil rigs; there are dozens of other small airfields, of course, including a small terminus in east London handling a few services run by especially quiet short take-off planes.

Since the government sold its holding, British Airways has become one of the world's major private airlines. European air fares are high compared to those in the US, probably because of the level of regulation; if it is reduced, as is planned, competition might become fierce for a while. Incidentally, British Airways operates a mixture of American and European-built aircraft, including a couple of supersonic Concorde airliners on the trans-Atlantic route. Other airlines based in the UK include Dan Air, British Midland, and Virgin Atlantic; aside from the last, these are mainly associated with internal and European travel and charter flights. Helicopters are used for a few purposes, mostly oil rig support; a company that builds and operates small airships sometimes uses them for sight-seeing work over London or as camera platforms over major public events.

STANDARD BRITISH ROAD VEHICLES

Vehicle	Hex Size (/metres)	DCV	Mass	STR	DEF	BODY	DEX	SPD	Move	Max
Mini	1.5x0.7 (3x1.4)	-1	650kg	22	3	12	17	3	17x4	204
"Supermini"*	1.75x0.75 (3.5x1.5)	-2	760kg	25	3	13	16	3	20x4	240
Small Family Car*	2x0.85 (4x1.7)	-2	890kg	27	3	13	16	3	22x4	264
Med. Family Car*	2.15x0.85 (4.3x1.7)	-2	1050kg	28	3	14	15	3	23x4	276
ExecutiveCar*	2.35x0.9 (4.7x1.8)	-2	1250kg	30	3	14	15	3	25x4	300
Lotus Esprit Turbo	2.1x0.9 (4.2x1.8)	-2	1140kg	22	3	13	20	4	25x4	400
Jaguar XJ6**	2.5x0.9 (5x1.8)	-2	1720kg	33	3	15	15	3	26x4	312
Range Rover***	2.25x0.9 (4.5x1.8)	-2	1860kg	35	4	15	14	3	21x4	252
Rolls Royce Silver Spirit	2.65x0.95(5.3x1.9)	-2	2245kg	35	3	15	13	3	27x4	324
"London" Taxi	2.15x0.9 (4.3x1.8)	-2	1750kg	33	4	15	11	2	25x4	200
Double-Decker Bus	4.8x1.3 (9.6x2.6)	-4	9500kg	45	4	16	10	2	11x8	176
Milk Float	2.3x0.9 (4.6x1.8)	-2	1000kg	35	2/4	4/13	5	2	10x4	80

Characteristics: STR reflects absolute maximum structural capacity; manufacturers' data would give a much lower load-carrying ability, which is the safe level. Also, STR as listed should not be used to calculate combat (Move By/Through) damage; STR for that purpose is given by mass as listed. Max, on the other hand, reflects manufacturers' data and would often be lower in practice!

* Faster (often fuel-injected) models have +1 DEX, +4" basic move, +48" MAX; Special/Turbocharged have +2 DEX, +7" basic move, +84" MAX.

** XJ12 is Move 29x4, MAX 348.

*** For Land Rover, etc, reduce DEX, SPD, MAX, price, and comfort.

Mini: A 30-year-old Austin-Rover model, the first modern transverse-engine minimum-size design, still selling.

"Supermini": Covers Austin-Rover Metro, Vauxhall Nova, Ford Fiesta, Renault 5, etc: 1.0-1.6 litre engine, town/very cheap transport.

Small Family Car: Covers Austin-Rover Maestro, Vauxhall Astra, Ford Escort, Peugot 309, etc: 1.1-1.8 litres, compact/economy designs.

Medium Family Car: Austin-Rover Montego, Vauxhall Cavalier, Ford Sierra, Audi 80, etc: 1.3-2.0 litres, general-purpose models.

Executive Car: Rover 820, Vauxhall Carlton, Ford Granada, Volvo 740, etc: 1.8-3.0 litres, more luxury and capacity.

Lotus Esprit Turbo: Lotus, nowadays a subsidiary of General Motors, are Britain's biggest-name specialist sports car builder; this is their fastest model. Glass fibre bodywork.

Jaguar XJ6: Britain's most prestigious "top executive" car. The V12-engined XJ12 is exceptionally powerful.

Range Rover: Made by Land-Rover; the original luxury off-road car, beloved of Britain's landed gentry, often seen in towns.

Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit: The flagship model of the British elite car-builder. Hand-made and excessively luxurious.

"London" Taxi: Diesel powered, capacious, with a very tight turning circle, and quite rugged.

Double-Decker Bus: Also 2.2 hexes (4.4 metres) high, with about 70 seats.For carrying people on crowded urban roads.

Milk Float: A common sight early in the morning on residential roads, loaded with milk for house-to-house delivery. Light (DEF 2, BODY 4) body-shell over a solid (DEF 4, BODY 13) chassis packed with batteries to run the electric motor; maximum load is tons of milk.

THE CHANNEL TUNNEL

"The best thing I know between France and England is the sea."

— Douglas Jerrold

Britain and France are currently working on a tunnel under the English Channel (the "Chunnel"), due for completion in the early 1990's. The biggest civil engineering project ever in Europe, it will be 50km (31 miles) long, with 38km (24 miles) below the sea bed; it will consist of two 7.6m diameter railway tunnels with a 4.8m diameter service tunnel between them.

Some people see this as very symbolic; the end of "Britain as an island", cut off from the rest of Europe by a well-placed moat. The tunnel may or may not increase actual traffic across the Channel, but the significance is certain to be psychological. The idea has been stopped by British attitudes many times in the past. It was first suggested in 1802, during a lull in the Napoleonic wars; the proposal was repeated several times that century, but British phobias about French (later, German) invasion killed plans, then and between WW I and WW II. After World War II, proposals were repeated, but the economics and politics never worked out — until the present scheme.

The Project

With growing trade links between Britain and the other members of the Economic Community, and even more due when the EC sets up a "single market" in 1992, the possibilities for the Tunnel were obvious, and by the end of 1986, preparations were underway. The Tunnel will be run by a consortium — "Eurotunnel". The Margaret Thatcher's government has a horror of public subsidies; their agreement was conditional on their not having to put a penny into either the tunnel or transport to it.

TransManche Link (TML), the contracting consortium, is working from France and Britain simultaneously Once complete, the tunnel will in theory enable a train to cross Europe from Scotland to Turkey — but in fact the appeal of the scheme depends on modern high-speed trains, which in turn demand modernisation of the tracks. For short, "shuttle" trips, passengers will remain in their cars on the trains, while long-distance and car-less passengers will ride in air-conditioned coaches.

British Rail naturally want the simplest, cheapest route across South-East England, but this is a prosperous area; a mix of environmental concerns and the demand for old-fashioned quiet have meant less direct routes and well-hidden inland tunnels. In North-West France, by contrast, economically depressed cities and towns are pressing to have the trains and their traffic pass their way.

Engineering

The Tunnel is a vast project, using state-of-the-art technology — but few really new techniques. On both sides of the Channel, giant boring machines, guided by precision lasers, are inching forward, while locomotives remove "spoil" and bring up material. It's tough, well-paid work; TML has created large temporary communities of workmen at both ends. The tunnel, or rather, the three tunnels (with cross-links every 250 metres) are having to go through fractured, water-soaked chalk, so they have to be sealed off from flooding. Problems are particularly bad on the French side; as expected, work is moving much faster on the British side (200-300 metres per week, against 100). The service tunnel is scheduled to link up in late 1990.

Safety and Security

With passengers up to 15 miles (25km) from daylight, any problems on a Channel Tunnel train are a worrying idea. Plans call for each carriage on passenger trains to be closed off in the case of, say, small fires, for engines at each end of each train so that carriages either side of one with larger problems can be got clear, and for easy evacuation access to the service tunnel. The latter will be kept at slightly higher air pressure, to stop smoke flooding in from a burning train. Interestingly for GMs, the time for evacuation has been set at ninety minutes maximum, because psychologists reckon that longer delays could lead to panic.

The danger from human action is a more complex topic. The two questions are of the use of the tunnel by people smuggling weapons, drugs, or animals, and of actual attacks on the tunnel. Britain, used to having a moat, is looking to watch tunnel-users closely; other EC countries are talking in terms of integrated policing throughout Europe. Incidentally, the weight of explosives needed to destroy the tunnel would be impossible to hide, but trains and their passengers are obviously vulnerable. Trains will be patrolled by a joint force of English and French police; Britain has, reluctantly, accepted that these should all carry guns. A problem has been that the British want customs checks to be carried out at the ends of the journey, for thoroughness, whereas Eurotunnel wants to follow the Continental practice of checks on board trains, as speed and efficiency is their selling point. At present, a large customs shed is under construction at Waterloo station, London. Meanwhile, sophisticated communications links between moving trains and police HQs are being planned.

Economic Consequences

The first effect of the tunnel will be on rival transport — especially the ferries, jetfoils, and hovercraft currently shuttling across the Channel. (The airlines are much less worried as yet.) Loss of ferry business could be particularly heavy if, as some cynics expect, tunnel fares are set low to start with — rising fast once the ferry companies have been forced out of business. Not many more trips may be made because of the Tunnel, although a few London workers are looking to commute from France, and others are buying French weekend country cottages (to the bemusement of the city-loving French bourgeoise). Effects on freight costs may widen the gap between prosperous South-East and economically depressed Northern Britain.

Game Considerations

In a campaign set in the near future, the Tunnel, or something like it, would probably exist. The reality in our own universe presents many possibilities. Characters with engineering or business involvements could take an interest as consultants or investors; terrorist or megalomaniac villains would be attracted by this vast, prestigious scheme; and who knows what Ancient Strangeness lurks under the dank, cool rocks, ignoring the busy seaways above but easily disturbed by drilling machinery? Once it's complete, well... trains are well-known settings for mysteries and "closed-group" incidents; these will be patrolled by armed police, but the tunnel will add an extra element of claustrophobia. Heroes with official connections may be called in to assist with "Chunnel" security problems; others may just chance to travel on it.

COMMUNICATIONS

Some British communications organisations are quite old; the parent of them all is the Post Office, founded 1635, which invented postage stamps and pillar (post) boxes in the nineteenth century. Until recently, it picked up any new communications duties going, and more or less ran things as a combined government department and fairly benign (if not always efficient) monopoly. The present government has broken up the monopoly; nonetheless, the Post Office still has various official tasks.

THE ROYAL MAIL

The Post Office still runs the mails. Although its official monopoly has been loosened, and may be suspended at any time when the government decides it's unjustified, no competitor is allowed to deliver post for less than £1 an item (except for minor exceptions). It generally resembles its US counterpart in action.

Letters may be sent either first or second class (currently 20 or 15 pence for anything up to 60 grams); the former is supposed to reach anywhere in the UK within a day, the latter within about two to four days. In fact, delays are quite common, although actual losses are rare. Street post boxes are cleared 2-4 times a day; letters can be posted at sorting offices later. Most homes get one delivery a day, in the morning, sometimes two; only a few, experimental Sunday deliveries take place. Many businesses use "courier" parcel services for speed and convenience, and the use of facsimile machines ("faxes") is growing. There are strict laws against sending dangerous materials through the system.

ELECTRONIC CONVERSATIONS

In 1981, the Post Office's old telephone/telegraph business was split off and partly "privatised" as British Telecom. "BT" is the dominant licensed provider of telecommunications services; its only competitor so far is Mercury (created 1984, a subsidiary of Cable and Wireless), which shares use of the phone system and sells services on it, but BT still, for example, controls what equipment may be used on the system. In the near future, up to six satellite-based specialist communications operators may be licensed.

Other radio-based communications are used, but are limited in importance by the small size of the country. The Post Office has long licensed the use of short-wave radios by hobbyists (among others), who must pass tests in subjects such as morse code. There was a fashion a few years ago for American-style CB radio, and the government was pushed into relaxing the rules accordingly, but fashions change, abuse of (and on) the system by young users put some people off, and few people found CB essential to their work, so it is now very much a minority interest.

FUTURE DIGITAL?

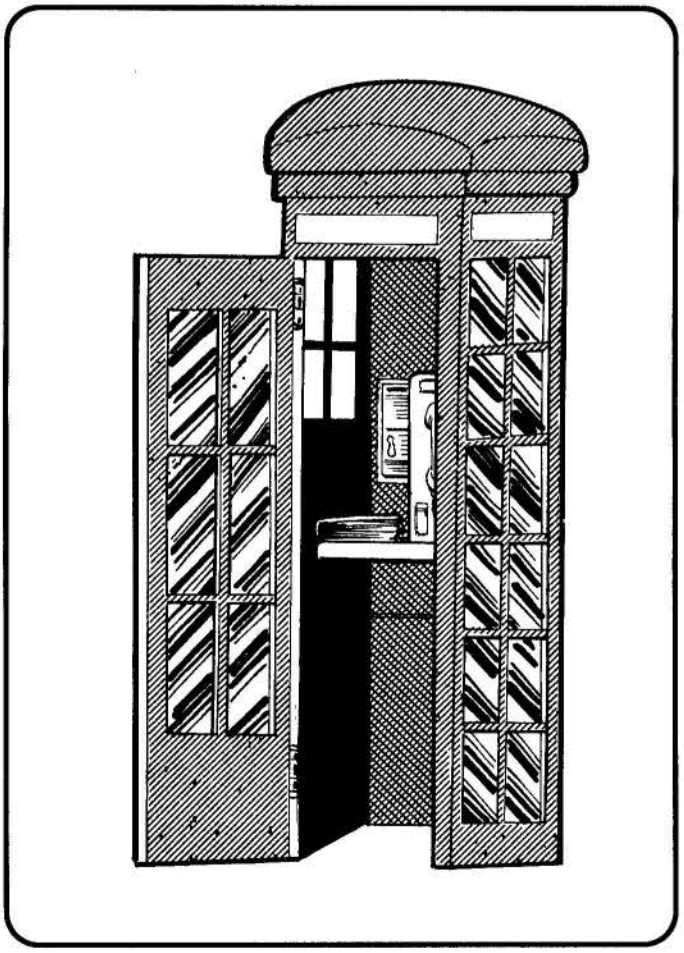
Computerised, high-tech communications are emerging in the UK, and will no doubt develop further. There are many computer bulletin boards, including Prestel, a multi-purpose information service run by British Telecom. Increasing use of fibre-optic technology reflects the needs of the computer age; in it, Britain's high population density within a small space may well turn out to be an advantage.

ELECTRICITY

At present, most British electrical production and distribution is publically-owned. Traditionally, the industry provides a service, with profit a secondary consideration. What the priorities will be when the government sells the industry into private hands remains to be seen.

Currently there are two electricity boards: the CEGB (Central Electricity Generating Board), which supplies England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and the SSEB (South of Scotland Electricity Board), which supplies Scotland. Power stations in the UK include nuclear (about 20% of the total), coal-oil and gas-fired; there are a number of hydro-electric plants in upland areas. The CEGB also buys an increasing amount of power from France. The French have invested heavily in nuclear power and can sell cheap power. Many of the French stations are on the Channel coast. Should there be an accident, any fall-out or debris would be brought by the prevailing winds into the heavily-populated south of England.

Power stations sell electricity to the National Grid. Because of this system of power lines a city is unlikely to be blacked out by the failure of one, or even several, power stations.



NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS

Nuclear power plants are sited away from population centres, usually on the coast, so any fall-out would be blown away from the land. Nuclear power has a 30-year history in Britain. The earliest stations are now at the end of their life. One, Berkeley, has started the century-long process of decommissioning.

Material from nuclear power stations is reprocessed at Sellafield, on the Cumbrian coastline. This controversial plant, formerly known as Windscale, is notorious for letting radioactive material leak into the Irish Sea. As a result, the Irish Sea is the most radioactive sea in the world. The waste is currently stored on site until a decision on final disposal is made.

A small amount of fall-out from the Chernobyl explosion of 1986 reached Britain; western parts of the country were affected most severely. The main effect was that some spring lambs could not be slaughtered at the usual time, but had to be kept until the radioactivity levels reduced.

GAS SUPPLIES

Domestic gas supplies in the UK originated in the 19th century, and the age of the system is a problem in itself — there may not be many if any century-old pipes around, but some are certainly old enough to be unsafe. After the discovery of major gas fields in the North Sea, the system was converted to use this "natural gas".

Because of the small size of the UK, it's been possible to set up a very extensive system of gas distribution; all cities, practically all towns, and even a lot of villages have piped gas supplies available, and many (though not all) British houses use gas for heating and/or cooking. The main point to remember for game purposes is that any event violent enough to damage a road surface in a British town stands a fair chance of cracking a gas main beneath it, with consequent dangers of explosion.

SITES AND SIGHTS



"...we shall fight on the beaches ...we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills..."

— Sir Winston Churchill

Big cities and the roads between them are all very well, but they aren't necessarily the obvious scenario venues in the UK. Britain has no shortage of possibilities, many of them appearing in this book. GMs might also wish to think about the following:

THE SCOTTISH ISLES

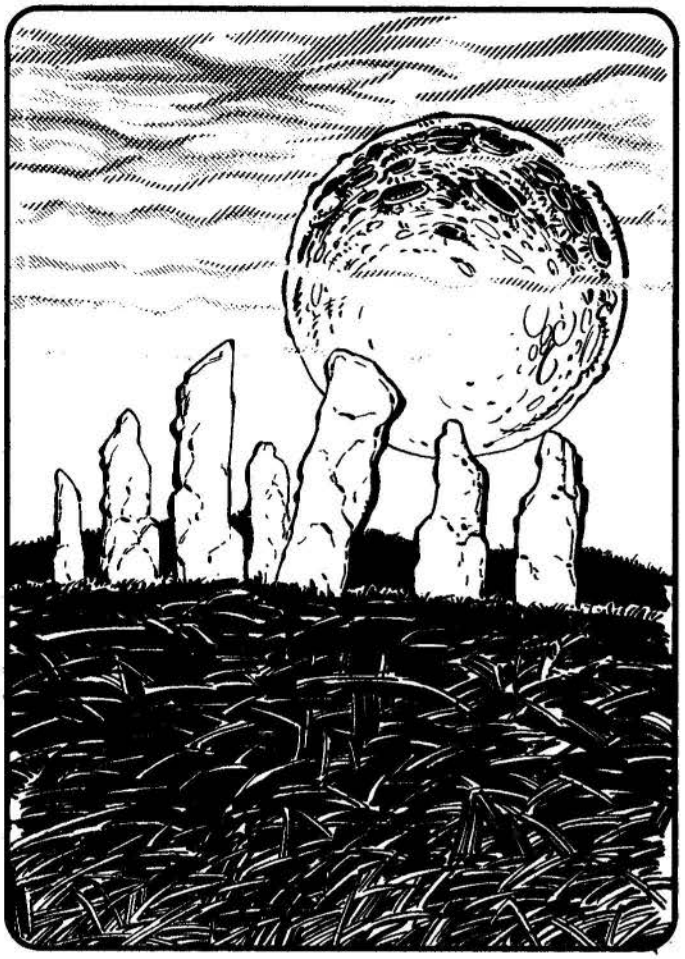
North and west of Scotland are dozens of wild, remote islands, mostly very picturesque and good settings for secret bases and the like. Although wind-blown and often treeless, these have been inhabited for millennia; secret base operators will need some kind of cover story for the locals.

Furthest north is Shetland, with Orkney to its south running to within six miles of the Scottish mainland. Both are archipelagoes (and both names are plurals — it is incorrect, though common, to talk of "the Orkneys" or "the Shetlands"); in both cases, the largest island is called simply "Mainland". They've been inhabited since prehistory (Shetland since 2000-1500 BC, Orkney since around 3500 BC), and have the highest density of ancient sites in Britain — Neolithic houses and tombs (Britain's finest is Maes Howe, Orkney), Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age brochs, and Viking sites. The Norse dominance ran from about 700-900 AD to 1469, when they passed to Scotland in a royal marriage settlement, and to this day the inhabitants don't quite see themselves as Scots; Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, has an impressive Norse cathedral, St Magnus'. The traditional local industries were fishing and farming, today augmented by tourism (there's a lot for bird-watchers, among others), and even more by North Sea Oil. Sullom Voe, in Shetland, is Britain's largest port by tonnage. The area has strategic significance; Scapa Flow, a sheltered bay on the south side of Orkney, was the Royal Navy's main northern base in both World Wars, and relics of wartime defences litter the area.

The long chains of islands off Scotland's west coast include the Outer Hebrides, the "Small Isles" (including Skye), and so on. The Gaelic names of some of these can ring oddly to English-speakers — Benbecula, South Uist, Rum, Eigg, Muck, Mull, and Jura are all major islands. Some are large enough to support thousands of people; others were always on the borderline of viability, and have been evacuated in recent decades; others again are bare rock, where only sea-birds live. One small island was used for experiments with anthrax in the early days of germ warfare research, and today is banned to human visitors.

The westernmost group is St Kilda, 45 miles from the Outer Hebrides, evacuated in 1930, but occupied today by visitors such as wildlife-watchers and military personnel monitoring missile tests across the Atlantic. St Kilda has 1300ft sea-cliffs, the highest in Britain. 184 miles west of there is Rockall, a 70ft granite pillar, annexed by Britain to extend territorial waters.


SITES IN ENGLAND
Edinburgh Castle
Lindisfarne Priory
Gretna
Hadrian's Wall
Whitby Abbey
Rievaulx Abbey
Fountains Abbey
York
Number Bridge
Beaumaris Castle
Arbor Low Stone
Caernarvon Castle
Abbots Bromley
Offas Dike
Grime's Graves
Warwick Castle
Cambridge
Sutton Hoo
Milton Keynes
Letchworth
Stevenage
Whipsnade
Welwyn Garden City
Harlow
Great Dunmow
Hatfield
Harold's Stones
Milford Haven
Severn Bridge
Oxford
Caerphilly Castle
Wayland's Smithy
Uffington Castle
Avebury
Windsor Castle
Silbury Hill
West Kennett Long Barrow
Bath
Sandwich
Bratton Camp and White Horse
Dover
Woodhenge
Stonehenge
Durerington Walls
Hythe
Glastonbury
Long Man of Wilmington
Rye
Hastings
New Forest
Brighton
Cern Abbas Giant
Maiden Castle
Tintagel Castle
Hurlers Stone Circle



These isles also have their share of prehistoric sites; the most spectacular is Callanish, on Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, which is comparable to Stonehenge. It was erected 4,000 or more years ago, and consists of monoliths up to 15 ft tall, arranged on a promontory with a plan roughly resembling a Celtic cross, 405ft north to south, 140ft east-west. 47 stones remain, 19 still standing. They seem to be aligned on lunar events (such as mid-summer moonset), although legends say that, at sunrise on mid-summer day, the "Shining One" walks the main avenue of stones, heralded by the cuckoo, the bird of Tir na Og (the Celtic land of youth). Legends also mention giants turned to stone by a Christian saint, or say that a priest-king brought the stones, and black men to raise them, attended by priests; all wore robes of bird-skin and feathers. The role-playing game possibilities are endless.

Scottish Islanders, like the Highlanders on the nearer parts of Scotland, are mostly Gaelic-speakers, largely Presbyterian (with pockets of Roman Catholicism), and legendarily reserved and careful, but also helpful and usually honest. The people of Skye were long said to have "second sight", and their island was supposed to be home to many sidhe, the fairy-folk.

GRETNA GREEN

This little village, just north of the English-Scottish border, is famous for weddings. In the 18th and 19th centuries, parents expected to control their offspring's marriage plans, while the offspring were beginning to expect a say in the matter. At that time in England, the age at which no parental consent was needed for a wedding was 21. In Scotland, however, the limit was 16, and marriages could be contracted by a simple declaration in front of witnesses, including a "man of standing" — such as a village blacksmith. The roads to Scotland were much travelled by runaways, and Gretna was the first village across the border. Many couples arrived late at night, with angry fathers in hot pursuit.

The local blacksmith, coaching inns, and later a toll-bridge keeper, all did a roaring trade in weddings. One keeper made a fortune, then lost it when the law was changed to require that the couple be resident in Scotland before marrying. The law allowing marriage by declaration was abolished in 1940; Gretna today is a tourist spot, with a few visitors marrying there for romance.

HADRIAN'S WALL

This stretches across the narrowest part of Britain, 70 miles from Newcastle to Carlisle. Originally 15' high and 9' across, it was built by the Romans to control movement and discourage raiding, not to stop mass attacks. Passage through was only possible at the forts and mile-castles. Between the latter were observation turrets; behind the wall ran a road and a 10' ditch, marking the edge of the military zone. The wall perches atop north-facing crags for part of its length. Parts of the wall are barely visible today, having been plundered for building stone in later centuries.

THE BORDERS

The frontier between England and Scotland was long disputed, and the inhabitants were much given to feuding and raiding. As a result, this rather wild area of hills and heathlands is dotted with small, incredibly rugged fortresses.

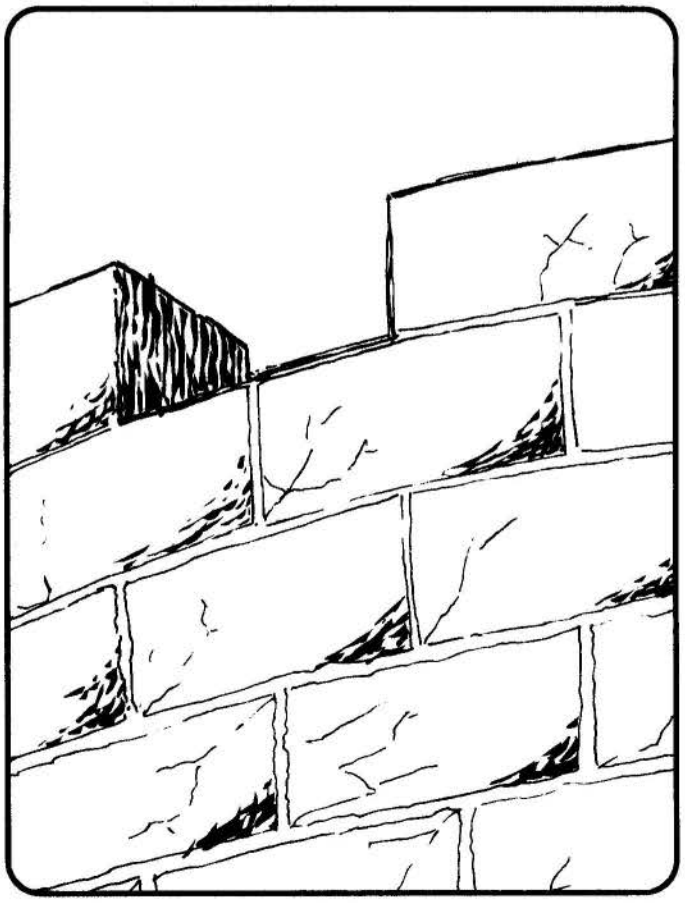
YORKSHIRE ABBEYS

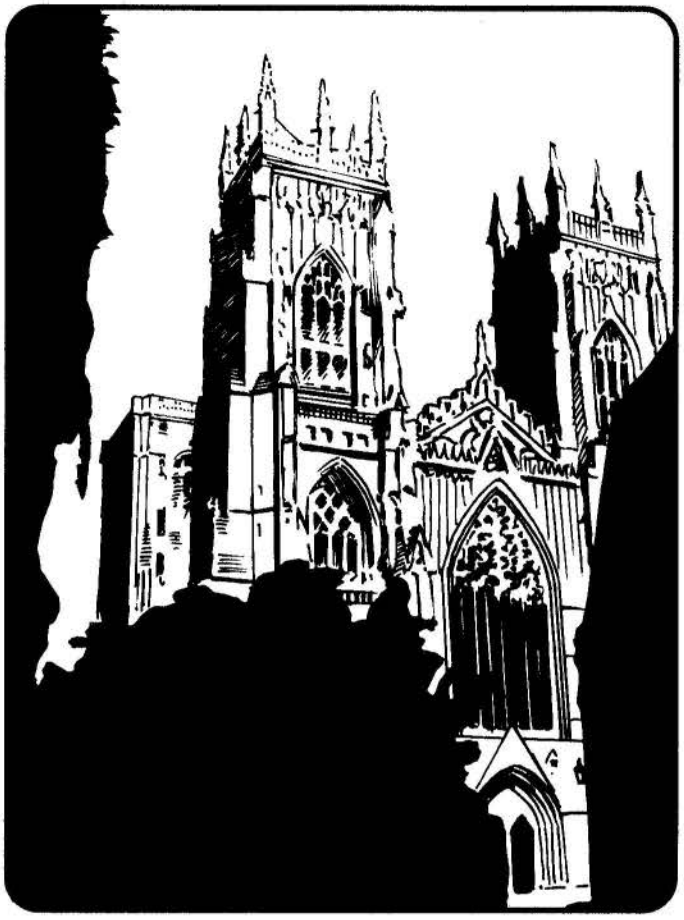
In the Middle Ages, the church was a powerful land-owner, and monasteries often dominated the local economy. Much of this wealth was used to build great abbeys, some of which survive today, but others of which have fallen into ruin (partly thanks to Henry VIII's disbanding of the monasteries). Yorkshire has at least three which remain interesting even in ruin. One is in Whitby; part of this one's ruined state is due, not to Henry VIII, but to the more recent shelling of the town by the German fleet in 1914. Incidentally, Whitby, a fishing town, was the childhood home of Captain Cook, and the setting for the arrival in England of the vampire Dracula in Bram Stoker's novel. Another abbey is Rievaulx (pronounced "Ree-vo", or sometimes "Rivers"), on the North York Moors; a third is Fountains, a few miles west of York. In each case, the internal structure of the buildings is long gone, but walls still stand to varying heights, including enough of the great

arched bodies of the main halls and towers to give an idea of the original grandeur of the design. The complicated plans of the lesser parts of these building complexes, now marked out by walls, sometimes more, sometimes less than head-height, and with floors on varying levels, form veritable mazes.

YORK

Briefly the capital of the Roman Empire (as Eburacum), later a Saxon town (as Eoforwic) and Viking colony (as Jorvik), and later again a centre for Norman power and then of the wool trade that also made Fountains Abbey rich, York is loaded with history. Today it is a relatively small but bustling city; the centre still has a medieval street plan, and the old city walls survive — all three miles of them, with four gates. Buildings include crooked half-timbered medieval shops around narrow, pedestrian-only streets, and York Minster, a spectacular cathedral which took from 1220 to 1470 to build. After the serious fire of a few years ago, this has been carefully restored, complete with vast stained-glass windows. There is also the castle, site of one of Britain's worst medieval mob attacks on Jews; the 18th century prison nearby is now a museum. Viking-era archaeological finds during the building of a modern shopping centre inspired the creation of a display of life-size reconstructions of Jorvik life in the basement of the centre, with a museum attached. Outside the city wall is the National Railway Museum, with steam and other engines from all over the world.





AVEBURY

Avebury, Wiltshire, is the largest Bronze Age site in Britain. A modern village lies within and around the stone circle, and many of the stones have been destroyed or moved over the centuries. When one was lifted recently, the remains of a medieval barber were found beneath, no doubt crushed when people sought to topple these pagan symbols.

A circular bank with a ditch inside (a henge) surrounded the site. Inside was a circle of about 100 standing stones, 400 yards across; the stones, many 12' tall and 40 tons weight, are broad, tall and flat, their surfaces left rough. Curved avenues led from the four entrances to other local sites.

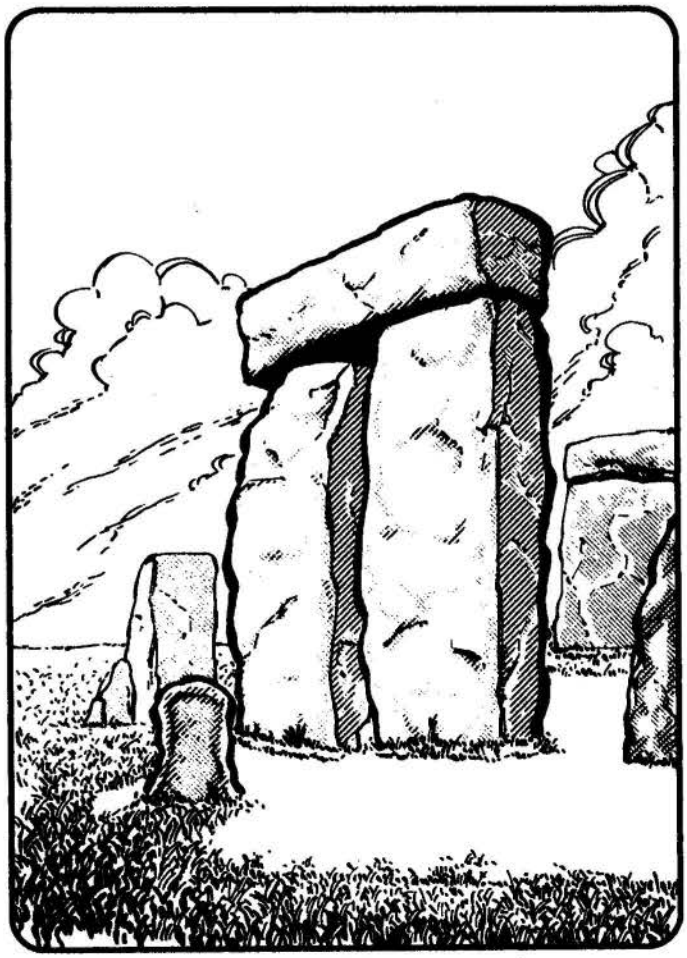
Inside were two or three smaller circles, each with about 30 stones of which a bare half-dozen survive; a stone or two of the central arrangement also remain. Even crumbled and fragmentary, the site is impressive; the south-west sector is the most complete. There is no restriction on access; sheep graze among the stones.

According to folklore, the stones alternate male and female; touching both simultaneously would cause one to change sex. However, this would require arms 10' long.

STONEHENGE

Also in Wiltshire, Stonehenge is fairly isolated, but can hardly be called remote; it is one of Britain's biggest tourist attractions. For all this, it retains an aura of peacefulness. Roads run nearby; the A303 to the south, the A344 to east and north. Around is mixed farmland; to the west is the army's Salisbury Plain training area (only closed to the public during manoeuvres; "tank crossing" notices decorate the roads).

Tourists walk from a car-park north of the A344, through a pedestrian underpass to reach the monument, which is roped off because of erosion of the central area. The site is grassy, and the stones (even the "bluestones") are grey. The whole site is fenced off, and opening hours are enforced. Until recently, midsummer sunrise was one exception, but this has now been stopped. "Druids" had, for the last few decades, held ceremonies at Stonehenge on this date, when the rising sun aligns to a viewer at the centre of the circle with the "Heel Stone" to the northwest (near the road). Over recent years, a miscellaneous bunch of hippies, New Agers, and rock music fans have gathered at the same time, and English Heritage (the body in charge of the site) cancelled the mid-summer privilege. As some of the celebrants haven't accepted the ban, the railings around the site are tastefully draped with razor wire at midsummer, and clashes between police and "hippies" have been violent.



Stonehenge developed from a simple henge (ditch and bank) in 3100 BC. It was abandoned from 2500 to 2100 BC. From 2100 to 1800 BC, it was rebuilt several times. "Bluestones" were brought by land and water some 240 miles from Wales, larger "sarsens" from quarries 20 miles away. It continued in use until at least 1500 BC, but the druids never used it, and no human sacrifice was done at Stonehenge.

The names of some of the stones were invented by people with vague ideas about druidism. The Altar Stone and the Slaughter Stone lie flat today, but were originally upright. Tradition credits Merlin with bringing the stones over from Ireland — using machines, not magic, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth. "Stonehenge" means "hanging stones" in Anglo-Saxon; it has been taken to refer to levitation, or human sacrifice, but simply refers to the stones' vague resemblance to a gallows.

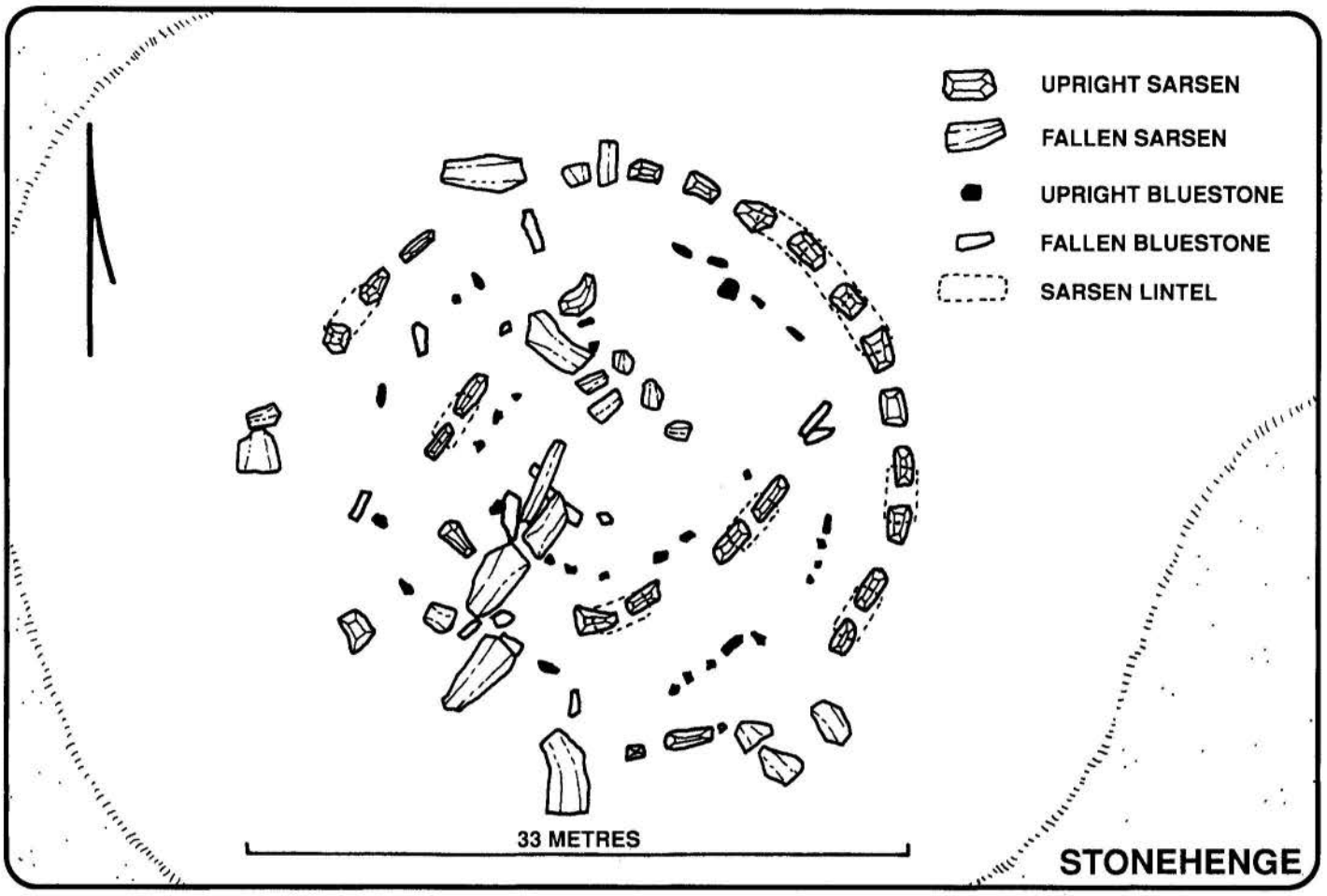
The outer ditch is about 100 yards across, the stone circle in its centre perhaps 100'. The outer ring had 30 uprights with connecting "lintels" across the top; within was a ring of 60 smaller "bluestones", inside which was a horseshoe of sarsen "trillithons" with lintels, with another horseshoe of 19 bluestones within that. Other stones were placed at focal points in the design, and there was a long, curved approach way. The layout was aligned to noteworthy sunrise and moonrise points.

Much about Stonehenge is unique, especially the smoothed stones with lintels over the top. The map shows the layout today; many stones have fallen or been damaged, but the scope and size of the design remains astonishing.

OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE

The two oldest universities in the English-speaking world (flippantly conflated as "Oxbridge") are both based in English provincial cities. However, Oxford (as a city) has developed in other directions, as an industrial town in the south Midlands; the British motor industry found a home in Cowley, on its outskirts, and modern Oxford has been jokingly called "the Latin quarter of Cowley". Cambridge, by contrast; remains a quiet market town in the low-lying farming region of the East Anglian fens; the land-owning university hasn't welcomed heavy industry, although today, the university's strength in science has encouraged the growth of modern, "high-tech" companies around the city.

That said, the university areas of both cities have a lot in common; both city centres are dominated by dozens of college buildings (plus chapels and churches), dating from the thirteenth century to the present day, some of them architectural masterpieces. (The medieval buildings, being constructed to last, are almost invariably stone, not half-timbered.) The usual layout involves buildings of around three storeys, grouped around courtyards with superbly-manicured lawns. Both cities are on rivers — Oxford on the Thames (known as the "Isis" in the university), Cambridge on the Cam (similarly known as the "Granta").



Both universities have libraries entitled, under British law, to copies of every book published in Britain; Oxford's is the Bodleian, housed in 17th-18th century buildings in the city centre, while Cambridge's University Library has a large 1930's building with a vast, glowering tower a little way from the heart of the town. Both also have large collections of old, rare, and obscure books, useful to anyone going in for peculiar research.

By established cliche, Cambridge is "better at science", while Oxford is stronger in arts and "classics". Actually, both places have formidable records in both areas, but Cambridge has produced a lot of great scientists, including Newton, Darwin, Rutherford (who first split the atom) and Crick and Watson who, along with a London University team, determined the structure of DNA. Cambridge also produced Milton, Byron, Tennyson, and several spies who turned out to be Russian double agents; Oxford had Wren, Shelley (expelled), Roger Bacon, Gibbon, and Tolkien.

Both towns also have major museums; the Ashmolean in Oxford, and the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge.

BATH

A west-country town named for its mineral springs, which have been known since Roman times (when it was "Aquae Sulis"). Bath became fashionable when its water was recommended for medicinal purposes in the eighteenth century. Today it is therefore best known for its superb Georgian architecture (and some Roman archaeological finds). UNESCO classes Bath as a world-class architectural site.

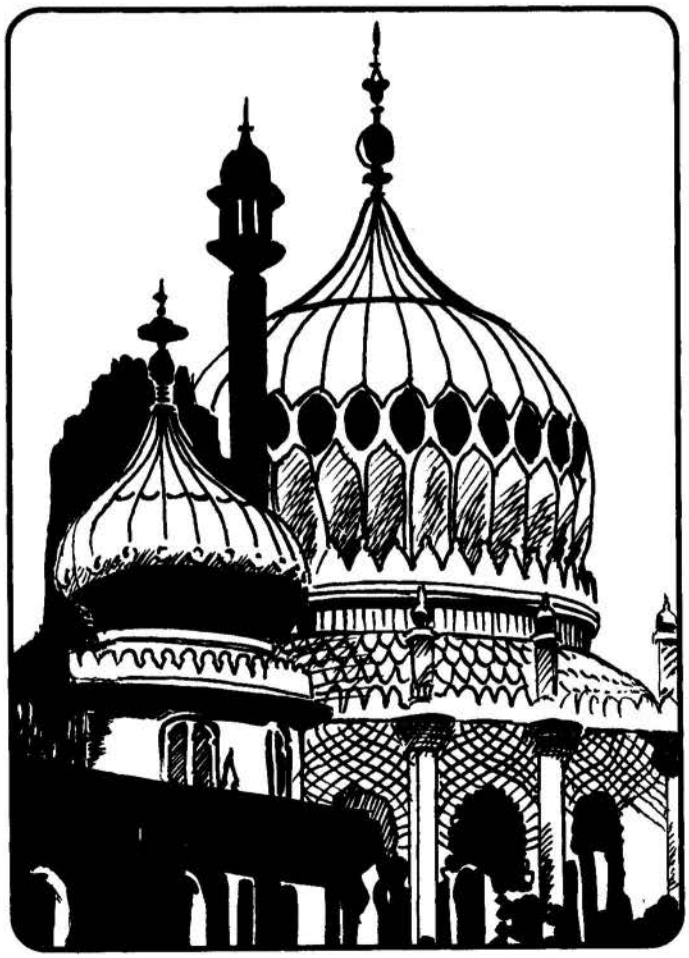
CHALK FIGURES

The chalk hills of southern England offer the opportunity for a neat form of display. By cutting away turf down to the white stone, large pictures can be created that are visible for miles across valleys or lowlands. This trick was apparently discovered in pre-Roman times, but figures are hard to date; some may have been cut in the Middle Ages or later, while others were being kept clean. Cerne Abbas, in Dorset, and Wilmington, in Sussex, have human figures; Bratton Down, in Wiltshire, and Uffington, in Oxfordshire (on the Vale of the White Horse) have horses — the latter, 374 feet long, possibly a Celtic religious symbol. The technique hasn't been forgotten; during WW I, New Zealand troops cut a 420' kiwi at Bulford, Wiltshire, and Whipsnade Zoo, in Bedfordshire, the rural outpost of London Zoo, has a white lion.

GARDEN CITIES AND NEW TOWNS

With the population of London rising and transport improving, twentieth-century British governments and philanthropists have attempted to encourage the obvious solution; the creation of new, pleasant towns for commuters or new industries. The first wave were the pre-WW II "Garden Cities"; Letchworth and Welwyn, in Hertfordshire, both now substantial towns with a lot of greenery between their houses. The second, larger-scale phase started in the 1940's, with the "New Towns", such as Harlow, Stevenage, and Hatfield. These have a reputation as "concrete wastelands", some worse than others, although none are as depressed as comparable developments in the less prosperous north of the country. Usually, they were built round existing villages or small towns, the older buildings of which survive in pockets — Hatfield has a great "stately home" within the new development.

The newest new towns include as their archetype Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, planned as a full-scale city, with a highway system on which many visitors get lost, miles of housing, and grandiose modern buildings. Milton Keynes is controversial, with some people admiring its success in creating a city out of farmland and villages, and others despising its stark regimentation.



GREAT BRIDGES

For some years, the most spectacular suspension bridge in the UK was that across the Severn Estuary, linking South-West England with Wales, with a centre span of 3240ft. However, the greatest bridge in Britain is now the Humber Estuary Bridge, in the North-East, with a 4626ft span and a total length of 1.37 miles, opened 1981. This was an expensive project, with high tolls resulting, and politically controversial. Other noted British bridges include the railway bridge over the Firth of Forth, Scotland (a cantilever design, proverbial in the UK for the belief that when the permanent crew have finished painting one end, they go back and start again at the other), and the Tay Bridge, also in Scotland, Britain's longest railway bridge, with 85 spans, which replaced an earlier design after a famous 19th century disaster.

BRIGHTON

Sea-bathing (for health) first became popular in the 18th century, and the fashion did wonders for a small south-coast village named Brighthelmstone. By the end of the century, the then Prince of Wales had bought a country house there; when he became Regent in 1812, taking over the country from his sick father George III, he decided to have the place turned into an exotic eastern-style pavilion, with onion-shaped domes that looked as odd to contemporaries as they do now. However, this did no harm to Brighton's resort status, which survives today. The British may have taken to going abroad for their holidays, but Brighton has adapted; it houses commuters, offices, dozens of antiques shops, a conference centre and many hotels, and hosts arts festivals and other "events". Sussex University is in parkland on low hills a couple of miles north, and veteran car rallies and suchlike find the fifty-odd miles from London a convenient distance.

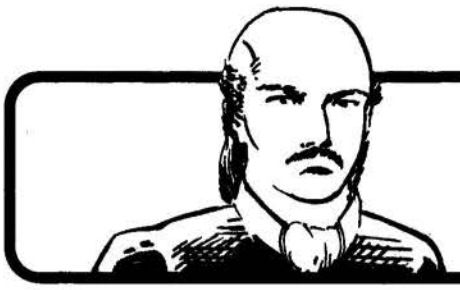
MAIDEN CASTLE

Maiden Castle, Dorset, is a great hill-fort (earthworks), built from around 300 BC and an important centre of pre-Roman southern Britain. It fell to the Romans in 44 AD, and was deserted; the surviving inhabitants were moved to the Roman new town of Dorchester.

Maiden Castle occupies a grassy hill which rises 80 feet above the surrounding countryside. It is an oval, 1000 yards long by 500 wide; four sets of ditches and ramparts surround the central area, originally topped by a palisade. The "gateways" at each end are mazes of ramparts and ditches that would have made direct approach impossible and allowed the defenders to shower their enemies with missiles.

THE CINQUE PORTS

In the Middle Ages, a number of south-eastern sea-ports were responsible for providing most of England's navy, and received various privileges in return. The original five (French "cinque", pronounced "sank") ports were Hastings, Dover, Sandwich, Romney, and Hythe; Rye and Winchelsea were added later. Today, most are reduced to fishing villages or small towns; several have been left inland as the coastline has changed, and only Dover rates as an international port. The legal privileges too are gone, but the title of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports is a ceremonial honour (currently held by the Queen Mother).



A COMMON LANGUAGE

"When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetic without rules."

— Samuel Johnson

Speakers of English sometimes boast that it is uniquely rich, the result of multiple cultures mixing through a long history. The funny thing is, several of the languages spoken in Britain have remained defiantly unmixed, so the country now has several languages in routine use.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

The indigenous, living languages of the UK are English, Scots Gaelic, and Welsh, plus Romany (Gipsy) and Irish Gaelic, which is used more in the Republic of Ireland but may be heard in Ulster. The last native speaker of Manx, the language of the Isle of Man, died in 1974; the British-owned Channel Islands, off the coast of France, use a French dialect. The last Cornish speaker died in 1891 (but the first Cornish dictionary had been published four years earlier). Many immigrants use their original languages at home, Indian languages being especially widespread.

The political dominance of England within the UK for much of history often led to English being imposed heavy-handedly, and to its being seen as the language of the powerful. This in turn has made Gaelic and Welsh into symbols of regional defiance, although governments in these more "enlightened" times are less likely to repress other tongues. In fact, there are now stories of extremist nationalists harassing and refusing to co-operate with English-speakers. These are rare, extreme cases, but GMs should note that languages can be a useful tool for anyone wanting to shut outsiders out of conversations!

Britain's small Romany community have their own, ancient tongue; the other long-established minority tongues are all Celtic. Welsh is spoken by perhaps 18-25% of the population of Wales (500,00-750,000 people), mostly in the rural north and west, and Welsh TV and radio carry a fair amount of Welsh material. It has become a symbol of Welsh identity, with literary festivals — "Eisteddfods" — held using the language alone. Scots Gaelic is spoken by only 50,000-80,000 people (about 1.6% of the Scottish population), largely in the Islands and north-west Highlands — it was actually a pre-medieval import from Ireland, and English dialects have long predominated. The presence of immigrants has led to various provisions being made for speakers of other languages — TV programs and public library stocks in major Indian languages, for example — but English remains dominant in most places, only some recent immigrants and the very insular not being fluent in it. Still, there are...

ENGLISH VARIATIONS

It often surprises Americans that a relatively small country like the UK should include, not only several languages, but a large variety of accents and dialects of English. There's no mystery, however; most of the variations developed over centuries when communications, and so linguistic mixing, were much less efficient than today. (Social stratification helped, too; there are distinct "upper" and "lower" class accents.) Modern mobility and TV are helping eliminate a lot of variation, but slowly.

Variations range from subtle distinctions between neighbouring towns, through heavy regional accents, to variants such as Scots English, which has a large unique vocabulary and some grammatical peculiarities (and some internal variations of its own). There is also a lot of slang, shading into dialect and jargon; for example, one book lists nine different mining industry terms for poor-grade coal.



"Standard" English

There was never one unique form of English; all the regions had variations from early times. However, the royal court, based in London, was the centre of power, and its language became the key to respect. This was the aristocrats' language, different from that of poor Londoners (although there are resemblances, such as the drawled "aw" sound for the letter "o"); over time, it became the basis for "Standard" English and "Received" pronunciation (so called because it was "received" at court). Americans (and others) should note that this "standard" isn't quite the same as the one they use.

The "public" schools were created to teach this "Received Standard English" (RSE) to the sons of the newly rich; in this century, the broadcasting systems used to concentrate on RSE, partly because it was "correct" and partly for clarity. Hence English characters with money, extensive educations, old fashioned stage training, or just middle-class, south-east England up-bringings will mostly use RSE. Foreign English-speakers will know it as the precise, rather "plummy" tone used by many English actors who've done well in Hollywood. Highly-educated users may sound rather "fussy", and aristocrat types have much more of a drawl (see UK-made costume dramas for examples; "Yarr, sounds like this, dawnt ya know, old chap?"), while military officers tend to a clipped, terse form (as used in a lot of war movies). For a traditional upper-middle class female voice, see any film with Joyce Grenfell or Margaret Rutherford. Incidentally, film actors' accents aren't a reliable guide to anything; even good British films often get accents wrong, and strong UK regional accents aren't allowed in Hollywood.



London

As noted already, the London accent isn't the same as RSE. It's been much used and abused by writers; Dickens had a better ear for it than some of his imitators. The form known as "Cockney" is that of the working class East End (a Cockney supposedly had to be born in earshot of St Mary-le-Bow church — "within the sound of Bow bells"), but it's the archetype. It's probably familiar to film-watchers in the mouth of the joke London street-urchin ("Yer wot, guv? Cor blimey, strike a light, 'oo do you fink I am?"), or Parker in Thunderbirds (a weak attempt); see any film where Michael Caine is playing a working-class character for a more restrained version. An imitator can achieve a recognizable parody by dropping a few h-beginnings to words and throwing in some rhyming slang (see below). The rest of South-East England tends to variants of RSE or London accents, particularly where they are spread by commuters and Londoners moving outwards.

The West Country

This area provides the basis for traditional joke English rustic speech; it is a farming region. Local forms of speech include 'n for "him" or "it", ("I seed 'n" for "I saw it"), and sometimes "thou" and "thee" for "you". Other usages include swapping "her" and "she" in speech, and "for to" or "for" instead of "to" before a verb — "her came for to see the doctor". Rolling the "r" sound a lot, and pronouncing "z" for "s" and "v" for "f" is also standard. ("Arr, you'll vind thaht joke varmerz talk loike thiz, iv you zee what oi mean...")

The Midlands and East Anglia

This is a varied area, ranging from industrial Birmingham, with its nasal urban accent, to rural East Anglia, with its sing-song burr and London influence. In addition, the industrial cities of the north and west of the region have large immigrant communities, making Indian accents quite common. This area is the source of the kind of strong but still (to the outsider) easily comprehended "regional" speech used in "realistic" stories of UK industrial life; a bad parody of the "Brummie" (Birmingham) accent can be achieved by slurring every consonant and talking while holding the nose. The rural variants tend to the archaic, with "thee" and "thou" often used, and (in East Anglia), a long "oo" sound for many vowels. (hence "boo-tiful" for "beautiful"). In the area generally (but especially East Anglia), "a bit of bread and butter" becomes "a bi'o'bre'n'bu'er".

Wales

Welsh English has an accent of its own (actually more than one), partly similar to that of western England; the "musical" pattern of Welsh speech is well known, and there's plenty of literary examples to imitate. The late Richard Burton sounded American after years in Hollywood, but he could always demonstrate the effectiveness of a good Welsh speaking voice.

Northern England

The North has a number of strong accents, much used and often confused in books and dramas about the tough life of the region's industrial workers. Actually, they vary substantially, from nasal Liverpudlian — world famous thanks to the Beatles — through terse Yorkshire to the "Geordie" of Newcastle. In this area, and the north Midlands, the key forms of speech are a very short "a" in words such as "grass" and "path", and an "oo" instead of a "u" for words such as "cup" or "butter", plus "aye" instead of "yes". Yorkshire is also noted for the use of the archaic "thee" and "thou" for "you", and is often badly parodied — "eh, bah gum, lad, thou'rt reet there, t'north gets sent oop no end. By t'way, there's trubble at t'mill".

The Geordie and related Sunderland accents are probably the strongest regional variations from RSE in England, and can be heavy going for outsiders; Londoners can easily find Geordies incomprehensible. "Dinnut" for "don't", "wer" for "we", "ont" for "of it", are some of the obvious features. (Jest dinnut see wer dinnu tell you part ont.) The rock star Sting has a very mild Geordie accent.

Northern Ireland

Curiously enough, Ulster folk usually have Irish accents, but the northern accent isn't the stereotyped Irish "blarney"; the "sing-song" quality of the south is replaced by a more emphatic manner, and the frequent use of phrases such as "to be sure" and "at all, at all" is missing. For a broad generalisation, assume that a northerner with a more "southern" style of speech is more likely to be a Catholic; Protestant speech is closer to the Scots.

Scotland

Scottish speech itself is very varied; anyone who doesn't believe that it can be a distinct dialect should look at some Robert Burns poetry. (He called a mouse a "Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie".) The strongest accents to be heard are in the Highlands and Islands and the industrial cities, especially Glasgow — Glaswegian comedians can always get a laugh out of an impersonation of an incomprehensible Glasgow drunk, and the speech of the Glasgow poor has had to be sub-titled on English television.

Even the softest-accented Scots speech may be peppered with words rare or unknown elsewhere, some from Gaelic — "bairn", "brae", "canny" and "dour" are just ones that have slipped into English. (Ye've got tae ken, it's nae jest that 'engines canna take it' rubbish frae the television; ah'm talking real accents here, Jimmie.) For a light Scottish accent that has partly survived Hollywood, listen to Sean Connery. (Incidentally, it's not true that all Scotsmen are called "Mac"; the standard/joke Glaswegian name is "Jimmie". Meanwhile, some Londoners call every male they talk to "John".)

Role-Playing Considerations

GMs should remember George Bernard Shaw's comment that Britain and America are two countries divided by a common language. The Rules notes elsewhere in this book look at some ways of handling such things; without getting too complicated, a game in which British characters have speaking parts should notice the variations, and one in which anyone attempts to fake or mimic British speech is going to need some care.

SPELLING DIFFERENCES

Some words are spelled differently in Britain and America, mostly where Americans have simplified an archaic form which Britons have kept. Most obviously, "-our" endings in Britain become "-or" in the USA ("colour", "honour"), and "-re" can become "-er" (in "centre" or "metre" — but the latter is a unit of measure, while a British "meter" is a gauge or indicating device). Also, Britons usually spell "apologize", "specialize" and the like with an "s"; "defence" is what protects from attacks. Other examples of British spellings can be found throughout Kingdom of Champions.

COMMON VARIATIONS

Some words just mean different things in the UK and USA, despite American cultural imperialism. For example:

British	American
Braces	Suspenders
Suspenders (as in Suspender Belt) (Things to hold ladies' stockings up)	Garter Belt
Trousers	Pants
Pants	Underwear
Car Park	Parking Lot
Dual Carriageway	Divided Highway
Ring Road	Beltline, Beltway
Crisps	Chips
Chips	French Fries
Biscuit	Cookie
Scone	Biscuit
Muffin	Cup-Cake
English Muffin	Muffin
Aerial	Antenna
Anorak	Windbreaker
Bank Holiday	Public Holiday
Chemist	Drug Store
The City	Wall Street
City/Town Centre	Downtown
Courgette	Zuccini
Cupboard, Wardrobe	Closet
Dinner Jacket (DJ)	Tuxedo
Dressing Gown	Bathrobe
Estate Agent	Realtor
Fancy Dress (Party)	Costume (Party)
Flat	Apartment/Condominium
Garden	Yard
Goods Waggon	Box Car
High Street Banks	Clearing Banks
High Street	Main Drag (Redundant Phrase)
Housing Estate	Housing Project
Joint (of meat)	Roast
Jumble Sale	Community Garage Sale
Kettle	Tea Kettle
Lift	Elevator
Noughts and Crosses	Tic Tac Toe
Old School/University	Alma Mater
Pan	Kettle
Pavement	Sidewalk
Pelican Crossing	Crosswalk (with pedestrian lights)
Petrol	Gas(olene)
Post	Mail
Prevaricate	Evade Truth, Quibble (not lie!)
Public School	Private School
Purse, Wallet	Pocketbook
Reverse Charge Call	Collect Call
Reversing Lights	Back-Up Lights
Rubber	Eraser
Shop Floor	Blue Collar
State School	Public School
Subway	Underpass
Summer Time	Daylight Saving
Trade Union	Labor Union
Tube Train	Subway
Wellingtons, Wellies	Rubbers (footwear)
Windscreen	Windshield
Zebra Crossing	Crosswalk (pedestrian right of way)

SLANG AND COLLOQUIALISMS

British slang and dialect are very rich fields. Some words go back centuries, some come from popular TV programs; some are old political jokes, some are modern comedians' creations. The underworld has its jargon, which the police learn and borrow. Slang can shift in meaning; the old northern version of "nit-wit" (ie a fool) was "nig-nog", but that has now merged with the racist's abusive "nigger" as an insult for a black person. A particularly rich source is "Cockney Rhyming Slang", which works by taking a word, finding a phrase that rhymes, then dropping the rhyming part — so a look becomes a "butcher's hook", which becomes a "butchers" (as in "take a butchers at this"), and time (in prison) becomes "birdlime", or "bird" (so a British convict "does bird"); some rhyming slang has become almost universal, while some is invented daily by would-be wits.

American slang has come in via television — younger policemen refer to "spooks", whereas their seniors still talk of "the funnies" ("funny" as in "strange") for the intelligence services; other Americanisms come in via Jamaican slang ("bulls" or "bullermen" for police). Nonetheless, not all US slang is instantly understood in the UK; for example, the insulting "faggot" for a homosexual is unknown (a British "faggot" is a traditional type of meatball, and a "fag" is a cigarette, or a junior pupil at a public school). Certainly, there is enough original British slang in everyday use to be worth a partial list here (a full list would fill the book).

In this list, "General" words are those understood by almost all Britons; others are used by the group specified. "Dated" terms are only used by older people.

List of British Slang

In this list, "General" words are those understood by almost all Britons; others are used by the group specified. "Dated" terms are only used by older people. For each entry, the slang term is given first in italics, then the "Origin/Usage" in parenthesis, and finally the meaning.

Banger (General) — Old Car (or a firecracker)

Belt and Braces (General) — Double or Excessive Security

Bird (General, esp. Male) (Young) — Woman (slightly sexist)

Bloke, Fellow, Fella' (General) — A Male Adult

Blimey (General/London/Dated) — (Mild Oath)

Boffin (General/Dated) — Scientist

Bonking, Screwing, Getting a Leg Over (General/Vulgar) — Sexual Intercourse

Cheesed Off (General) — Unhappy, Annoyed

Chuffed (General) — Pleased

Cobblers! (General/Vulgar) — (Expression of Disagreement)

Coppers, The (Old) Bill (General) — Police

Cough Up (General) — Pay Up

Dead Chuffed (General) — Very Pleased

Dole (General) — Unemployment Benefit

Dolly-Bird (General, esp. Male) — Overly Decorated and probably unintelligent (young) woman (sexist)

Dosh, Folding Stuff, Greenies, Lucre (General) — (Paper) Money

(Gift of the) Gab (General) — (A talent for) Speech

Gabble (General) — Too-Rapid Speech

Geezer (General/London) — A Male Adult

Get on like a house on fire (General) — Be very friendly with

Go with the tide (General) — Take the easy way

Going like a bomb (General) — Doing very well

Gordon Bennett (General) — (Mild Oath)

Hooray Henry (General) — Irresponsible upper-class male

Howler (General/Middle to Upper Class) — Glaring Mistake

Jock (General) — Scotsman

Keep Your Hair On! (General) — (Command to) Cease to be over-excited or mad

Knackered (General/Vulgar) — Exhausted, Worn Out

Loadsamoney (General) — Vulgarly obsessed with money, especially one's own wealth; a person with this attitude

(Loonie) Bin (General) — Lunatic Asylum

Make a Bomb (General) — Make a lot of money

A (Right) Mug (General) — A Gullible Person

Mutton Dressed Up, As Lamb (General) — An older woman trying too hard to dress or look younger

Naff Off (General) — Leave Immediately (often a command)

Nicked (General/South-East) — Arrested

O.A.P. (General) — Senior Citizen

Oik (General/Upper Class) Person with no manners or education

An Old Lag (General) — An "experienced" criminal prisoner

On the Game (General/Vulgar) — Engaging in Prostitution

Over the Moon (General, esp. Soccer Managers on TV) — Very Pleased

Paddy, Mick (General) — Irishman

Patter (General) — Fast Talk, Spiel

Pissed (General/Vulgar) — Inebriated

Pissed as a Newt (General/Vulgar) — Very Inebriated

Playing Gooseberry (General) — Acting as a chaperone (accidentally or otherwise)

Prat, Wally, Wazok, Berk (General) — Fool, Incompetent

Pub, Boozer, Tavern, Inn (General) — Public House for the consumption of alcohol

Sail Through (General) — Get Through Easily

Scouse (General) — Liverpudlian

Shifty (General) — Untrustworthy

Sick as a Parrot (General, esp. Soccer Managers on TV) — Very Displeased, Upset

Skeleton in the Cupboard (General) — Guilty Secret

Skive Off (General) — Avoid, Evade (Work)

Sloane Ranger (General Upper-Class) — Female Twit

To Slope Off (General) — Leave Surreptitiously

Spud (General) — Potato

Squaddy (General/Military) — Soldier, often an infantry private

Squire (General/London) — Informal mode of address to male

Taffy (General) — Welshman

Take a Shoofty (General) — Take a quick look

Tea Leaf (Cockney/General) — Thief

A Thatcher (General) — A Pound (£1) Coin

Thug (General) — Punk, Hoodlum

Tube (General) — Subway/Underground Railway

Wad (General) — A large bundle of paper money

Yank (General) — (Any) American

Sowing Wild Oats (General/Dated) — Youthful Promiscuity

Wind-Up (rhyme with "mind-up") (General) — A straight-faced practical joke

To Get the Wind Up (as in weather) (General/Dated) — To Be Scared

Wotcher (General/Working Class) — (General Greeting)

Yellow Peril (General) — Traffic Wardens

Boys in Blue (Verbose, General) — Police

Peelers (Dated & N.Ireland) — Police

Flatfeet, Bobbies, Rozzers (Dated) — Police

Pigs, Fuzz (General/Derogatory) — Police

Brass Monkey Weather (General/Vulgar) — Very Cold

Adam and Eve (Cockney) — Believe

Guv (Cockney/London) — Sir

Trouble and Strife (Cockney) — Wife

Babylon (Black/Rastafarian) — Europe, The West, White Society, "The System"

Ganja (West Indian/Black) — Cannabis

Skanking (West Indian/Black) — Reggae Dancing

Woollyback (Liverpudlian) — Country Bumpkin

Slops (Glaswegian) — Police

Charlie Wood (Police) — A Truncheon

Enforcer (Police) — A Sledgehammer

Blagging (Criminal) — Armed Robbery

A Brief (Criminal) — A Wallet (bill-fold), a Driving Licence, Alternately, a Lawyer

Brown Fox (Criminal) — A (Sawn-Off) Shotgun

A Carpet, A Drag (Criminal) — Three Months in Prison

A Ching (Criminal) — Five Pounds

A Cock, a Cockle (Criminal) — Ten Pounds

Diabolical Liberty (Criminal) — An Action that annoys the speaker

Dragging, Jump Up (Criminal) — Stealing from motor vehicles

The Filth (Criminal/Derogatory) — Police

Gaff (Criminal/Lower Class) — A Flat (Apartment)

Going Case (Criminal) — Sleeping with a woman

Grass, (Copper's) Nark (Criminal) — Police Informer

Half a bar (Criminal) — Fifty Pence

To have a guy (Criminal/London) — To be on the run from the police

The Island (Criminal) — Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight

Joeys (Criminal) — Young Criminals

Kiting (Criminal) — Cheque Fraud

A Long'un (Criminal) — A Hundred or a Thousand Pounds

A Monkey (Criminal) — Five Hundred Pounds

A Moon (Criminal) — A Month in Prison

Mystery (Criminal/Derogatory) — A Woman

To Nash (Criminal/Northern) — To be on the run from the police

On One's Toes (Criminal) — On the run from the police

An Oxford (Criminal/Cockney) — Twenty-five Pence

Pavement Artist (Criminal) — Hold-Up "Specialist" (ie Armed Robber)

Pony (Criminal/Gambling) — Twenty-five Pounds

Porridge (Criminal/General) — A Prison Sentence

A Score (Criminal) — Twenty Pounds

Screws (Criminal/General) — Prison Officers

The Scrubs (Criminal) — Wormwood Scrubs Prison, London

Snout (Criminal) — Tobacco (used as currency in prison)

Steaming (Criminal) — Mob-handed Theft

A Stretch (Criminal) — A Year in Prison

Supergrass (Criminal/Press) — Very Important Police Informer

The Sweeney (Criminal) — Police "Flying Squad"

Tom (Criminal) — A Prostitute, alternately, Jewelery

The Ville (Criminal) — Pentonville Prison, London

Bounder, Cad (Upper Class/Dated) — Unprincipled Person

What-Ho! (Upper Class/Dated) — (Term of greeting)

Wizard (Upper Class/Dated) — Excellent

To get a green rub (Military) — To get bad luck

To get the rub of the green (Military) — To get good luck

Prang (RAF/Dated) — Crash

Freshers' Week (Academic) — First week of a new academic year

Rag Week (Academic) — Period of practical jokes and stunts, supposed to raise money for charity

May Ball (Cambridge Academic) — Big all-night party, held in June after exams have finished

The Word "Quite"

British English also makes complicated use of the word "quite":

"Oh Quite, Absolutely" — upper class mindless agreement

"That's Quite Nice" — tepid approval

"Quite Magnificent" — awed admiration

Tone of voice is the only guide possible here.

The Word "Bloody"

One significant point that Americans miss; in Britain, "bloody" is a moderately strong swear-word. Adults wouldn't usually use it in front of young people, or vice-versa, and strongly religious people would use it rarely if at all.

SUPERBEING SLANG

Lastly, let's speculate what slang terms would arise in a superbeing-infested world. The first examples of something often give their names to the language (if you take Fire-Watcher from this book as Britain's first costumed hero, Britons may call all heroes by that name); criminals would have their own codes for things. The following are just our ideas for a number of different categories.

Telepaths

Head-hunters — Obvious

Cyclists — "Trick Cyclist", from "Psychic" (or "Psychia-trist")

Flyers

Bombers — Obvious

Bovver — "Hover" (rhyme, used in a genuine lawnmower advertisement)

Exotic Talent

Exies — Abbreviation

Superheroes

(Boy) Scouts — Obvious/Sarcastic

Big Men/Girls — Obvious/Sarcastic

Brussels — A Double Rhyme; "Brussel" for "muscle", and "Brussel Sprout" for "Boy Scout". Hence especially applied to bricks with ethics!

Sir — "Sir Galahad" — mainly for those with obvious ethics.

Mister — "Arm Twister" (rhyme) — mainly for those with bad reps for treatment of prisoners. (Note; GMs may see how long it takes the heroes to notice that "Sir" is a compliment while "Mister" isn't...)

STOP, UNTIL

The Zap Mob — Obvious

Grocers — "Grocers' Shop" (rhyme)

VIPER

Snakes — Obvious (may be applied to all villain agents)

Superbeings

Troops — "Trooper" (rhyme), Ironic

Maniacs — Ironic (hence "Maniacs on the loose" for heroes on patrol, "Maniacs on the prowl" for those after a specific objective)

Superheroines

Page 3s — The location of the pin-up in a tabloid newspaper — hence sarcastic.

Berserker — Taxman — "Mad Axeman" (rhyme)

EXAMPLE CONVERSATION

Finally, let's imagine an exaggerated conversation in a universe where superheroes exist. A Hooray Henry, on being told that a super-fight has taken place, asks a London-born bystander for details:

HH: "What ho! Heard there was a bit of a set-to round here, don'cha know?"

Bystander: "Could be, squire, could be. See, this bloke — 'alf a pork pie short of a picnic, if you ask me — 'e comes down 'ere in this flamin' great wagon — got up to look like a giant spider, would'ja Adam and Eve it. Parks it artside the bank there, right on a yellow line. I'm just sayin' to meself, the yellow peril ain't going to like that, are they? When 'e opens up wiv this bloody great shooter from the top..."

HH: "A gun, d'you say? Bally heck!"

Bystander: "Yeah, right, mate. Gordon Bennett, I says to meself, it's one o' them Exies like what you read abaht, and a Taxman ta boot. Course, by then I'm down on me nose in the street, but I can't but take a shoofty, can I? Only 'ooman. Well, just then, up rolls this big geezer in a flash motor of 'is own. Well, I says to meself, this must be a right Brussel. And right away, 'e leans out of the window, pulls aht a gadget-fing, and wallop! 'E blows the leg orf of the spider."

HH: "Good Lord! Really!"

Bystander: "Straight up, guv, but lemme tell this."

HH: "Sorry old chap. OK, yah, you were saying?"

Bystander: "Well, 'course, the first geezer, 'e don't like it. The 'ead fing twists rahnd, and 'e shoots the front wheel orf of the uvver bloke's motor. But the uvver bloke, 'e comes rolling out, and 'is motor 'its the first one. It's just sittin there rockin' when the bloke gets up wiv 'is gadget and blows its bloomin' 'ead orf. Then the Taxman — all dressed up like an insect 'e was, too — 'e comes crawlin aht of it, screamin blue murder 'bout 'ow 'e was goin' to get the uvver bloke. Two coppers — been keepin' their 'eads dahn, and I can't say as I blame 'em — they're just wonderin if they orta nick 'im, when the Big Bloke walks up to 'im, bops 'im on the mush, and 'ands 'im over, calm as you like. Don't know 'bout you, guv, but I reckon its a diabolical liberty, them blokes carryin' on like that in public. People coulda got 'urt!"

Passing Scot: "Aye, Jimmie, bluidie silla business it all is an' all. Ah mean, ah've noo tahm fah th' slops, ye ken, but those two fellas had nae care fa wha' they were dooin' tae other folk. 'Tisn't reet!"

(And so Dr GoldWing sends Dr Mantis away for another spell in prison, and the cause of modern science's public image gets set back another twenty years.)



HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

"The people of Britain unfortunately make more history than they can consume locally."

— (adapted from) Saki

"The history of England is emphatically the history of progress."

— Macaulay

Archaeology in comics is traditionally a high-risk occupation. Because of this, it is worth considering British archaeology in some detail.

NEOLITHIC (4800-2300 BC)

People have lived in the British Isles for many thousands of years. Little is known of the earliest inhabitants, who were hunters and gatherers, using simple tools of wood, stone and bone. The Neolithic people were the first to influence the landscape.

The oldest Neolithic monuments are *long* barrows, mounds up to 100 yards long. They were communal graves and places of worship. *Henges* are circular areas defined by a ditch and bank. They may have been religious sites, markets or meeting places. They were not dwelling places. Some such as Woodhenge and Durrington Walls (both near Stonehenge), may have been vast wooden buildings. Silbury Hill in Wiltshire is the largest prehistoric mound in Europe. It was constructed around 2600 BC, and is 120' high. Its purpose is unknown; no burials have been found there. The Neolithic pople created farmland from the forest and traded widely.

BRONZE AGE (2300-1300 BC)

The people of the Bronze Age left us many individual tombs, round barrows, and cairns in upland areas. *Menhirs*, single standing stones, are either burial markers or surviving parts of stone circles.

The best-known Bronze Age remains are stone circles. About 1000 are known. Some were religious centres, others were mainly burial sites. Some circles such as Avebury and Stonehenge were built within earlier henges. Stone circles are between 10 and 100 yards across. Late, small circles are commonest, and may have been made by a single family.

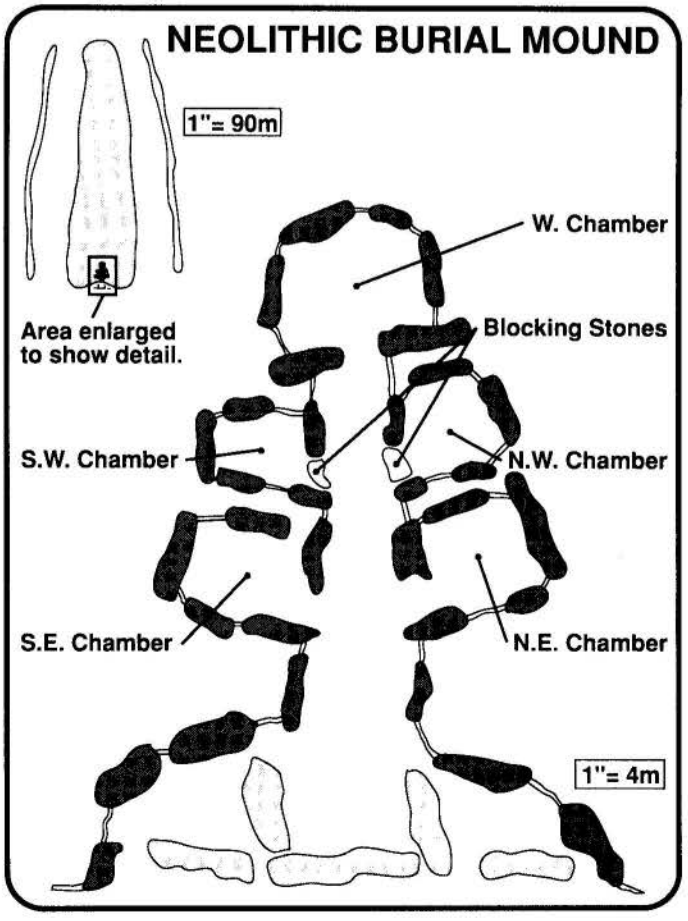
Stonehenge is often thought of as the archetypal stone circle, but its main features — the carefully-shaped and smoothed tall sarsen stones with stone lintels on top — are unique. In other circles, the stones were left rough, nearly square, and sited apart from each other. There are no inscriptions on the stones — the Romans brought writing to Britain — but many Neolithic and Bronze Age stones bear one or many "cupmarks". A cupmark is a round, fist-sized hollow, sometimes enclosed by inscribed circles.

Early Religion

Early monuments are often aligned to midsummer or midwinter sunrise, or the rising points of the moon. The moon was connected with death. Human bones were used in ancestor worship at some sites. A very few possible human sacrifices have been found. Practices and beliefs varied across the country and through time.

IRON AGE (1300 BC — 43 AD)

There are few early Iron Age relics. Neither elaborate burials nor religious monuments were in fashion. The best known Iron Age structures are the hillforts, built around 750-500 BC, with defences of one or more lines of palisaded ditch and bank taking advantage of the contours of a hill. They were built during the unsettled time when the Celtic culture was arriving from Europe. Some hillforts were stock enclosures, others were fortified towns, trading centres, or places of retreat. Hillforts varied in size from less than an acre to over two hundred acres, but most were 3-30 acres. Many hillforts were used until Roman times, some were reused in





the unsettled times when the Romans left. In northern Scotland and the Scottish isles, people built brochs, round structures, looking like power station cooling towers, with very thick walls, and an open central area.

By the first Century BC, society (especially in the south-east where Celts from Gaul ruled) was ruled by kings and nobles, the rest of the population being virtual slaves with very little freedom.

Druids and the Celtic Religion

The druids probably came to Britain with the Celts. Older structures such as Stonehenge are not related to the druids. The druids were religious and social figures; they acted as judges in court cases. Study to become a druid took 20 years. Druidesses were subordinate to the druids. The druidic base in Britain at Anglesey was destroyed by the Romans in 60 AD.

The Celts believed in the transmigration of souls. They worshipped many tribal deities, of rivers, springs and wells, horned gods, battle goddesses, and sacred animals. Human sacrifices were frequent, and the heads of those killed in battle were taken by the victors. Offerings were made at groves, sacred trees, wells, and natural or artificial shafts.

ROMAN PERIOD (43-410 AD)

In 55 and 54 BC, Caesar spent his summer holidays in Britain. He claimed this was a great conquest, but actually, he came, fought, got shipwrecked, and managed to struggle home. The Britons ignored this "conquest", until the Romans returned in force 100 years later.

The Iceni were a Norfolk tribe that welcomed the Romans at first. When their king died, the Romans imposed direct rule. The king's widow, Boudicca (Boudicea), led a revolt razed Roman settlements including London, battled several legions, but was eventually defeated. Tradition has it that Boudicca and her daughters took poison to avoid capture.

The Roman Empire ended at Hadrian's Wall. The tribes further north were subjugated, and another boundary wall (the Antoine Wall) was built between the Clyde and Forth in about 140 AD, but abandoned soon after. In the centuries in which it was a part of Rome, Britain prospered. Towns and country estates (villas) sprang up. Christianity arrived at the beginning of the 3rd Century, although paganism continued. In the 4th Century, Picts (from Scotland), Scots (from Ireland), and Saxons (from Europe) began raiding. In about 410 AD, the Roman legions were withdrawn from Britain.

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND (410-1066)

After the withdrawal of Roman rule, the cities gradually declined due to civil wars and raids. A British overlord, Vortigern, invited Saxon mercenaries to defend the land in the 430s. In the 440s, a plague killed about a third of the population, and the Anglo-Saxon mercenaries revolted. If King Arthur actually existed, it was then.

By the middle of the 7th Century, the Anglo-Saxons had settled most of the land now known as England, although Cornwall and Devon were still British, and the English settlements reached as far north as Edinburgh. This land

was divided into a number of kingdoms. The early English were pagans, but the Romano-British were Christians. In the early 7th Century, the English were converted to Christianity.

In the early 9th Century, the Viking raids began. By 874, Wessex was the only independent English kingdom. King Alfred forced the Vikings to withdraw from Wessex. After his death, his son King Edward of Wessex and daughter Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia, began the conquest of England. Edward's son Athelstan became the first king of a united England. At the end of the 10th Century, there were further Viking raids. The English defences collapsed, and the English were forced to pay protection money, "Danegeld", to the raiders. In 1013 the Danish King Cnut (Canute) came on a raid, and found himself elected to the English throne.

By now, England was a single kingdom with common laws, currency, and language. Despite later upheavals, there was never a serious threat of England disintegrating. In 1042, the throne went to an Englishman, Edward (the Confessor). In 1066, his successor, Harold II Godwineson, was faced with simultaneous invasions from Norway and Normandy. Harold defeated the Norse at the battle of Stamford Bridge (a battle which finally destroyed the power of the Vikings), but was defeated and killed near Hastings.

WALES (5TH-11TH CENTURIES)

The Welsh tribes were subdued by the Romans, but largely left alone. Most of the country was too poor to be of interest. When the Romans left, Wales fragmented into small kingdoms. Irish raiders settled in the southwest. Wales was sometimes raided by the Vikings, but was not settled by them. Relations between the Welsh kingdoms and England were stormy. A treaty with Mercia (which led to creation of Offa's Dyke) did not prevent raiding. Gruffydd ap Llewellyn managed to unite Wales briefly in the 11th Century, but his raids into England led to English retaliation, and he was killed by his own men.

SCOTLAND (5TH-11TH CENTURIES)

During the Roman period, the Celtic tribes outside Roman rule combined to form the Picts. Little is known of them, as their written records have not survived. Rock engraved with their designs — animals and abstract shapes — are their main surviving relics.

From the 5th Century, Scots from Ireland settled the southwest of Scotland, and in the 6th Century, the southeast up to Edinburgh became part of English Northumbria. The Picts were absorbed by the Scots in the 9th Century. By about 850, the Vikings occupied the northwest. The kingdom of Scotland did not have its present size until the 15th Century.

MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

After the battle of Hastings, William the Conquerer made a show of following the proper form in getting himself elected king, and took the king's oath to rule justly. Meanwhile, his army ravaged the countryside around London, and English landowners were dispossessed. English rebellions were ruthlessly put down.

England held lands in France, which led to sporadic wars against France and its ally Scotland. England, especially after the adoption of the Welsh longbow in about 1300, won most of the battles, but lost its French posessions by the middle of the 15th Century. Civil wars (the Wars of the Roses) in the 15th Century were finally won by Henry VII, the first of the Tudors.

MEDIEVAL WALES

After 1066, individual Norman lords seized land in Wales, but the conquest of Wales was not completed until the campaigns of Edward I in 1283. Edward constructed castles throughout Wales, and in response to Welsh requests for a ruler who was noble, virtuous, and spoke Welsh, offered them a Prince of royal blood who was sinless, and who spoke no other language. Consequently, his infant son of a few months became Prince of Wales, a position that the heir to the throne still holds.

MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND

Immigrants (English nobles, and later Anglo-Normans) were welcomed by the kings of Scotland, and soon, many of the nobles were more English than Scottish. Eastern and southern Scotland developed urban economies, and were English-speaking. The west and north remained poor, primitive and Celtic.

In the late 13th Century, the English King Edward I installed a puppet king on the Scots throne, and took the Stone of Destiny (Stone of Scone), which is now under the throne of the British monarch. William Wallace and later Robert the Bruce led Scotland's Wars of Independence.

THE RENAISSANCE

Henry VIII of England's marital adventures led to a break between the English Church and Rome, and Henry later dissolved the monasteries and stole their wealth. His Catholic daughter became known as Bloody Mary because of her attempts to reimpose Papal authority by creating Protestant martyrs. When she was succeeded by her Protestant sister Elizabeth, Philip of Spain (Mary's widower) attempted to invade England. His armada, carrying the Spanish army, was defeated in 1588.

The Tudors were consistently mean, and the meanest of them all was Elizabeth I. She started England on the road to world domination — ambitious people had to go out and win wealth, rather than hope to get it from Elizabeth. And so they went, privateers, explorers, bucaneers, and pirates, to win glory for England, and get their hands on some money. Meanwhile, William Shakespeare wrote his plays, making sure that he praised the right people (Elizabeth's forbears) and criticised the wrong ones (the enemies of Elizabeth's forbears, such as Richard III).

Elizabeth, unmarried and childless, was succeeded by the son of Mary Queen of Scots, James I (and VI of Scotland). This brought to an end the long history of raiding and war across the Anglo-Scottish border.

REVOLUTIONS

James' son Charles I attempted to impose absolute rule on an unwilling country and Parliament. This led to the English Civil War (in which Scotland, Wales and Ireland also took part!), between Cavaliers and Roundheads. The Roundheads (Parliamentarians) won and beheaded Charles I in 1649. Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Roundheads, established the "Commonwealth", and Parliament had the power that the king once had. Although its members were solidly self-seeking, and mostly upper class, modern ideas of democracy were starting to evolve.

After Cromwell's death, the Commonwealth crumbled, and Charles' son Charles II returned to the throne in 1660. His brother, James II, converted to Catholicism, and people feared a repeat of the reign of Bloody Mary. James was deposed in the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 by his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange, who ruled jointly as William and Mary. They were succeeded by Anne, who died without heirs in 1714, and Parliament chose to offer the throne to George I (of Hanover).

James, the overlooked son of James II, became known later as the "Old Pretender", and his son Charles as the "Young Pretender", "Bonnie Prince Charlie". The Old Pretender led an unprising in 1715, and Bonnie Prince Charlie the famous 1745 rebellion.

The '45 has become the subject of much Scottish romanticism, although at the time the main support came from the Highland tribes (which were looked down on by the more civilised Scots), and even the Highlanders were not united in their support. Bonnie Prince Charlie was a poor general, and after the massacre of his troops at Culloden (1746), he fled abroad, and eventually died of drink. In the wake of '45, the Highland tribes were suppressed, the wearing of their native costume was banned, and many people were forced to immigrate. In the long run, however, it led to economic development of the Highlands.

By now, Britain had a strong tradition of maritime trade and exploration, and strong merchant and military fleets. It was among the richest countries in Europe, with efficient agriculture, mineral reserves, wealth from its colonies, and the Protestant Work Ethic. Not everyone was happy in such a climate; religious and political dissenters wanted to find niches for themselves; but this actually increased Britain's influence in the world. By 1837, Britain had the largest empire the world has ever seen, and had led the world in the Industrial Revolution.

This was partly accident. India fell into the hands of a British trading company; Australia was claimed as part of a scientific exploration, and was settled as a means of emptying British prisons. One older colony was lost through a mixture of progress, ineptitude, and sharp political practice — but American readers will know about that subject. In Britain, the early industrial use of water mills gave way to steam powered machinery, powered by coal from the north of England and elsewhere. Raw cotton from the new colonies was processed in British mills, laying the foundation for its weaving industry.

All this was happening as Britain was changing — relatively peacefully — from a monarchy to a Parliamentary democracy. Britain became a modern industrial nation before in had fully shed feudalism; it had built an empire without becoming a military dictatorship.

This made traditions. First, Britain mistrusted standing armies (an attitude the USA's founding fathers inheirited); the Empire produced a small army of professionals who fought abroad but who were never strong enough to threaten the civilian government. Industry allowed clever, hard-working men to acquire wealth, but they still had a landed aristocracy to envy; today, Britain is notoriously class-obsessed, with land and history often counting for more than wealth or intelligence. Against the traditions of rural life, poor though that was, were set the new industrial cities, controlled by arrogant, quasi-feudal businessmen. At the time, Britain's industry was ahead of the world; later generations rested on those laurels, and fell behind. But all this was achieved without revolution; one of Britain's most important tradtions is compromise.

In France, there was revolution, and British rulers feared that Britain would follow. It didn't. France came under the rule of one of history's great generals. Napoleon achieved much, but his fleet was blockaded by the Royal Navy for most of the time. Admiral Nelson died romantically at Trafalgar (1805), defeating the combined French and Spanish fleets. After this, Napoleon's fleets were never a threat to Britain. In 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia, and discovered the Russia winter was greater than were men (a lesson Hitler forgot 130 years later). Napoleon was then beaten at Waterloo by a combined British and Prussian army in 1815. Americans may be surprised to learn that the war between Britain and the USA in 1812 is unheard of by all but those with a deep interest in the period — who regard it as a side-show in the struggle for Europe.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901. During that time, Britain was the foremost industrial nation. Coal mining, iron works, railways, factories, ship-and bridge-building were features of the age. Britain also gave the world social innovations such as police forces, postage stamps, fire services, and Boy Scouts. Britain was the most powerful trading nation in the world, and the army and navy protected its trade routes.

The many wars in this era were concerned with protecting British interests rather than expanding British influence. One such war was the Crimean war (1854-1856). This was fought between the Russians, and the British and French who were supposedly protecting Turkey. Turkey repelled the Russian invasion before the French and British arrived, so the allies landed in the Crimea (north of the Black Sea), presumably to dissuade the Russians from attacking Turkey again. The British and the French won the war, which included the Charge of the Light Brigade, in which light cavalry proved that a headlong charge into heavy artillery was not very clever.

Other wars included the Indian Mutiny (1857-8); and the Boer War (1899-1902), where the South African Boers made the British Army look very foolish, until the British Army realised that they didn't actually need to be stupid. There was also the Zulu War (1879), which included the battles of Isandwhalha (the only occasion where spear-carrying natives defeated a British Army); and Rorke's Drift, where about 100 Welsh troops defended a mission hospital against 5,000 Zulu — and won.

Queen Victoria was succeeded by Edward VII, who set about preventing war from breaking out in Europe. Europe had settled into armed camps, with Germany, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Britain and Italy all mutually hostile and locked into an arms race.

THE GREAT WAR

A minor Austrian duke was assassinated. In response, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia; Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary; Germany declared war on Russia; and Britain and France declared war on Germany. Germany attacked France, and nearly got to Paris before being pushed back. In Britain, everyone knew that the war would be over by Christmas.

That was in 1914. There followed four years of the bloodiest and most horrible battles the world has ever seen. The war bogged down into trenches, with the added menance of machine guns, barbed wire, massive artillery barrages, poison gas, tanks, and airplanes. Hundreds of thousands of Britons died in the mud of France, especially in the battle of the Somme. Battles elsewhere included Gallipoli, where Australians and New Zealanders fought Turkey. Further south, Lawrence of Arabia raised the Arabs against the Turks.

The stalemate continued until 1917 when the Russian revolution took place. For a while, Russia remained in the war, but after a series of catastrophic battles, it made peace with Germany. The Germans were then able to turn their whole attention on to the Western Front, and launched a series of major assaults, which were barely halted by the French and British. However, at this point, the USA joined in, and the influx of troops from a country that had not been drained by three years of bloody fighting turned the tide, and Germany was defeated.

BETWEEN TWO WARS

By the end of World War I, Britain was no longer the greatest power on Earth; that role having been usurped by the United States. The economies of Europe were exhausted, and Britain was no exception. The Depression struck, and it hit Britain hard. Many people were on the poverty line. In 1926, there was a General Strike in support of coal miners' refusal to accept a wages cut. However, despite the chaos caused by the General Strike (troops and volunteers ran essential services), the miners were eventually forced to give in.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In the 1930's, Hitler rose to power in Germany and embarked on a programme of rearmament. Britain, weakened by internal conflict and political battles, tried to make compromises to avoid or postpone conflict. Britain and France had a treaty of mutual defence with Poland, however, and when Germany invaded Poland in 1939, war was declared.

The war didn't really heat up for Britain until 1940, when Germany attacked France. Everyone expected a repeat of World War I, but France collapsed in only 6 weeks. Churchill barely managed to evacuate British forces from France at Dunkirk.

Hitler intended to invade Britain in the same year, but to do this, the British Royal Air Force had to be defeated. So began the Battle of Britain, in which the German air force bombed airfields and radar stations and attempted to destroy aircraft. Despite being vastly outnumbered, the RAF inflicted such losses on the German airforce that the invasion plan was abandoned. Instead, Hitler invaded Russia. Britain gained a respite, although it was still vulnerable because of its need for supplies. German submarines attacked shipping convoys in the Atlantic.

Churchill, the British Prime Minister, came to symbolise the British refusal to be defeated throughout the worst years of the war.

In 1941, Japan entered the war, attacking British forces in Southeast Asia, and later, the US Naval Base at Pearl Harbour. In support of Japan, Hitler declared war on the USA. The main sphere of the war remained, however, the Russian/German struggle, in which millions died. Eventually, the greater Russian numbers prevailed, and the Germans were pushed back. In 1944, Britain and the USA, along with their other allies, landed in Normandy, and Germany was forced to fight on three fronts — the Russian, the Italian, and the French. In 1945, the war ended.

POST-WAR

After the Second World War, Britain was exhausted, and the age of Empires was at an end. Unlike other Imperial powers, Britain took care to hand over power to responsible local leadership — and many of these governments remained free democracies. As a result of this, the British Empire moved relatively peacefully to become the Commonwealth, and most of the nations remain friends to this day.

Britain retains its seat on the Security Council of the UN, although industrially, militarily, economically, and politically, it is no longer the power it was. It's future lies within a European partnership.

RACE AND COLOUR



The people of Britain are the result of wave after wave of migration over the millennia, so there have always been racial minorities; sadly, there has often been racial prejudice, too. For example, Medieval Christian bigotry against Jews wasn't as bad as in some countries, but there were riots and murders, and mass expulsions when English kings found they owed Jewish bankers more than they could afford. Unlike the USA, Britain didn't have vast numbers of European immigrants in the nineteenth century, so the white population is a little more homogenous, but even so, there are white minority groups. It isn't really possible to tell a white Briton's origin by looks, but there are a few stereotypes with some truth; the tall, blond, chinless Norman aristocrat, the rugged, red-haired Celtic Scot, the small, dark, wiry Welshman with pre-Celtic genes, and so on.

COLOURED ARRIVALS

Slavery was never (fully) legal within Britain, so the main source of early non-white residents was seafarers. There are still a few small, exotic communities in UK ports; a few hundred Yemenis in South Shields in North-East England, blacks in Tiger Bay, Cardiff, South Wales, and so on, while Manchester ranks almost with San Francisco as a Chinese home-from-home, although this group is quiet and often forgotten. When slave-trading was at its height, a number of free blacks made their way to the UK; it was quite fashionable in the eighteenth century for "society" ladies to employ black page-boys, and one Caribbean slave, press-ganged into the Royal Navy, overcame contemporary racism to rise to the rank of a senior ship's captain.

MODERN PATTERNS

No certain figures are available, but the UK non-white population doesn't seem to have grown very much between the early nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. However, in the 1950's, even as the British Empire was being dismantled, the UK gave Commonwealth citizens extensive rights of entry, and encouraged workers to come and fill particular jobs with recruitment problems. The two main "sources" were the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent; today, both these groups remain, keeping some, slowly fading links with their areas of origin (especially, perhaps, the Asians).

It was at this time that "immigration" and "skin colour" became linked topics in the British psyche, despite the smaller numbers arriving from, for example, Australia over the years. Prejudice and fear work more easily given something as simple as pigmentation to focus on.

The relationship between white and coloured Britons was never based on memories of slavery, as in the American South, but friction still arose, and fears of culture clashes and "swamping" mixed with the search for scapegoats when unemployment rose or towns suffered hard times. Governments responded with controls on immigration, mostly in the form of quotas; this principle has been relaxed on occasions, as when Uganda expelled most of its long-resident Asians, or when a small number of Vietnamese "boat people" were allowed in.

The greatest current argument about controls is whether they are racist in formulation and enforcement. It's reckoned that coloured visitors are much more likely to be stopped and closely examined on arrival in the UK than are whites, although anyone with an American passport shouldn't have too much trouble. The other problem concerns the right of legal immigrants' families to join them; officials display a degree of paranoia about abuses of this principle, with blood tests demanded and so on.

CURRENT SITUATIONS

Questions of race are regarded as too sensitive for the official UK census, but the non-white population of Britain is estimated at around 2.4 million (something over 4%); the Muslim community, which is largely of Asian origin, has been quoted at up to 1.5 million. Both Caribbean black and Asian communities are mostly concentrated in larger cities, more in England than Scotland. Real "ghettoes" are rare, but some urban areas do have predominantly "ethnic" populations. Rural areas see few coloured faces, and may display racism based mostly on ignorance.

Many coloured Britons are first-generation immigrants, but they also have children and grand-children; hence the fading of ties to "home". One result may be friction between parents and westernised children, especially in Asian families where the tradition is of arranged marriages.

There are few "typical immigrant" jobs, although a fair number of early arrivals from the Caribbean went to work for London Transport and suchlike — except that a number of Indians, being from "mercantile" castes, went into keeping small shops. Being willing to work long hours in family groups, many have been very successful at this, and "Mr Patel, the Asian grocer" is now a British stereotype. Arguably, settled immigrants are actually falling into British class-oriented patterns, with urban factory workers having less and less in common with ambitious entrepreneurs who are entering the British middle classes.

THE MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY?

In contrast with the American idea of "the melting pot", British politicians discussing immigration came to talk about a developing "multi-cultural society", where any citizen could live in the type of community they wished. However, hard cases can arise with this idea, as when Muslim immigrants' sensitivities have recently been bruised by a book written by an ex-Muslim, leading to clashes with the European liberal ideal of free speech.

Britain has in practice stuck with traditional patterns of law and custom, leading some people to say that "multi-culturalism" is paid only lip-service. If justice is to remain blind to differences between groups, the idea is sure to hit limits, although some adaptions such as the Race Relations Act (see below) may develop.

Anyway, some cultural mingling has occurred, without wrecking "multi-culturalism". The "Mr Patels" are keeping small retailing going; their children dance to pop music that mixes Asian and disco styles, while Caribbean reggae has long been part of the UK pop scene. British "non-white culture" is less developed than in the USA, but also less segregated; black bands can borrow US soul styles, play to mixed audiences, and throw in "white rock" riffs. If many successful British blacks are in "stereotyped" fields — entertainment or sport, for example — they are admired by mixed audiences. Even white conservatives admire the Asian traditions of strong family ties and strict morality.

RACE RELATIONS

The first modern British "race riots" were in Notting Hill, London, in the late '50's, with white mobs attacking blacks. They led to the Notting Hill carnival, originally a black gesture of self-assertion which survives as an annual event, and to a long debate culminating in the Race Relations Act (1976), which makes racial discrimination a crime. This law prevents overt shows of prejudice, but of course it can't change people's thinking (in itself), and any crime has to be proved in court. Racism manifests itself in anything from problems for blacks looking for work, through white police attitudes (although prejudice is a disciplinary offence in the police force), to attacks by hooligans. Friction between young blacks and authority led to inner-city riots in the early '80's, which in turn led to "emergency" government measures (at least until things calmed down).

British racism is patchy, sometimes eccentric; of all minorities, the inner-city black and Asian groups meet it head-on. Although coloured and white liberal politicians point to the shared interests of the two communities, there is actually some serious friction between the two, with their very different background cultures.

It is important to realize that Britain isn't like other countries — its racial problems aren't those found elsewhere; the black experience is that of poor immigrants, not former slaves. White prejudice is real, nasty, but shallow; a large minority of young negroes marry whites. One idea that some politicians took to, but which never became "respectable", was repatriation — all but the bigots saying it should be voluntary, with financial incentives (the bigots chanted "send 'em back!"); today, a black comedian can mock this by saying yes, he'd take money to go back where he came from, as it's just down the railway line. Race relations are a live issue in Britain, but the complex ethnic mix of the country is an inescapable fact.

THE BRITISH CHARACTER (IF IT EXISTS)



"Have you any idea what it's like to be British?"

— John Cleese, "A Fish Called Wanda"

Given that GMs may wish to run British characters, it would be useful to discuss the British character — but things aren't that easy. There are around 58 million Britons, and summing them all up under one heading is very silly, or very brave. But the British have a reputation for being brave, silly, and possessed of a sense of irony, so here goes.

PAST CARING?

Britain has been around a while, and by luck, character, or talent, Britons have had a fairly stable history. So they are weighed down with a mass of habits and traditions. These can be either beneficial or catastrophic, and are often both, depending how you look at them. Most social arrangements in Britain are derived from tradition, not deliberate planning; however, because even Britons will eventually give up on something that just doesn't work, these traditions tend to be ones that do work, sometimes well. For example, British military units have high loyalty and esprit de corps — something that comes from loyalty to tradition. The British political system evolved directly from the medieval monarchy, with some shakings-up over the centuries; it works, despite the lack of a written constitution. However, some Britons feel that it needs reform; one reason it doesn't get it is the strength of tradition, although another is that many people say "if it works, don't fix it". (Britons aren't strong on preventative maintenance.) The British education system incorporates universities that date back to the thirteenth century, with ancient rules to match; they win more Nobel prizes than most countries, but British industry has difficulty converting academic science to working products. And so on.

Another key factor, part of the cause of the traditionalism, is that Britain is an island. This makes for a very, well, insular mentality, but unlike Americans, who Britons see as brash, naive isolationists, Britons accept that the rest of the world exists; they just try to keep it at a distance. For centuries, Britain has related better to America and its own scattered empire than it has to Europe; the English Channel was long seen as a moat, protecting the country from invasion. The French were rivals, as they still are, although shared interests are admitted; the feeling was reciprocated. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, France became an ally against Russia and Germany, but all foreigners were still inherently suspect; as late as the inter-war period, plans for a Channel Tunnel were blocked for fear of French invasion.

In recent years, Britain's membership of the European Community (basically an economic organisation) has been controversial; the economic arguments are complex, but an insular mentality is also involved. Britain built an empire, but its members were seen as either "like us" (white English-speaking Canadians, Australians, etc) or "inferior" (technologically less sophisticated Africans and Indians). By a self-reinforcing process, insularity led to ignorance, and ignorance made foreigners seem "strange"; Britain's schools are still far worse at teaching foreign languages than those of most European countries. A side-effect of this linguistic insularity is that, while Americans are viewed in various ways by Britons, they have the definite "advantage" of talking (much) the same language, and so are treated with more friendliness.

ANYTHING FOR A QUIET LIFE?

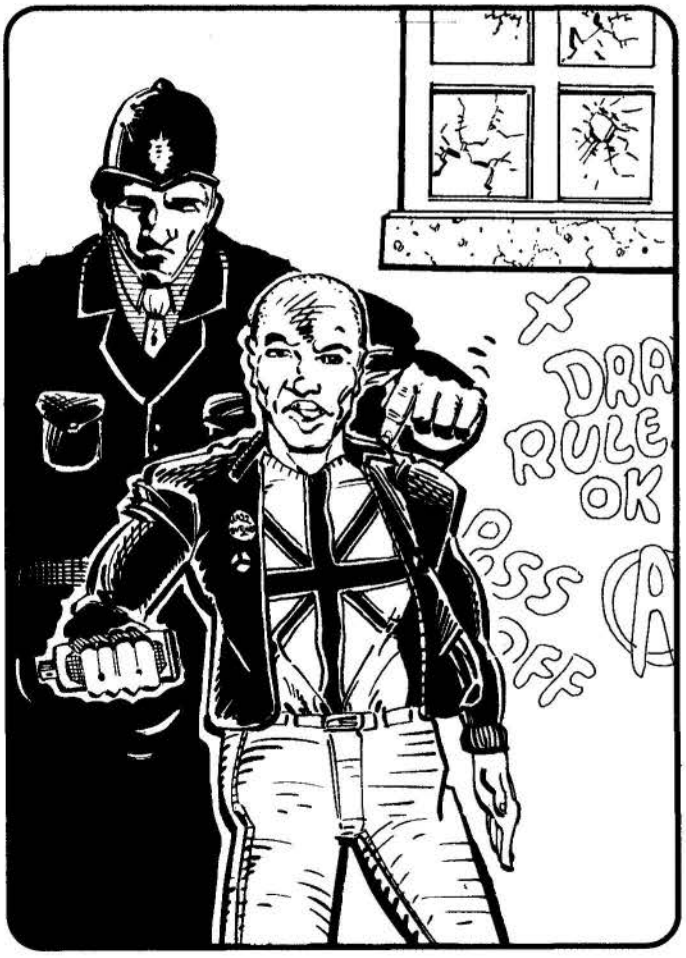
With the defensive advantage of a moat, the British rarely felt the need for a strong army; a small, professional force could defend the empire and fight minor wars, while a strong navy could keep communications open and prevent invasion. Professional armies used to be seen as too useful for tyrannical rulers, a worry that faded with the growth of democracy and the growing fear of wars against professional enemy armies. Britain's "sea-going tradition" doesn't mean that all Britons want to go to sea, but it does give the Royal Navy a sense of moral superiority. (In 1940, faced with the danger of German air power suppressing the Navy, the Royal Air Force suddenly became very important.) Only in "World Wars" did mass military conscription become necessary, although it was kept for some years after 1945.

This ties in with another point; Britain is a less violent society than America. Britain does have violence, and things are perhaps getting worse, but not only are murder rates still far lower in the UK (Northern Ireland included) than the USA, but Britons have no "Constitutional Right to Bear Arms", and very few feel the need to. On the one hand, British law comes down from times when the ruling classes wanted the peasantry kept quiet; on the other, Britain has not, in living memory, been a "frontier society", and Britons have felt little need to claim rights of self-defence. British law allowed the individual to protect self, home, and family, but pursuit of criminals was left to the law, and protecting the country was left to professional forces. So guns aren't seen much in public, and Americans are considered too gung-ho in both their personal and their international political attitudes. Armed robberies happen in the UK, but the public sees them as rare aberrations, and leaves them to specialised police units.

SUPERHEROES: CLOAKED CRUSADERS OR MASKED MENACES?

So how would Britain react to the appearance of superheroes? Without the historical memory of the lone frontier lawman, the masked vigilante could be seen as little better than the criminals he pursues. On the other hand, Britons like to see good triumph over evil, and a few big supervillain crimes would make the heroes more popular. Recently, in the real world, the New York "Guardian Angels" set up a branch in London; they found recruits, but were faced with considerable opposition from police, officials, and some of the public. Others liked the idea of crime being opposed, and were willing to "wait and see"; superheroes could probably expect a similarly guarded response.

As in America or anywhere else, a lot is going to hinge on the heroes' behaviour, how they are reported in the press, and so on, but in Britain the task may be harder. In particular, "heroes" who use guns or gun-shaped weapons will trigger a public aversion to such things; "this isn't the bloody Wild West, you know". Gun-slingers with American accents will meet particular prejudices; any foreigner playing the crime-fighter on Britain's streets is likely to run into hostility ("...coming over here, beating people up, claiming to solve our problems for us..."), until this can be overcome in some way (such as by a widely-reported act of unambiguous heroism). As "mutants" and suchlike may expect rather less bigotry from religious fundamentalists, if such is a feature of the USA in the game, focus-users may enjoy trips to Britain less than their teammates. British heroes may be most publicly popular if they are open about their aims, polite to everyone, and have some personal feature that some press and public like (good looks, understated patriotism, a line in humour, whatever), but other types would be entirely possible and likely.



THIS HAPPY BREED?

Actually, British attitudes are more laid-back than American ones in many ways. As a result of a class system descended from feudalism, Britain has never had the attitude towards business and financial success specify that Americans do — or, come to that, the meticulous precision traditional in German industry, or the commitment to the success of the company so central to Japanese life. On the one hand, this may be part of the reason for the lower rate of economic growth in Britain this century; on the other, it may make Britons less success-obsessed than Americans. At worst, Britons are snobbish about "vulgar" money-making; at best, they will respect it without assuming that money makes anyone a better person. The British attitude towards intelligence in itself, rather than its application to money-making, is ambiguous; British science is successful, British humour is ironical, but it's never been much of a compliment to call a Briton an "intellectual", and scientists have as much of an image of unworldly folly as in the USA. At worst, this reduces to inverted intellectual snobbery.

Snobbery, and class obsession, are widespread British failings — or rather, English failings. The clan system and Calvinist religion made the Scots partly immune to this, but in England, a feudal past, a long-stabilised society, and industry established in the days when bosses and workers were clearly distinguished, has led to a lot of social stratification. It is possible to rise up the ladder, but the nouveau riche who makes silly mistakes socially is a standard British comic figure. Distaste between classes is two-way; although arrogant treatment of "inferiors" is the worst aspect, British workmen and unions have been accused of pig-headed refusals to accept that their interests may be the same as the management's.

Britons are capable of patriotism, albeit less than in the days of imperial power; some are quite militant about it, others are less sure. However, it's usually a quiet sort of patriotism, focused on the country itself rather than on symbols; the Union Jack is important because it marks what is British, not for itself. The nearest thing to a revered symbol is the monarchy, but that at least means people who are respected as people. A few obscure laws protect the monarch, but the idea of a law to protect the flag would be laughed at in the UK.

A failing that Britons are less prone to than Americans is litigiousness. The proportion of lawyers per head of population is much lower in Britain than in the US (which may be cause or effect), and huge court awards for trivial hurts are rare, apart from some bizarre libel awards. In part, this is due to a more substantial social welfare system; Britons do not need to sue doctors for malpractice in order to survive illness, because free health treatment is nominally universal. Which said, it may also be part of Britain's lower regard for money. A Briton's first reaction to outrage can vary a lot, but it is less likely to be "sue the b*st*rd"!

THE PRESENT

However, all these attitudes have been put under some stress in recent years. With a government much in favour of "wealth creation" tackling the unions head-on, and with British industry (finally) responding to its many post-war problems, Britain has seen an increase in apparent respect for money-making, and an increasing number of Britons willing to work hard and take risks in exchange for large cash rewards. Meanwhile, union power has been squeezed between new laws and fears of high unemployment. And yet, it's not clear that these changes go very deep; the (rather small) group of big money-makers is largely concentrated in the "City" — the financial and banking area — rather than "vulgar" manufacturing industry, and aren't much respected, and older attitudes are often expressed. Meanwhile, the decay of manufacturing and growth of service and high-tech companies has shifted money ever more from north to south, creating a "widening north-south divide" — an old and painful problem. British psychology is in a rather uncertain state right now.

SMILE WHEN YOU SAY THAT

This brings us to British irony, and the British sense of humour. Britons have a reputation for dry, ironic wit, with some justification, but it's much exaggerated; mostly it's the better comedians and TV comedies get exported, while British TV has its share of pratfalls and easy jokes. However, it's wrong to say that only sophisticated, intellectual Britons enjoy irony; the straight-faced practical joke, seeing how long a victim takes to spot the trick, is a staple of British workplaces. Certainly, foreign visitors shouldn't expect Britons to laugh at their own jokes (some do, but it's thought crass), and sarcasm is a standard British conversational weapon. Equally, many Britons can tolerate criticism of themselves or their country better than other nationalities; they are aware of their faults, and claim to be amused by attacks. Some years ago, an immigrant wrote a book about the British best remembered for its one-sentence chapter on sex ("Continental people have sex life; the English have hot-water bottles."); it became a best-seller.

The roots of surreal, ironical British humour are obscure; it may be the long-settled, culture, the oddities of the education system, the moral confusion following loss of a global empire, the stress of ruling an empire in the first place, or just something in the water.

Talking of Britons and sex... Britons have a reputation for being reserved and cold, and certainly aren't as floridly "romantic" as the archetypal Mediterranean character, but little Britons do come from somewhere. There's a tradition of Puritanism, along with a dislike of shows of emotion, but also hypocrisy. At worst, British attitudes are prurient and mean; sex scandals do far more damage to politicians than they do in France, but many Britons buy newspapers with topless girls mixed with the news. Which said, the British ideal of tolerance can, at best, mean tolerance of other people's lifestyles, although attitudes to homosexuality are only now, slowly, shifting. Nudity is treated as something "rude", to be sniggered at, but not totally prohibited; British TV can show nudity, at least after nine o'clock at night, without causing mass outrage, and a few seaside towns have official nudist beaches; ladies who choose to sunbathe topless in quiet places are tolerated.

Organisations exists in Britain dedicated to "cleaning up" TV, but even they do not usually claim that all nudity should be outlawed, and surveys suggest that most of the public, while objecting to "bad language", especially when children are watching, doesn't worry much about sex. These organisations also tend to link sex and violence, although most people seem more worried by the latter. (American TV is rather more violent than British.)

A MIXED BUNCH?

Given the social stratification and the fact that Britons may claim to be from four different countries, it's inevitable that British psychology should cover a number of sub-groups. South-east England is the area of the greatest wealth, the traditional rulers and leaders and their hangers-on, and so the focus of snobbery, while the industrial north, seen by southerners as a dirty area full of boring factories, produces people who talk about the north's greater honesty, realism, and friendliness, and say that a tougher life-style has bred better people. Then there is the "Celtic fringe", who have reason to feel exploited by the English, and who retain distinctive cultures; the Welsh wax sentimental over their mountains and valleys, and protest strongly at every English cultural incursion, while the Scots, a large enough group not to fear absorption, have developed some very distinct social systems, but still feel threatened. Scottish feudalism was based on clan rather than land, and the Scots retain a "familial" society, with less snobbery than England; this is part of a rather anarchic individualism, which has given the Scots more respect for education than the English, more respect for money (the English make racist jokes about Scots miserliness), a tradition of non-stratified, Calvinistic religion, and less of a habit of restraint and tolerance than the English. Scots regiments and Scots low-lifers alike have plenty of fighting enthusiasm, and this, combined with the religious attitude, transplanted to Ulster in earlier centuries, has a lot to do with the ferocity of Northern Irish Protestantism. In the days when Scotland and England were warring neighbours, the great English advantage was that the Scots were as likely to fight each other as to unify.

MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN?

So — there are "typical" British characters, but they're varied, and not entirely predictable. Gamers should play British characters as fully rounded human beings, but not quite like people from their own country.

MINOR (CULTURE) SHOCKS

One good way of making players realise that their PCs are abroad is to throw in a few details that momentarily confuse them because they aren't like home. Some of these, in the right (or wrong) circumstances, could cause real problems.

° In the UK, the ground-level part of a building is the Ground Floor; the next level up is the First Floor, and after that the Second, Third, Fourth, etc. Lift (elevator) controls are labelled B (for basement), G, 1, 2, 3, and so on.

° Standard format for writing dates in the UK is Day/Month/Year. So Christmas 1990 is 25/12/90, and 02/04/59 was the Second of April 1959.

° British mains electricity is supplied at 240 volts (AC); some hotel bathrooms and the like may have 110 volt shaver sockets for tourists. Two-pin shaver points apart, Britons mostly use three-pin plugs with rectangular pins in a triangular configuration. (The topmost pin is the "earth" — ground.) Light switches are usually ON when DOWN — but building rules require that bathrooms have pull cords rather than switches (to reduce danger from wet hands).

MINOR (CULTURE) SHOCKS 2: ON TIME

° Unlike the USA, Britain is small enough to fit into one international time zone; the "zero meridian" zone, which also contains Portugal, and parts of western Africa. This would make the "clock time" equal to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), which is eight hours ahead of California, five hours ahead of most of the eastern seaboard of the USA, and ten hours behind eastern Australia.

° However, Britain (currently) uses British Summer Time (BST), which means that the clock time is increased by an hour (the clocks "go forward") in summer, to make better use of early morning daylight (and keeping the UK generally the same time ahead or behind other countries with "daylight saving times"). The rules on this are periodically and heatedly discussed, as different people (farmers, lorry drivers, the Scots, the EEC) have different ideas as to exactly what they would prefer.

° The standard working week in Britain is around 37-39 hours, typically made up of five 7.5 hour days — often 8:00 am to 4:30 pm for factory workers, 8:45 am to 5.15 pm for white collar staff, both with an hour for lunch. Trade union demands for a shorter working week are presented as cures for unemployment, but usually owe more to members' wishes for more overtime payments.

* Usual holidays (vacations) for most are 20-25 days per year, including two or three weeks in summer as the main part, plus about eight public ("bank") holidays (Christmas and Boxing Day, New Year's Day, a couple in summer, and so on).

ROLE-PLAYING BRITONS

British characters shouldn't be too hard for most (American) GMs to portray, but there are a couple of pitfalls. Firstly, there's the similarity trap; because most people in both Britain and America talk (approximately) the same language, it's too easy to play Britons as "Americans with funny accents". This is mistaken (and boring); life in Britain and America has differences, and no one will feel that their characters have really travelled if these are ignored. Second, there's the stereotype trap; "all Britons are either aristocrats, cockneys, or kilt-wearing Scotsmen", talking like the last Brit actor the GM saw in a movie, living in a stately home or a Dickensian slum, and obsessed with tea and class.

The worst thing about this is not the fact of stereotyping — that's partly inevitable and at least can be amusing — it's the dated stereotypes. Charles Dickens and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote over a hundred years ago, the aristocracy has been in (very slow) decline for centuries, "Swinging London" was a '60's phenomenon, the East End is full of yuppies... Yet still the cliches roll on. So GMs should read through this book, and try to understand that Britons are people — generally quite ordinary people, but with as much individual variation as any other nationality, and also with lives and attitudes that make them British.

Before starting to play such characters, the very least that's needed is some idea of the precise sort of Briton being played. Traditionalist, Entrepreneurial, Iconoclastic, Don't Care? South-East England suburban, Yorkshire industrial, Welsh rural, Glasgow urban? Or South-East England unemployed, Yorkshire gentleman-farmer, Welsh professional, Glasgow intellectual? True-Blue Conservative, Traditional Labour, Idealistic Green, Wild-Eyed Anarchist, Neo-Nazi Bigot? Not to mention the usual NPC questions — friendly or hostile, smart or stupid, young or old, introvert or extrovert? After that, it's all quite easy — and maybe some gamers will learn to apply such questions to characters from their own countries.

A LAND OF HEROES

"Bid men of battle build me a tomb
fair after fire, on the foreland by the sea
that shall stand as a reminder of me to my people."

— Beowulf

If we are talking about the British, and heroes — what about British heroes?

Real or fictional, these have certain common features. Some say that the British prefer losers to winners, and are uncomfortable with victory. This is untrue, but the British idea of heroism requires the facing of overwhelming odds, rather than an easy win. This means that a good proportion of British heroes do lose...

Archetypal British heroes retain their dignity and composure, even when faced by horrendous odds. They do not become brash, or boastful. Indeed, they are marked by a modest understatement that verges on the ridiculous. When Captain Oates walked out into the Antarctic blizzard, sacrificing himself to give his comrades a chance at survival, he is said to have simply said "I'm going outside; I may be gone for some time". British irony endures in the face of death.

Further, British heroes do not stoop to callous methods to gain tactical advantages; at worst, they can be insufficiently ruthless when the situation needs it, but the British see little heroism in the ability to slaughter foes by the thousand. (That's left to the heroes of success-obsessed nations.) British heroes are dependable, decent, trustworthy sorts. They do not engage in dramatic shows of emotion; they are not motivated by greed or glory; they just continue to do what they think is correct, though all the hosts of hell stand in their way.

British heroes usually defend or help Britain in some way, but they usually respect what is good in other nations, and some have fought for people not their own, from Beowulf to Lawrence of Arabia. In the past, the fictional hero has often been an aristocrat, sometimes a snob; the reality, from Agincourt to Dunkirk, has been more varied and complex. Character (along with the time and place) is what makes the hero. Courage; a sense of duty; quiet calm; certainty in the rightness of one's cause; patriotism; a willingness to strive against any injustice; a sense of fair play; a modest appraisal of one's self in public; these are the sign of the Complete British Hero.

SLOANE RANGERS AND CASUAL VIOLENCE

One of Britain's areas of success in recent decades has been in trends and styles, especially in "pop culture". Of course, much has been imported, and followers of "youth cults" and members of "subcultures" make up a tiny proportion of the population, but then... Superhero games are very much about style and show and visuals, and atmosphere is so very important...

Teddy Boys

A hangover from the fifties, long past their peak, but old rockers never die. The "Teds" were the first and archetypal British rock and rollers, fans of Elvis and Bill Haley and the Comets. Quiffs, long jackets, drainpipe trousers are the uniform. In their heyday, Teds had a name for violence, but now the few who dress that way are more interested in appearance than trouble.

Rockers, Bikers and Angels

The early rockers had a fondness for black leather and motorbikes, and this image merged with others, including the "Hells Angels" of the USA. Some British Angels claimed direct links with the Californian originals; other leather-clad bikers were simply wearing sensible clothing. British cycle gangs may sometimes have had a taste for illegal substances, but they've never quite had the US association with the organised drugs trade. This category shades into the large number of Heavy Metal Fans, who wear the universal uniform — leather, battered denim, long hair — but who in many cases are ordinary working boys (hardly ever girls) who just like the music and dress that way.



Mods

The '60's reaction to "scruffy", long-haired rocker styles, the mods went for neatness, suits, immaculately maintained Italian motor scooters and American soul music, plus attention to style and dedicated partying. Sustained in pockets by soul and scooter lovers, the mod style has periodic minor revivals.

Hippies

Britain was caught up in the '60's flower power movement, and it largely died here, too; but the ideals, the psychedelia, and sometimes the use of drugs stayed around in pockets. Hippy style is also subject to periodic attempted revivals, but most hippies are old hippies. One small group has adopted an itinerant lifestyle, moving between casual farm work, semi-organised rock festivals, and unofficial camp sites, sometimes coming into conflict with conventional society in general and the police in particular. Classed in the press as "hippies", these people actually include any and all "drop-out" styles, including punk. They have been described as anything from vagabond brigands to misunderstood pacifists — choose your prejudice.

Skinheads

In the '70's, the sharp, soul-loving Mod style was transformed into something harder; a deliberately aggressive, consciously working-class imagery of close-cropped hair, collarless shirts, denim jeans held up by braces (what Americans call suspenders), and workman's boots. The aggressive look might be backed up by a varying level of real aggression. Early skinheads had a fondness for soul and Jamaican reggae music, but ironically, many later "skins" are associated with extreme right-wing, neo-Nazi and racist groups. The style, the reggae fans, and the neo-fascists are all still around.

Punks

By the end of the '70's, with increasing unemployment and economic downturn, there was a lot of hopelessness in some of the younger parts of British society, and this emerged in Punk. With styles borrowed a little from the New York avant-garde, a little from the skinheads, but largely original, the punks were seen as revolutionary, dangerous, but also self-destructive. Emphasising ugliness where skinheads merely avoided beauty, punks went for ripped tee-shirts, plastic, straps, buckles, zips and disintegrating leathers, plus pale make-up and extreme hair styles (greased spikes, bright orange Mohawks). A deliberately anarchic movement, it's hard to say if and when punk stopped, infiltrated by too much skinhead aggression or diluted by too much commercial compromise; punk gear can still be seen, the uniform of the uncaring no-hoper and the deliberately shocking extremist.

Casuals

Traditionally, street-gang and soccer-related violence in the UK has been associated with dress-styles that may have been carefully maintained, but which avoided ostentation; violence was supposed to be the refuge of those with no cash who didn't care about it, and who couldn't, wouldn't find satisfaction in "bettering themselves". In the '80's, however, the popular press realised that money, style, and a taste for fighting weren't incompatible. Stories appeared of hooligans in fashionable "casual" designer clothes, flaunting Italian trademarks; some were said to carry specially-printed "calling cards" to leave on their victims. It's questionable whether "Casuals" are a "movement", but it's a recognised phenomenon.

House

In the late '80's, both hippy idealism and punk cynicism were out of fashion, and all some people wanted to do was party. There'd been attempts to create narcissistic, dance-oriented movements throughout the decade, but all they produced was a clutch of opportunist disco bands. "House", however, in all its variants ("Acid House" was the original), seems to be a genuine fashion movement; based round discos and semi-illegal "warehouse parties" in odd locations, with electronic music played very loud, its style involves brightly-coloured, almost psychedelic costumes and a lot of "Smiley" badges and "Smiley" t-shirts. Despite tabloid press attempts to link it to designer drugs and decadence, and underworld links to warehouse parties, the hedonism of "House" mostly focuses on the dancing and the music.

Rastas

Britain has a substantial community of West Indian immigrants and their offspring, not all of them happy with their lot; young blacks often form a very distinct and self-conscious group, noted for their strong style sense. All of which is a white stereotype, but one with some truth to it. Some young blacks look to the USA for their inspiration, taking soul as their music and American blacks as their role-models, but a significant number look to Jamaica. The stereotype Rastafarian will have hair in long dreadlocks under a large woollen hat (in red, gold and green), a fondness for reggae music, and perhaps also a taste for cannabis ("ganja"). That's the extreme, and this group has perhaps been on the wane for some time now, but it's real, and it appeals to some.

Sloane Rangers

Of course, at any time there have been the young British rich who've had their own parties and their own fashions, but now there's a label that can be attached to their style. In London, the number of them to be found around Sloane Square in Chelsea led to the label "Sloane Rangers", mostly applied to the female of the species. Actually, there are at least two sub-categories; the "country set", based in their families' rural homes, who mostly dress in boring but expensive clothes for practical reasons, and whose badge is the green Wellington boot ("the green wellie brigade"), and the urban, fashion-conscious variety, who haunt expensive night-clubs. The Princess of Wales is the Sloanes' patron saint; their manner combines casual arrogance with aristocratic empty-headedness.

OTHERWISE

It's not as easy as once it was to identify a Briton's class and status by the way he or she dresses, but some signs are indicative. London office workers have given up the bowler hat and tightly-furled umbrella, but the neat suit and tie remains; untidiness will be taken as the sign of the artist or the intellectual, if it is permitted at all by an employer. (However, the smartness may not stand up to close inspection.) Messy hair, beards, glasses, and tweed jackets, and a small, slow Citreon 2CV to drive, are the sign of a stereotyped male liberal or "Green" supporter, who is assumed to care more about causes than appearance; the female counterpart would go for a shapeless floral-print dress. However, only a small minority of the breed actually fit the image. Similarly, denim overalls or boiler suits and short, hennaed hair are fairly rare amongst feminists. "New Age" fashions (soft mysticism, quiet music, etc) are rarer in restrained, relaxed Britain than in obsessively relaxed America.

Only public (ie. private) schools retain many rules about uniforms, and only Eton and a few others go for anything more archaic than suit-and-tie. Football supporters heading for a match will favour scarves and other trimmings in their team's colours, with Union Jack variants added for international matches; the only serious national costume seen in public is the kilt worn by some (mostly higher-class) Scots for formal occasions.

HIERARCHY AND GOVERNMENT



THE BRITISH MONARCHY

"He holds up his glass and says in low voice
The QUEEN. Cheers cheers cheers for the queen we all drink and hurra for england." <sic!>

— Geoffrey Willans, *How to be Topp* <sic!>

The British Monarchy is a highly symbolic thing. It's not unique (other nations are constitutional monarchies), not every Briton regards it with awe (there's a lot of respect, but little awe), but patriots and revolutionaries alike regard it as symbolising something serious. (The monarchy is the Spirit of Britain or the British inability to get out of the Middle Ages, respectively.) If nothing else, the Monarchy is a basis for ceremony, and the tabloid press treats "the Royals" as a real-life soap opera.

HISTORY

When England was first united as a kingdom, the Anglo-Saxon rulers had a relatively open system; there was a hierarchy, but those higher up had to respect those beneath. On the king's death, the king's council would elect the next king — usually a son or near relative of the last. The Norman conquest of 1066 introduced a different system of absolute monarchy — a system brutally enforced. The Norman aristocracy owed their places to the king, but debts are not remembered for ever, and the ensuing centuries saw plenty of conflict between kings and aristocrats (as well as church, foreign rulers, and once in a while, peasants). Even a strong king needed supporters; aristocrats could aim for the throne themselves, or put puppets upon it. The history of the English crown shows only rather short lines of father-son succession. So a lot of constitutional compromises were worked out, including Magna Carta, an attempt to define the relationship between king and lords.

By the time the often smart, sometimes glorious, usually ruthless Tudor dynasty installed themselves, a balanced set of relationships had been worked out, including a Parliament that had to be consulted before taxes could be imposed — but also including a lot of royal power. As a strong island state, England could even cut loose from the chief religion of Europe and survive. Wales had been absorbed, authority could be asserted over Scotland (whose own, spectacularly messy history of kingship had involved much reference to the English crown as feudal overlord), and Ireland could usually be kept in line. When Elizabeth I, last of the Tudors, died childless, James VI of Scotland inherited her throne to become James I of England, and mainland Britain became a "double kingdom".

However, the balance of power was moving, and his son, the haughty Charles I, came into conflict with the growing power of Parliament — not (just) upstart aristocrats, but untitled land-owners, a powerful middle class. Powerful enough, in fact, to win what is still referred to as the English Civil War (although it involved Wales, Scotland, and Ireland too). With Charles deposed and executed, the Parliamentary general Oliver Cromwell became "Lord Protector" of the "Commonwealth". However, the new system, which turned into military rule, died with Cromwell, and the late king's son, Charles II, returned as king. Nonetheless, the balance of power had shifted; when Parliament came to dislike Charles' son James II (VII of Scotland), they ejected him with little violence, and invited his daughter Mary II and her husband William III from Holland as joint monarchs.

All this is significant because it laid the foundation of a constitutional monarchy; as power shifted from monarch to parliament, the kings and queens of England held on as figureheads with vestigial powers. In countries where the monarch tried to hold on to real power, a build-up of pressure could lead to revolution. The British habit of fudging compromise, without written constitutions or bloody revolutions (after the Civil War), avoided both bloodshed and any sort of clear-cut, thought-out, logical system of government. Thus the monarch, in theory, rules with advice from the Prime Minister; in practice, this means that the Prime Minister runs the system with a lot of reference to parliament, but also with a lot of "borrowed" power.

POWERS OF THE MONARCH

The monarch is the head of state (like the US president); the Prime Minister is only the head of the government. The standard justification for this system is that it means that no-one has absolute power; so long as the armed forces, the police, the civil service and the law courts all owe ultimate loyalty to the crown, no government can use them to take complete control. In addition, the Queen can act as a "constitutional referee", especially when it comes to elections; the Royal Family are not allowed to vote, but the Queen asks the leader of the winning party to form "her" government, and in fact elections cannot be called without her permission (they must be held at least once every five years, by convention, but can be more frequent), so she has some power to adjudicate on results.

When a session of Parliament is opened, the Queen makes a speech, written by the government, outlining their intentions; when laws are passed, they technically become law when the Queen gives her assent to them. In addition, the Queen has ceremonial duties, including the job of handing out medals, awards, and public honours. She and her family spend much of their time opening public buildings, lending their names to "good causes", making visits abroad, and generally acting as a focus of ceremony.

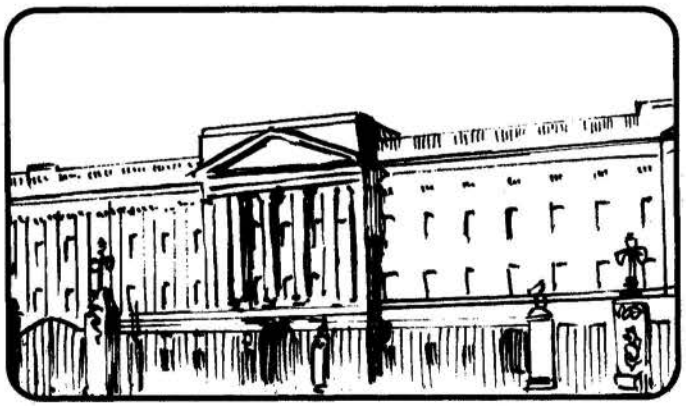
Royal weddings and coronations (and sometimes funerals) are occasions of much pageantry, arguably justifiable in terms of benefits to the tourist industry if nothing else. It's common, in Britain and abroad, to think of all this ceremony as going back centuries, but actually, it was mostly invented by the future Edward VII and various officials late in the nineteenth century. This ceremonial function is extended by the fact that the Queen is head of the Commonwealth, and is head of state of many Commonwealth countries.

The monarch's other major job is Head of the Church. Actually, with two different "established" churches, in England and Scotland, the Queen performs the interesting theological trick of changing religion whenever she crosses the border, but this has never led to serious problems. Again, the Queen's leadership is largely ceremonial; the churches are administered by bishops (in England) and assemblies, but major decisions such as the appointment of new bishops do have to be approved by the crown; in this as elsewhere, the Queen is advised by her Prime Minister. This leads to another oddity, as although the monarch is obliged by law to be a member of the church, the Prime Minister could belong to any religion or none. (The present PM is an Anglican, having converted from Methodism earlier in her career.)

ROYALTY TODAY

Ceremonies aside, the Royal Family have lands to administer and staffs to run. The present queen is said to refer to the monarchy as "the family business", which is not too misleading.

If the British Royal Family is a business, then its head office is at the western end of the Mall, in London. Buckingham Palace was built in 1703, re-shaped in 1825, became the principal home of Queen Victoria, and had its present facade added in 1913. The Palace stands in substantial gardens, and these and the building are used for official events (an invitation to a Royal Garden Party, along with thousands of other minor worthies, is sometimes a benefit of public success in Britain). Parts of the building are private residences for monarch and staff, parts are "function rooms", and parts are offices from which the "business" is administered. Full details of the interior layout are not public knowledge, but the building is a substantial and impressively-furnished Georgian palace, built round a central courtyard, and comprised of a mass of rooms for all these various purposes. Security is in theory and to a casual glance heavy, with both military guards (in ceremonial dress) and police out the front and massive walls and railings all around, but there have in fairly recent years been embarassing incidents in which this security has proved to have flaws. It is probably safe to assume, however, that the authorities try to learn from these mistakes.



The Royal Family has other residences, including St James' Palace (an older building just off the Mall); Clarence House next to it (the Queen Mother's London home); Windsor Castle in Berkshire; Sandringham House in Norfolk and Balmoral in the Scottish highlands (two "country retreats"), and various homes for members of the family, ranging from houses in the grounds of the palaces for the Queen's offspring to flats (apartments) occupied by royal cousins; the Queen also has a large yacht, the *Britannia*. When the Queen is in residence in one of her homes, this is marked by the flying of the red-and-gold Royal Standard outside.

The Royal Family, at the time of writing, is usually reckoned to consist of the Queen, Elizabeth the Second, her husband Prince Philip, her mother (Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother), her children and grand-children, and whatever royal sisters, cousins, and relations-by-marriage anyone wishes to count in. Members of the family may be given various titles and nominal positions for ceremonial convenience; for example, Prince Philip is the Duke of Edinburgh. Particular traditions attach to the heir to the throne; the Queen's oldest son, Prince Charles, is (among other things) Lord of the Isles, Duke of Cornwall, and Prince of Wales. Charles is married; his wife Diana's correct title is simply "The Princess of Wales". He has two sons, Princes William and Henry, who are next in line to the throne; he also has three siblings — Princess Anne (the Princess Royal), Prince Andrew (the Duke of York), who is currently in the Royal Navy, and Prince Edward, currently working as a dogsbody in a theatre company. Other noted "royals" include Princess Margaret (the Queen's sister), and her, Anne, and Andrew's families; although most such relatives do some ceremonial and charity work, those further from the throne are less involved in the "family business" and tend to have conventional full-time jobs of their own.

ROYAL FINANCES

The financial position of the Royal Family is curious. The Queen has inherited vast amounts of property, and she is (of course) outside the tax system. However, the convention has grown up whereby much of the income from the crown's property is passed over to the state, and Parliament then pays the Queen and her family money which is intended to cover the cost of royal duties, including the necessary administrative and staff costs (the "Civil List"). Thus the Queen, whose duties are full-time and complex, receives a large payment, while members of her family who have ordinary jobs with ordinary salaries receive smaller payments to cover their part-time ceremonial functions. An exception is Prince Charles, who is Duke of Cornwall; this Duchy happens to own large amounts of land and various businesses (mostly agricultural), and the Prince keeps most of the money from these. In effect, he is the (working) head of a large, mostly agricultural, business consortium, and has the income to go with it.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES

According to surveys, the British public mostly approves of the monarchy, for reasons ranging from sentimentality to constitutional logic. However, there is a minority of "republicans", and majority approval is largely based on the ceremonial function of the crown. If the public lost their respect for the professionalism with which the monarchy is run, the whole business might fade away. Recently, the popular press has treated the Royal Family with increasing prurience; attempts to find "scandal stories" near to the Royal Family have been persistent. Yet the papers involved are not especially republican; they are simply populist, and chase whatever will sell. They claim to support the monarchy, but they may be doing it damage; they certainly aren't much liked by the Palace. The gossip problem is a side-effect of a royal policy of greater public openness over the last twenty years or so, originally intended to increase public respect for the monarchy. However, if anyone ever says anything publicly critical of the Royal Family (as opposed to reporting gossip), they are usually attacked by large numbers of "royalists" who argue that the Royal Family "can't answer back". (A dubious claim, as some royals have been very effective at getting their feelings on some subjects publicly known; it's more that they choose not to answer criticism, as it can never hurt their image as much as getting involved in public argument would.)

GAME CONSIDERATIONS

GMs should be cautious about incorporating "royal themes" into British-based scenarios; they can very easily end up looking silly or clumsy. For example, it's fine to run a scenario in which the PCs foil an assassination plot against a public figure — such as a British "royal" — but there should be some reason why the assassin chose a particular target. Terrorist groups, or a lunatic, might choose to go after a victim who would give them a lot of publicity, but as the Queen has no direct control of UK government policy, attacks on her family wouldn't be very likely to change that policy. There are other problems with suchlike plots, if they bring the real-life figure into the action; all else aside, it's usually quite hard for the GM to role-play such figures convincingly. Further, if the GM tries to keep the game-world close to reality, it could be rather difficult if a major "real-world" figure were badly injured or killed.

The PCs foiling a plot against a "royal", or becoming involved in royal ceremonies and the associated organisational chaos, can be entertaining, but note; the Queen and direct heirs to the throne are usually kept out of high-risk situations, or at least very carefully guarded. (Also, they don't usually fly in the same plane. This caution is limited to direct heirs; Prince Andrew, a serving navy officer, was involved in the Falklands campaign.) When the Queen and her immediate family are out in public, they will always have bodyguards around — specially trained police officers in the UK. The Queen especially is permanently at the centre of a web of ceremony and security. Royal residences are often interesting in themselves, with great historical significance, and may have artworks to interest a light-fingered supervillain, but security will again be heavy. Finally; the British public have a very sentimental view of the monarchy, which may oblige PCs to be extremely cautious if they value their public images.

CONFOUND THEIR POLITICS

"How Nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative!"

— WS Gilbert

Britain, unlike the USA, has no written Constitution. The procedures of Government and the rights of individuals, are ruled by the tradition and precedent laid down over centuries. The Head of State is not the Prime Minister, but the Monarch. In practice, the Queen's control over Government is purely nominal; she does not initiate laws, conduct foreign policy, nor even exercise her right of veto. The Government is Her Majesty's Government, while the major party in opposition is Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

PARLIAMENT

General elections occur at least every five years, but the Prime Minister decides the date. Britain is divided into 650 geographical constituencies, each with about the same number of voters. In an election, the voters choose between a handful of candidates to represent them in the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament (MP). The MP is supposed to help constituents, and represent their opinions in Parliament (insofar as it doesn't conflict with the party line). A party can win an election with a minority of votes; they can receive 30% of the votes and have a hundred seat majority in Parliament.

The leader of the party with the most MPs is asked by the Queen to be her Prime Minister and form her government. The Prime Minister picks a Cabinet of Ministers: MPs (and occasionally Lords) to take different departments. The three most important Ministers are the Chancellor of the Exchequer (responsible for the economy), the Home Secretary (law-and-order), and the Foreign Secretary (foreign affairs).

The party in power decides to pass a law. The draft law is debated in the House of Commons, and is passed by a simple majority. MPs rarely vote against their party, especially when the party uses a "3-line whip", where several MPs (called "whips") persuade the others to follow the party line. An MP who hopes to get ahead does not ignore the whip. Individual MPs can put foward "Private Members' Bills", but these have little chance of being passed, even if supported by most of the MPs.

The Bill then goes to the House of Lords for debate. The Lords can do one of two things. They can pass the Bill, in which case it goes for the Royal Assent (a formality), or they can return it to the Commons, perhaps suggesting changes. The Commons may modify the Bill, or they may simply send it back to the Lords. Once, this process could continue indefinitely until everyone got bored, but now the Lords have to pass the Bill on the third attempt.

The House of Lords (House of Peers) consists of several groups. Firstly, there are the nobility, whose ancestors received lordships (some impecunious kings made money selling titles), and have an hereditary right to sit in the Lords, whether they are stupid, senile or just plain crazy. Fortunately, few turn up. Secondly, there are all the British Anglican archbishops, and a few of the bishops. Then there are the Life peers, enobled for services to the woollen industry, or whatever. Career politians are likely to retire to the Lords.

Debates in the House of Commons often result in scenes of uproar, with the Speaker (chairman) vainly trying to keep order. Despite, or perhaps because of, the volatile nature of debates, parliamentary language is full of traditional circumlocutions. If an MP calls the Prime Minister a liar, he is suspended by the Speaker for a week and cannot attend debates. It is, however, acceptable to accuse the PM of "terminological inexactitudes", which means liar. MPs call each other "The honourable member of (constituency)" rather than by name. Anything said in the Commons or Lords is priviledged, and can be quoted without fear of libel proceedings. Parliamentary sessions start at 2 pm, and often continue until late at night, or even overnight. Debates in the House of Lords are more dignified than in the Commons.

The debating chamber of the House of Commons is a long thin room. The Speaker sits at one end, and benches run down the length of ths room. The Cabinet sit on the front bench of the government side, and their opposite numbers, the "Shadow Cabinet" on the front bench on the other side. The benches were originally designed to be far enough apart that member could not attack each other with their swords. Other MPs sit where they can, on their side. The room is not actually big enough for all the MPs. A gallery for press and public (who can get free tickets by writing to their MPs) looks down on the room; this is cleared if an MP recites the formula "I spy strangers". Radio and TV broadcast debates. When the MPs vote, they troop off through the "lobbies" to be counted.

The parliamentary year starts in the autumn. The MPs are summoned to the House of Lords to hear the Queen's speech, in which she announces the legislation her government will bring in in the coming year.

POLITICS

From the end of World War II, the two main parties, Conservatives and Labour, have swapped roles as Government and Opposition, usually with small majorities in the Commons. As a result, they generated a lot of words and actually did little. When they did, the other lot changed it when they got in next time.

There have been two notable exceptions to this. Immediately after World War II, the Labour Party won a massive victory, and introduced laws intended to prevent the poverty seen during the Depression. They included the National Health Service, and National Insurance, which gives Unemployment Benefit, old-age pensions, and other benefits. The vast majority of Britons support these. Industries such as railways were nationalised, as it was felt they should provide a service to the community, and not be motivated by profit.

The other exception was in 1979, when Mrs. Thatcher first led the Conservatives to a narrow victory. She began a policy of tight monetarism and right-wing reform. In the 1983 and 1987 elections, the disunity of opposition parties ensured her return with a massive majority of seats, and she continued and extended her policies. She has now been in power longer than any Prime Minister in centuries.

Thatcher is seen as a strong, sometimes strident leader, who brooks no argument, and sometimes refuses to listen to an opposing viewpoint. She is popular in the USA and the USSR, very unpopular in the Commonwealth, and in Britain she evokes strong responses. It is fair to say that a Briton will either strongly support her, or strongly oppose her — there are very few who are indifferent.

The Conservatives (Tories)

The party currently in power, their leader is Margaret Thatcher. They are broadly right-wing. Their stronghold is the south of England and rural areas. They have 376 MPs.

The Labour Party

The second party, led by Neil Kinnock. They are broadly left-wing. Their stronghold is the north of England, London and other cities, and Scotland. They have 229 MPs.

The Social and Liberal Democrats (SLD)

This is the middle-of-the-road party. They are led by Patrick (Paddy) Ashdown. They have 20 MPs.

Other Parties

The Social Democrats are a splinter of the SLD. They have 2 MPs. The Green Party have no MPs, but in the most recent elections (to the European parliament) gained 10% of the vote, making them the third most popular party. The Welsh Nationalists (Plaid Cymru) and Scottish Nationalists are confined to Wales and Scotland, and are in favour of devolution to these regions. They have 3 MPs each.

Other fringe groups which sometimes put up candidates include the Communists and Socialist Workers Party on the left, the National Front and Independent National Front on the right, the Monster Raving Loony Party, and the Ban Salman Rushdie Party. Most of these can be safely ignored, as they (and independents) never reach Parliament.

Some of the fringe groups achieve a significance beyond their numbers by their activities. The National Front have a record of making provocative marches through areas with high immigrant populations, demanding the "repatriation" of colured immigrants, and demanding police protection for these marches; or acts of violence against immigrant families to escalate racial tensions. The support of the National Front is almost entirely young working class inner-city men. The extreme-left, though vocal, have failed to provoke mass industrial unrest or revolutionary fervour.

From Northern Ireland, there are 13 Unionist, 3 SDLP, and 1 Sinn Fein MPs. (See Bullet *and Ballot Box*).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is weak in the UK compared with the US. Councils are supposed to have control of their budgets, but this has been strictly limited by the current government. Local council finance is currently changing from rates (a housing tax) to "community charge", a poll tax, benefiting the rich. The councils of the main cities in the UK (London, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Leeds/Bradford, Birmingham and Newcastle) were abolished in 1986, and their duties taken over by district councils. Oxfordshire has county council, but not London.

Local government is divided into local "district" councils, and larger county (England and Wales) or regional (Scotland) councils, which cover education, police and fire services, etc. In rural areas of England and Wales there are also still smaller parish councils. Most councillors belong to the main political parties, but there are a substantial minority of independents and members of minor parties.

District councils are presided over by a mayor (or sometimes chairman/woman), chosen by the councillors from amony their long-term members. The mayor has ceremonial duties such as opening school fetes. The city of London has a Lord Mayor.

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

In 1950, France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The Second World War had just finished, and these countries had been invaded and devastated. In order to defend themselves jointly against outside forces, the ECSC linked steel and coal prodution in the countries. This would, in theory, prevent war between them.

In 1954, the same six nations formed Euratom, the European Atomic Energy Council. In 1957, they signed the Treaty of Rome, forming the European Economic Community (EEC), which reduced trade barriers between members.

In 1962, Britain applied to join the EEC, but France, perhaps fearing for its position as dominant partner in the EEC, blocked the application, as it did again when Britain re-applied in 1967. In 1969, the three organisations of the EEC, the ECSC, and Euratom were combined to form the European Community. In 1970, Britain again applied to join the European Community, along with Eire and Denmark, and this time was accepted.

In 1973, Britain had a change of government. The new government displayed Britain's deep commitment to the European ideal, by claiming that Britain was paying too much for membership, and insisting on re-negotiating the terms under which it had joined. Afterwards, the British people voted on it, and a majority chose to remain within the EC.

Subsequently, Greece, Spain and Portugal have joined the EC, bringing the total number of members up to 12.

Attitudes

Despite voting to remain in it, most Britains remain unsure about the EC. Politicians reflect this; most affirm their belief in the EC, but drag their feet over specific issues the EC wants to bring in; monetary union (a single currency throughout the EC); proposals to unify workers' rights throughout the EC; and metrication, for instance. Jibes about "Brussels and Bureaucrats", and claims that Britain should pay less for its membership in the EC were, at least until recently, vote winners. The EC is seen as a bureaucracy, and the European parliament as irrevelant to "real" politics. These attitudes have been changing over recent years, as the EC has acted as something of a brake on some of the unpopular policies of the current government.

One of the least popular policies of the EC has been its support of farmers. In Britain, people like to think that British farmers are supported by government grants and allowances and various other benefits, rather than by price intervention. EC policy has been to keep prices artificially high by buying excess produce, and storing it until it goes rancid, or is sold off cheap, or otherwise got rid of. This policy is summarised by the phrases "grain mountain", "wine lake", and similar geographical metaphors.

1992

In 1992, the European Community plans to remove all trade barriers between member nations, effectively making it a single market in fact as well as in intent. This would, however, allow easier transport of illegal drugs and terrorist weapons around the Community, as well as legitimate goods.

Future Perfect Tense?

Despite the nationalism of some member states (and France has outdone Britain in some respects), the European Community has not merely survived, it has actually grown. Whether the concept of an European State will come true remains to be seen. There are political and economic advantages in such a merger, despite the difficulties of language, separate cultures, and the sheer pigheadedness of politicians. Such a European State would become a major world power in its own right, rivalling the USA, USSR, and Japan for economic and political status.

TITLES & HONOURS

"Unlike the male codfish, which... finding itself the parent of three-and-a-half million little codfish... resolves to love them all, the British aristocracy is apt to look with a somewhat jaundiced eye on its younger sons."

— P.G.Wodehouse

The British political system has a lot of hang-overs from feudal times; apart from the peers with the right to a place in the House of Lords, many of these remnants have been adapted into a national "honours" system. All this fits together into a moderately complex set-up that regularly confuses almost everyone.

The main distinction is between the nobility and lesser honours, including knighthoods. There are many honours that don't put the holder in the aristocracy; although a knighthood is a major honour, even that doesn't "elevate" the holder to the House of Lords. Also, honours can't be inherited (apart from three Irish knighthoods); they have always (supposedly) been earned. (Selling them was made illegal in 1924.) Only this century have political compromises led to the creation of "Life Peerages", which can't be inherited. (New hereditary peerages are nowadays very rare.) However, the lowest rank of nobility is addressed like a knight...

Honours are mostly awarded on particular dates, such as New Year's Day and the Queen's official birthday (which isn't her real birthday). The presentations follow a few weeks later, usually at Buckingham Palace. Awards are mainly limited to UK citizens (hereditary titles aren't, but foreigners can't vote in Parliament), but some "honorary honours" may be given to foreigners.

Modes of address and titles are quite an important part of the system. Although the rules are confusing, a title-holder will get them right. Thus, it's important to avoid errors in games or fiction; a player could rightly claim that an NPC claiming to be "Sir John Smith, Duke of Surrey" must to be an impostor!

Titles and honours theoretically govern precedence in the UK, but only at formal occassions does anyone worry about seating plans. It's considered bad manners to get forms of address wrong, but most title-holders realise that not everyone understands the rules any more, and foreign visitors certainly aren't expected to be aware of them (although they may be politely corrected).

THE ARISTOCRACY

There are six ranks of nobility in Britain (below the Queen, who is literally in a class of her own). The top five are entitled to sit in the House of Lords, and are called "peers"; Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, and Barons. In each case, there is a corresponding term for the peer's wife, or a woman who holds a life peerage in her own right; Duchess, Marchioness, Countess, Viscountess, and Baroness. (All current Life Peeresses are Countesses or Baronesses; women can't inherit titles, except in Scotland.) A Life Peeress' husband doesn't have a title. A Baronet or Dame has a title, but isn't a peer. In Scotland, the equivalent of a Baron is a "Lord".

All peers have titles, which may or may not be their family names, or place names, or something else; hence "John Smith" might be "Earl Smith" or "Earl Stamford" or "The Duke of Crufts". Viscounts and Barons attach a place name to their title for formal purposes. Places referred to may not be in the UK; some hereditary peers have "Irish" places to their name, and (for example) Viscount Montgomery of Alamein took the name of the place in North Africa where he won his greatest military victory. Many hereditary peers have multiple titles, and "lend" some to their family for formal purposes; their heirs can be "courtesy lords". A Duke's widow is a "Dowager Duchess"; a Scottish peer's heirs use the title "Master".

A Duke or Duchess is formally addressed as "Your Grace", informally as "Duke" or "Duchess"; other peers are "My Lord" or "My Lady" formally, "Lord/Lady [whatever]" informally, although "life" peeresses may prefer "Baroness". (What a peer's friends use in private is, of course, up to them.) All sign with just their title (one word — e.g., "Marlborough" for the Duke of Marlborough, "Chadwick" for Baron Chadwick.

A Baronet is "Sir Alan Brown", his wife or a Dame is "Lady Brown" or whatever. A Scottish Chief of Clan (Highlands) or Name (Lowlands) is "The McVarron of McVarron" or whatever, or sometimes "The McVarron of that Ilk" ("that Ilk" meaning "that name").

Nowadays, hereditary peerages can be disclaimed, usually to stand for the House of Commons (where peers aren't allowed).

There are a few hundred peers in Britain, most with small families with associated titles, plus a few more hundred Baronets and the like. This is out of a population of millions; the chance of meeting a peer "at random" is quite small, although many peers have prominent public positions, if only because companies and charities invite them to act as figureheads. GMs may play up the chance for the sake of local colour, but an obsession with the aristocracy shows a poor understanding of British society.

HONOURS & THE ORDERS OF CHIVALRY

Honours that aren't titles are tied in to the "Orders of Chivalry". There are several such Orders, some with famous histories. The oldest, the Order of the Garter and the (Scottish) Order of the Thistle, consist of a limited number of knights; the 24-strong Order of Merit has no ranks; the others include various assorted Knights Grand Cross, Knights Commander, Companions or Commanders, Officers, and Members. Knights are addressed similarly to baronets, while others have only letters after their names.

Other Orders include the Order of the Bath (an "elitist" collection of military and civilian dignitaries), the Order of St Michael and St George (senior diplomats), the Royal Victorian Order (the monarch's personal Order, for members of the royal household), and the Order of the British Empire (a "general purpose" Order, for those who serve the British public). Noted, long-successful Britons may have "MBE" or "OBE" to their name; OBE's for pop singers and KBE's (knighthoods) for actors used to be controversial, so something of this kind for long-active British superheroes with Public ID's might lead to fun. In general, however, honours go to people with some years of success behind them and not too much controversy to their names; GMs should not attach them to every British superhero in sight.

OTHERS

There are a multitude of possible letters that some Britons may attach to their names. For example, the Privy Council officially advises the sovereign; membership is for life. All cabinet ministers, among others, become Privy Councillors, and so may put "PC" after their names, and are formally addressed as "Right Honourable". Members of Parliament add "MP" to their names. Then there are medals, the elite "Companions of Honour" (CH), and semi-private matters, such as the custom of giving a Master of Foxhounds (who leads a hunt) an "MFH" after his name...

GAME CONSIDERATIONS

Official honours may be something to boast about, but in a modern-period game, they aren't worth points — unless they carry titles. A Knighthood, Damehood, or Baronetcy is a one-point Fringe Benefit; the word will impress gullible foreigners, gets the holder listened to in some circles, and looks good on business cards. The offspring of a peer might have a two-point Fringe Benefit, or more in a game with a lot of high-society activity; a "courtesy title" gets letters to the press published more easily and so on. Membership of the peerage would be worth two to five points, depending on the nature of the game (it's less use when exploring the wilds of Borneo than in London clubland); three points would be right for most "conventional" superhero games. The holder can get into the press (if only for a "gossip" piece), will be invited to join the boards of some companies in a non-executive role to enhance their letter-headings, and may sit in the House of Lords, having a direct say in national government, attracting the attention of the political parties, and getting paid generous expenses for it all. A known criminal peer can't obtain many of these benefits, and so needn't pay all the points.

Many peers also have Money and Contacts, but not all do; some hereditary peers' families have lost their money at some stage in history, while life peers don't have to be rich, and Contacts have to be cultivated, even by a peer.

BULLET AND BALLOT BOX

"[King John] had begun badly as a Bad Prince, having attempted to answer the Irish Question by pulling the beards of the aged Irish chiefs, which was a Bad Thing and the wrong answer."

— 1066 And All That

There is a belief that there is a bloody civil war being fought on British territory, Catholics fighting Protestants, the streets of Belfast awash with blood. In line with this, the problems of Ireland have been shown in comics in terms of mutual distrust between superheroes from Britain and Eire.

Now, there is no doubt that "The Troubles" (as the unrest of the last 20 years is known in Ireland) have no simple solution, but there is more to it than bloody war, religious intolerance, or even British imperialism. Some of the myths about the Province include:

BLOODY WAR?

Attacks such as the one on a memorial service in Enniskillen in 1987 tend to receive a great deal of international press coverage, suggesting that Northern Ireland is a violent place. Compared with the rest of the UK, this is so, but the murder rate in Belfast is only one-tenth that of New York. Compared to the US, "war-torn" Ulster is a peaceful place.

From 1980 to 1986, the average number of deaths in the Province from terrorism was: 8 army, 9 UDR, 15 police, 45 civilians. The population of the Province is over a million and a half (of whom 40% are Catholic).

LIBYAN TERRORISM?

There is a belief, fostered by politicians and news media, that Libya, Iran, Nicaragua and Russia provide the arms to the Irish terrorists. In fact, 90% of the arms and over 95% of the foreign money supporting them come from the USA.

RELIGION TO BLAME?

The "Catholic vs Protestant" view of The Troubles is a media shorthand. The Troubles are not primarily a religious conflict. A historical accident (see below) has led to most of the nationalists being Catholics and most of the unionists Protestants. The terminology of "Catholics" and "Protestants" has been adopted here, since it is familiar, and other simple names are equally likely to be misleading:: not everyone in the "Catholic" community is necessarily a nationalist.

INTERNATIONAL ANIMOSITY?

The belief that Eire and the UK are at daggers drawn over the issue is also false. The security forces of both sides cooperate against the terrorists of both sides. The leaders of both countries discuss ways of jointly dealing with the situation. The Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed in November 1985, is the latest attempt at a solution, although extremists on both sides have pledged their opposition.

TERMINOLOGY

Northern Ireland seems to have generated more than its fair share of labels. The most important of these are:

RUC: Royal Ulster Constabulary. The police of the Province.

UDR: Ulster Defence regiment: Part-time military unit of the Province which is increasingly taking over routine security from the army.

Unionist/Loyalist: The "Protestant" community, supposedly loyal to the Union of Britain with Ireland.

Nationalist/Republican: The "Catholic" community, in favour of a united Irish republic.

UVF: Ulster Volunteer Force. Loyalist extremists — a banned organisation.

UDA: Ulster Defence Association. Loyalist extremists.

IRA: Irish Republican Army. Split into Official and Provisional wings in 1969. The Official IRA have become virtually inactive in terrorism, although they may still be involved in armed robberies and protection rackets. The Provisional IRA has about 250 active members, and is the most sophisticated terrorist organisation in Europe. It is a banned organisation.

INLA: Irish National Liberation Army. Formed in the early 1970's, it has about 1000 active members, and suffered seriously from informers and internal feuds in the 1980s. It uses terrorist tactics, especially in the border areas. It is a banned organisation. Both the IRA and INLA use Marxist rhetoric, although few of their supporters are Marxists.

POLITICS OF THE PROVINCE

Politics in Northern Ireland revolve almost entirely around the sectarian divide. None of the mainland political parties organise in Northern Ireland. The main politcal parties are:

SDLP: The Social, Democratic, and Labour Party. Set up in 1970, it is left-of-centre, and in favour of Irish Unity, but condemns terrorism. Its support is predominantly, but not entirely, Catholic.

DUP/UUP: The Democratic Unionist and Ulster Unionist Parties. The Ulster Unionist party is the traditional Protestant party.

Sinn Fein: The democratic wing of the IRA, it was legalised in 1974. Its support has been slipping since the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

HISTORY

Although Ireland was theoretically under English rule after the Norman conquests of the 12th century, the Norman lords in Ireland were absorbed into the Irish culture, and there was little to distinguish them from native Gaelic chieftains. English monarchs found that attempts to impose rule on either group were too expensive.

During the Tudor period, however, the idea arose of subduing Ireland by replacing the local lords. At first, native Irish farmers remained the tenants of English overlords. Later the Irish were evicted entirely, and the lands were farmed directly by so-called planters. The Irish were moved away, or employed as labourers. The planters were English and Scottish Protestants, and this religion quickly became associated with other English impositions such as bans on Gaelic clothing and language. Despite legal restrictions, the native Irish kept to the Catholic religion.

This divide between the ruling classes and the majority led to brutal repression of rebellions. Injustice towards the Irish peasants has been compared with that towards the American negroes of the same era. Between famine and emigration, the Irish population was cut in half between 1841 and 1901.

A rising of Irish nationalists in 1916 in Dublin (when British forces, including the Irish, were involved in World War I) was a fiasco. The arrival of British troops to surpress the insurgency was welcomed by the ordinary Dubliners. Later, though, the death sentences carried out on some of the insurgents swayed public opinion and led to war and the setting up of the Irish Free State (later Eire) in 1922. The six counties of the north east were those most thoroughly settled by the planters; their Protestant majority would not accept secession from Britain, and so Ireland was divided.

ORIGIN OF THE TROUBLES

Catholics in Northern Ireland were still discriminated against in housing, education, jobs, elections, etc. Uniquely in the UK, Northern Ireland had a devolved parliament (Stormont). The Protestants had a built-in majority in Stormont, allowing them a free hand. In 1968, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association held demonstrations demanding an end to these abuses. The Northern Irish Prime Minister was about to act, when Protestant extremists began campaigns of violence in defence of their privileges.

The violence escalated. In 1969, British troops went in to maintain order, and direct rule from London was instituted in 1972. The Catholics initially regarded the army as a protector against the Unionists, but when the IRA began a campaign of violence, army action against the IRA led to it being seen as an enemy of the Catholics.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

Internment without of trial of suspected terrorists was instituted in 1971, but was unsuccessful at supressing terrorism, and was ended in 1975. Convicted terrorists are treated as ordinary, not political, prisoners.

Intimidation of juries led to the establishment in 1973 of "Diplock" courts in terrorist cases. These consist of a judge without a jury (three judges in the case of appeals). They have been criticised, not because innocents are likely to be wrongly convicted, but because of a lack of public confidence. In Eire, terrorist cases are tried by three judges without a jury. Terrorist trials in mainland Britain are held with a full jury.

In the early 1980s terrorists turned informants gave evidence against large numbers of suspected terrorists of both sides. The informants were, however, not reliable witnesses. A low rate of conviction was obtained when there was no supporting evidence.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

Twenty years of violence has deepened the division between the communities, and between North and South. Many southerners would now reject union with Northern Ireland for fear of the effect on Eire of a million disgrutled Protestants. The governments of the two countries have, however, moved closer together to fight terrorism.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 marked a new era. Eire agreed that the sovereignty of Northern Ireland could not be altered without the agreement of the majority there, but was given a consultative role in the government of the Province. One major advantage of the Anglo-Irish Agreement was that it allowed the extradition of people wanted for terrorist offences in Northern Ireland from Eire. This advance has been marred by a number of highly-publicised cases where extradition was denied on technical grounds.

Recently, British TV stations have been forbidden from broadcasting interviews with members of banned organisations such as the IRA. This has had little effect on the terrorists, or even on news reporting of them, since the TV stations simply the quote the words of such people.

Northern Ireland is relatively poor, with high levels of unemployment. Despite attempts towards equality, the Catholic communities remain poorer than the Protestant. Northern Ireland receives subsidies of around £1500 million a year from the rest of the UK. Even the fervent nationalists do not want British financial aid to the Province withdrawn immediately.

Most children are still in segregated education. State schools are overtly Protestant, while "denominational" schools for Catholics are government-subsidised. Toy shops operate a voluntary ban on selling toy weapons in the Province.

The widespread street unrest of the early years of the Troubles has declined. Even the annual demonstrations on the anniversary of Internment (9 August) and Bloody Sunday (30 January) produce only sporadic street violence.

TERRORIST TACTICS

Protestant paramilitary activity is less likely to hit world headlines than that of the IRA and INLA. Protestant paramilitaries harrass the Catholic community rather than committing indiscriminate terrorist acts.

The stated aim of the IRA is to force "Britain" to leave the Province of Northern Ireland, and to reunite Northern with southern Ireland. It uses various terrorist tactics — shootings, bombs in cars, letters, etc. Although it claimed that it would attack only military targets, most of the people who have suffered during the Troubles have been civilians. The IRA claim that this raises the economic cost of "Britain" keeping the Province, and reduces its will to resist.

One of the best-known tactics of the IRA is the car-bomb. Sometimes warnings are given beforehand, sometimes not. The explosives used are usually home-made, and low-powered — 1000lb bombs are not uncommon. The number of car bombs have decreased in recent years, and the security forces has improved their response (defusing or exploding them under controlled conditions), so that bomb damage is much less than it used to be. However, parking is still prohibited in most town centres in Northern Ireland.

The IRA also attack "servants of British Imperialism": the army, police, judges, prison officers, their families, and civilian employees of the security services. Judges and senior politicians in the Province have permanent bodyguards. The most famous victim of the IRA was Lord Mountbatten, the Queen's great uncle, in 1979.

Most IRA activity is confined to Ulster, although campaigns on the mainland, and against British forces stationed in Europe, have occurred. Mainland bombings bring the IRA considerable publicity, for instance the IRA car bomb at Harrods store in London at Christmas 1983, which killed five people and injured 80.

The terrorists enforce their own form of "justice" against suspected informants. "Punishment shootings" (often in the knees, known as "kneecappings") and "executions" are carried out. The IRA and INLA have probably murdered about 30 suspected informants since 1973. The funerals of people killed in the troubles, especially of paramilitaries whose death is blamed on the British security forces, are often shows of strength by the paramilitary organisations. Masked armed men lead the procession and fire a volley of shots over the grave. The security forces usually take a low profile approach to these shows, avoiding further friction.

MAINTAINING SECURITY

The British military response in Northern Ireland has changed over the last 20 years, after some early mistakes. The number of deaths in recent years has been far lower than it would have been otherwise.

Army patrols maintain a presence in the Province, in Belfast and the cities, as well as along the border with Eire. These border patrols intercept terrorists crossing the border, and cooperate with the Irish security forces. There are difficulties in controlling the border areas, since many minor roads cross the border without checkpoints. The Royal Navy maintains patrols off the coast, searching ships for arms and explosives.

The SAS train covert units to gather intelligence on terrorist activities. These units have proven to be very effective, although there is a danger of them operating outside the law. Allegations of a conspiracy by security forces to murder terrorist suspects, a so-called "shoot-to-kill" policy, have been denied. Very few SAS men are employed in the Province, but the media describe any soldier employed on surveillance as SAS.

House searches for terrorist equipment have been the cause of friction between the security forces and the communities, but remain an important means of uncovering terrorist equipment. The paramilitaries sometimes store their weapons in the houses of non-supporters, in the hope that these houses will not be searched. Compliance is ensured by threats, and the fear of being arrested if the victims inform the security forces.

Permanent roadblocks are placed on strategic roads, and temporary ones on other roads as necessary. Cars are stopped and may be searched. The drivers and passengers must produce evidence of identity.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

The Irish problem is not going to go away. Simplistic solutions are impractical. Withdrawal of British troops would not stop sectarian murders. Incorporating Northern with southern Ireland would lead to further violence by the Protestant paramilitaries. The most extreme suggestions of the Irish nationalists, that all "British" should leave the Province, is roughly equivalent to solving the problems of the American Indian by demanding that all Americans of non-Indian descent should return to Europe, Africa and Asia. The best hope is that continued success against terrorists by the security forces will bring stability, and that economic development and membership of the EC will make national boundaries less important.

THE GREAT HOMES OF BRITAIN

"And tho' if the Van dycks have to go
And we pawn the Bechstein Grand,We'll stand by the Stately Homes of England!"

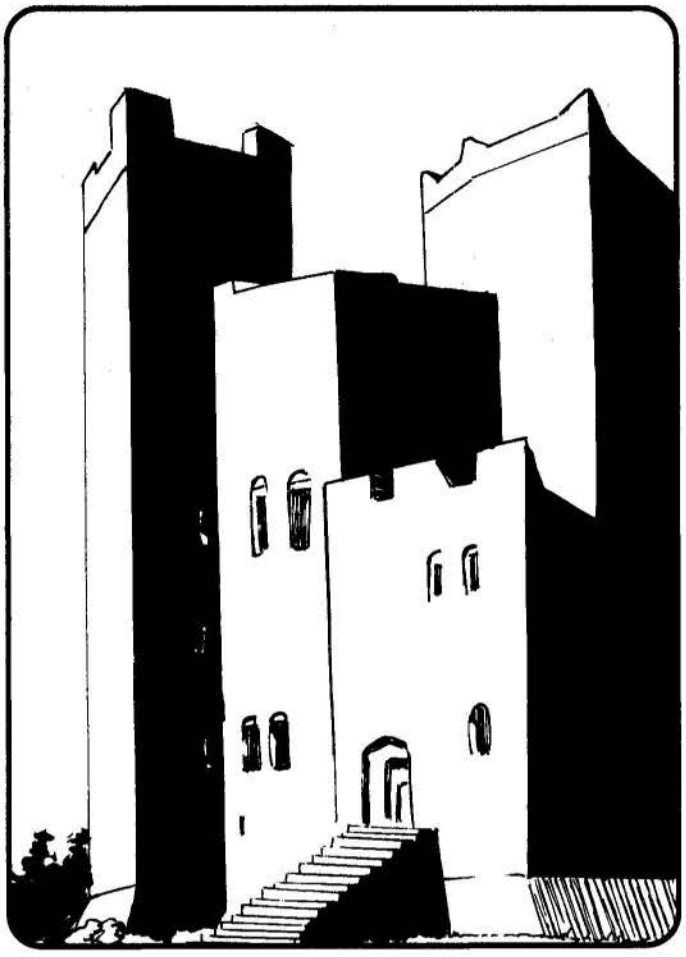
— Noel Coward

In any country where some people become rich, some of the rich will spend their money on houses; there are plenty of mansions in the USA. However, Britain was once run by a landed aristocracy, who began in times when they might have to defend themselves against armies, and lasted through to days when labour was cheap and great homes were the basis of High Society.

FAMILY CASTLES

The early "great dwelling-place" was the castle; great houses came later. The change was one of evolution rather than revolution (many of the houses took the sites and names of castles), but the real fortifications have suffered; some were destroyed after the Civil War to reduce the power of the aristocrats, some were pulled down to make way for later buildings, and some just fell down from neglect. Today, there's a lot of ruined castles, a few intact ones, and some once-defensible manor-houses. There're very few real castles still inhabited, apart from the Queen's Windsor; exceptions include some which were reconstructed in Victorian times, or completely Victorian Gothic (or "Scottish Baronial") fancies (such as the Queen's Scottish retreat at Balmoral).

Actually, the nineteenth century idea of a castle makes almost as good a setting for a scenario as would the real thing, but if GMs need genuine age, they can either use a ruin (maybe with its moat and artificial mound still intact), or one of the more or less intact structures. These can be found anywhere in the country, but many of the best examples are in what were once military trouble-spots; the Scots Borders, scene of feuding and raiding through much of history, is dotted with small, solid keeps, while Wales has a string of eight magnificent castles built by Edward I to control the country; one, at Caernarfon, is the site for the investitures of the Princes of Wales. Similarly, the Tower of London or Edinburgh Castle house ceremonies and hold treasures. Such buildings are mostly maintained by the Government's Department of the Environment, and kept open for tourists; the interiors of many are bare stone and modern wooden flooring, but the original layout is preserved. The "DoE" similarly looks after many less intact castles, which may simply consist of fragmentary stone walls on a grassy raised area. (Such places are studied by academics; most which might have had interesting remains buried beneath have been excavated.)



STATELY HOMES

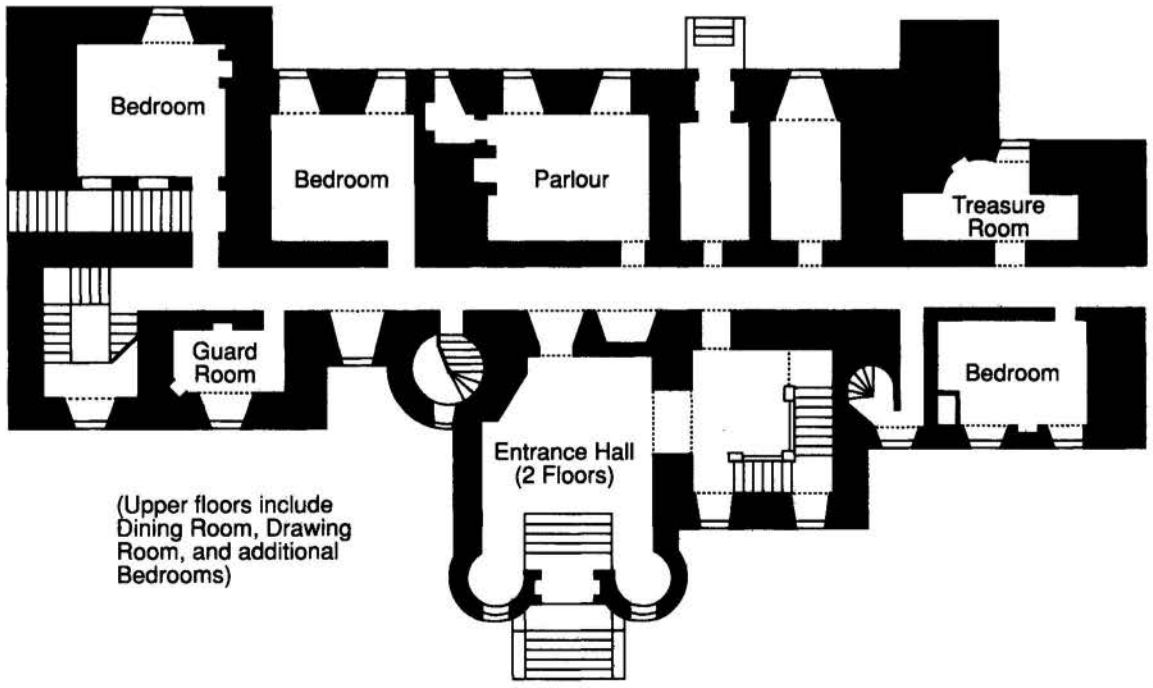
More intact homes of a later date may be tended by the National Trust, a non-profit-making body; as buildings of interest may be given to the Trust in lieu of taxes (such as Death Duties), it now owns many, opening them to visitors. They may not be unoccupied; some "trade offs" have been arranged whereby the original owners stay, but keep the place open to visitors, and elsewhere, maintenance grants are sometimes available in exchange for opening a house to the public. Others again are businesses, paying for themselves from agriculture or tourism; some have added attractions. For example, Longleat has a collection of animals, including lions, roaming areas of its grounds through which paying visitors drive; Woburn Abbey borrowed such ideas and added a full-scale fairground; and Beaulieu Palace House, one of whose owners collected classic cars, now doubles as the National Motor Museum, with a priceless collection of old vehicles on display.



All of the last three are great houses, although Beaulieu (for example) is a nineteenth-century development of a fourteenth-century abbey. The fortified castle evolved into the great house between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, in which time moated manors were also built; fortification required a license from the monarch, which wasn't freely given. The stability of Tudor times (and the fact that cannons were making castles less effective) encouraged the growth of large-windowed show-pieces like Longleat and Hatfield (the childhood home-prison of Elizabeth I). Incidentally, while half-timbering is genuinely characteristic of Tudor building, and some fine half-timbered manor houses exist, the most prestigious Tudor buildings (including great churches and college buildings) were built of more expensive stone.

By the mid-seventeenth century, economic changes led to smaller "great houses", but with opulent interior decoration to compensate. In the eighteenth century, however, more wealth not only meant big houses (again), but also large-scale gardening; Repton and "Capability" Brown swept away the old formal, geometrical gardens (which hence are now quite rare), dammed streams to form lakes, re-shaped vistas by tree-planting, and generally worked hard at making the scenery look "natural".

The "romantic" nineteenth century saw the return of the castle — for show, not defence. "Gothic" architecture, full of heavy-duty display, was the style for many of the larger houses built at this time. However, the "great house" was on its way out as tax rates rose, and despite a couple of eccentric millionaires in our century, the "stately home" is now a symbol of past history, if sometimes living, breathing, much-visited history — with a gift shop and a fairground in the gardens.



A SMALL SCOTTISH STATELY HOME (GROUND FLOOR)

HOME GAMES

GMs will often be tempted to throw a stately home or castle into a UK-set scenario, which is fair enough, but if the place is of any size and intact, the key question is "how is it maintained?". Smaller buildings may be in use as farm houses, hotels, conference centres, company research labs or whatever, or run by millionaires, but the biggest, grandest stately homes will almost invariably be open to paying visitors — on guided tours of the often spectacular interiors, wandering round the permanent fairgrounds outside, or driving amongst the monkeys, giraffes, or lions of a "safari park" section. Think of the interiors as museums, and the exteriors as monuments — all set in green English countryside, or less often on the edge of a sprawling modern town or amongst Scottish hills — and you'll get the idea.

Father died a couple of years ago. As he has made a successful private career as an architect, working all over Europe, and has a large house in London, he's not particularly upset over the necessity; he's planning to let the house out as a conference centre once the tax is paid off. PCs may encounter him around the place; he's a tall, quite elegant but balding, bespectacled, rather abstracted man in his thirties, concerned that events should run smoothly (normal w/INT 15, several Professional Skills). His French wife Genevieve is also around; she's a pleasant, attractive, and unnervingly shrewd woman (INT20, PRE 18, SPD 3, Deduction on 15-), who will rapidly take control if things get weird.

SCENARIO: SALE TIME

Every now and again, despite all the tax get-outs, special arrangements, and tourist trade, the owners of a British stately home find that they can't afford it, and raise some funds by selling up. Aside from the building itself, there's always the furniture. Such houses may hold phenomenal collections of antiques and paintings, especially if a previous owner had money and taste.

This scenario for a small group of PC heroes requires that they have some reason to visit such a sale, in their "civilian" IDs where applicable. The GM will have to determine why, depending on character specifics; there are many possibilities —

(1) Many heroes have careers as reporters or press photographers. Fine; they've just been given a human-interest assignment (maybe as a reward, maybe to get them out of the way). "There's an art auction in England; go write up the business."

(2) Rich characters, or those with interests in the art world, could become involved with the sale, either for profit or to get some decorations for their mansions. This could mean the PCs themselves, or it could mean their DNPCs, employers, or financial backers. Anyway, this can easily be parlayed into an excuse to get the PCs involved. If a PC is a lawyer, she or he could be asked to help sort out export licenses for purchases from the UK — not easy for really major artworks, as British museums must by law be given a chance to match the foreign buyer's bid.

(3) A "detective" PC could be on the trail of an art-thief super-burglar. A trail of clues leads eventually to the villain's apartment — but it's empty. Fortunately, the apartment trash-cans haven't been cleared this week; the hero finds a receipt for an airline ticket, and a news cutting about the sale.

(4) Mercenary characters could be asked by an international security company (SGI from Super-Agents?) to keep an eye on the sale — all unofficially, although the pay's OK, but some bright exec got itchy about this job (he suspects some of his regular staff). Of course, the UK law might be unhappy about undeclared foreign security men on the prowl, so be tactful...

(5) Holiday-making PCs in the UK could become friendly with a local antiques dealer, and, being at a loose end, might accept an invitation to come along as guests and assistants — for fun.

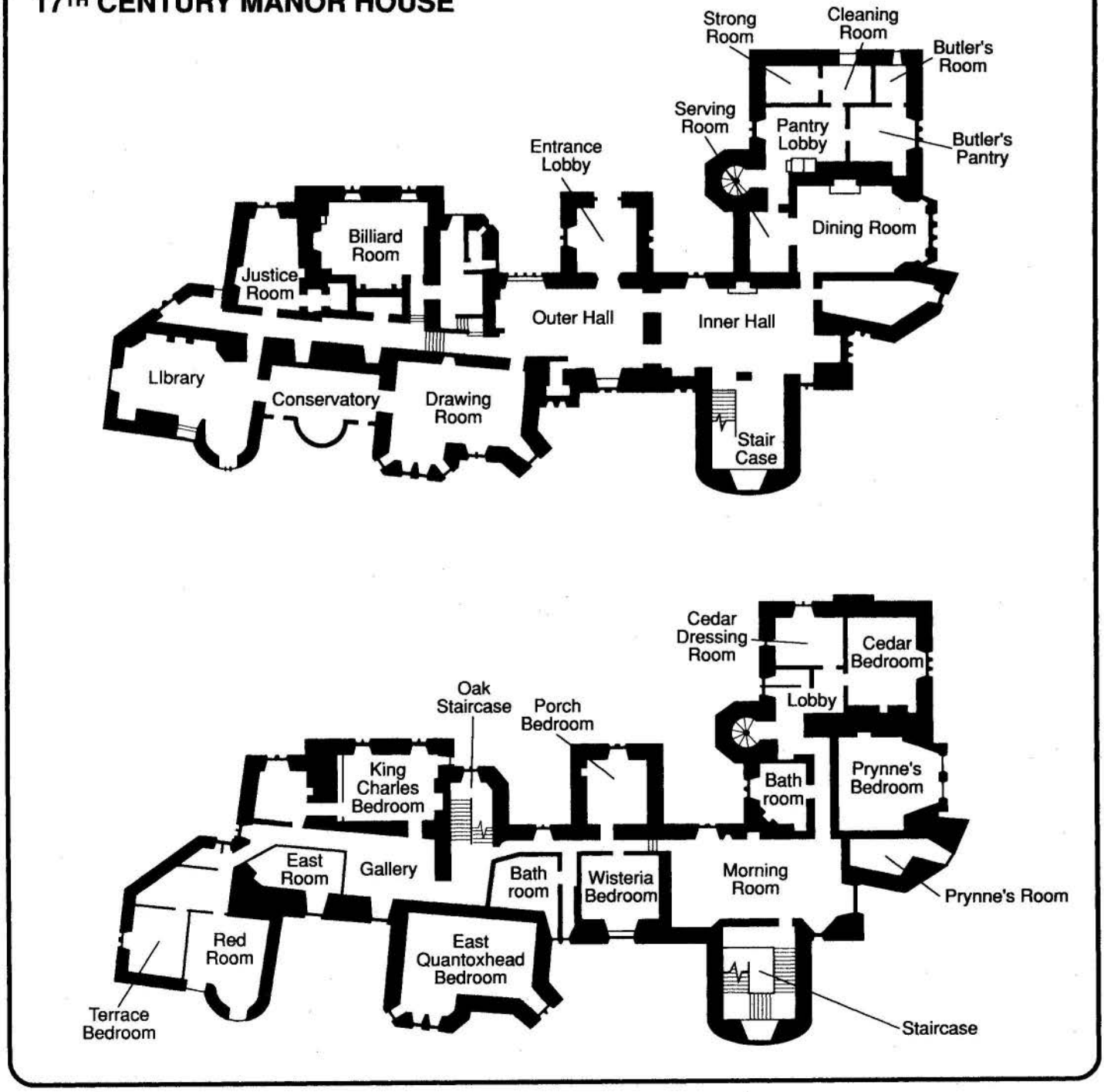
Note that all of these options put the heroes in the UK legally, but not officially — in other words, if they want to bring weaponry with them, they'll have to be clever, and if they're caught, they've got problems. Still, surely there's no reason to expect trouble at the auction, is there?

The event itself should keep them interested. It's being held at Steeple Weldawn Hall, Hereford & Worcester, home of the Parson-Dane family, the head of which is Baron Chadwick. The present Baron Chadwick, Simon Parson-Dane, is selling off most of his heirlooms to pay death duties on the estate, which he inherited when his

The only other member of the family to hand is Simon's sister Arabella, who is unmarried, in her late twenties, and lives in a not far away and runs a stables. A horse-loving, horse-faced woman, she might be overheard telling her brother that he should have found some way of keeping the collection together (but not suggesting how); she's insufferably bossy and arrogant, and will get in anyone's way given the chance, but she's fit and knows animals (PRE 15, SPD 3, PS: Horse Training on 15-, Riding 14-). The house is set in pleasant farming country, adjacent to a small village and about fifteen miles from the nearest small town, fifty from Birmingham, a hundred from London.

The auction is being managed and run by a Well-Known London Auction House, who'll do nicely out of commissions. Two previous members of the Parson-Dane family were art connoisseurs; a third was a senior administrator in the Indian colonial government, and had a taste for curios. The place holds a number of good eighteenth-century paintings (and some nineteenth-century second-rate stuff), a small collection of fine Dresden china, various Indian artworks, and a 1932 Rolls-Royce in good condition. All have been catalogued and valued; the sale should fetch £200-400,000 ($320,000-$640,000). Starting a superhero slugfest in the middle of all this could be expensive.

17TH CENTURY MANOR HOUSE



The PCs should arrive during the second of two days of viewing, before the sale itself; already, the event looks like controlled chaos. The well-heeled end of the British antiques business, which overlaps with the "landed gentry" and the lower end of the aristocracy, has descended en masse and is treating this as a combined cattle-market and social event. Even booking well in advance, the PCs will find themselves in a hotel twenty miles from the house; if they haven't hired a car (and lack useful super-powers), they'll need to spend a fortune in taxi fares. Fortunately, most people at the event have brought their own transport. Three fields around Steeple Weldawn Hall will be solid with Range Rovers, Volvo estate cars (station wagons), and a few Mercedes and Jaguars. Uniform for the throng is tweeds and practical footwear, and headscarves for the women; "town" clothes and foreign (indeed, non-upper-class) accents wil be noticed.

American visitors will be watched carefully; it will be assumed that they have money (why else come?), and so whatever they are after may suffer from high bidding. No-one will ask outright, but if the Americans pause for long, they'll be targets of at least one 13-Conversation skill, with a view to determining what it is they're after...

Options

How complex things get from here on is up to the GM, and may depend on the power and skills of the PCs:

(1) If the PCs are pursuing a super-thief, they'll have to identify and stop him. Such characters often have disguise skills, and the PCs are unofficial operators in a place where they are unknown. Unless they photograph their foe in the act of purloining the precious painting, they may have problems...

(2) If security is being provided by the PCs or their friends, perhaps there is a problem with an NPC involved. Unmasking a corrupt security expert could make for a tricky detective-work job — a country house mystery!

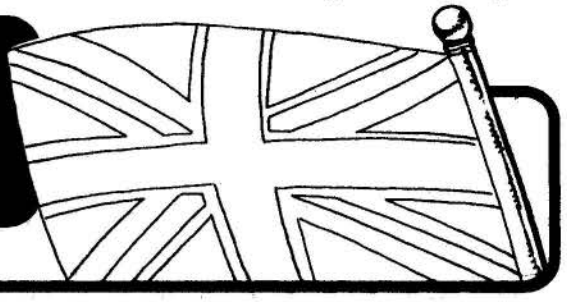
(3) The Shapeshifters are obvious supervillains to take an interest in the sale. Hag will show up as Martha McPhee, after putting a fellow dealer in hospital with magical amnesia; Nightmask will show up in the man's "borrowed" car, looking like its owner and well-briefed by Hag on his habits, with a young, sullen-looking assistant (Wolfbairn in human guise). They'll select the most interesting pieces on the "viewing" days, and burgle the place overnight after day one of the two auction days. Hag will slip into the house in bat, crow, or rat guise, with Nightmask to hand as back-up and Wolfbairn guarding their retreat — unless a PC detects them beforehand.

(4) A more straightforward, but no less effective, robbery could be masterminded by such flamboyant British gang-leaders as Mystery or Brown Fox. Their plans could involve crashing the estate gates with a stolen vehicle, drawing attention that way with lots of fireworks — then sending a high-firepower squad round the back in a military-standard four-wheel-drive truck. Certainly, anything they get would be too "hot" for normal sale; so perhaps they've a rich, unscrupulous buyer already arranged, or perhaps the boss wants something nice to hang on the wall at home?

(5) The auctioneers may have employed Brian Fitzherbert (alias Blazon) as a consultant on older items with heraldic significance; if so, he'll stay for the auction. He blends in perfectly; at best, the PCs may notice a rather vague, scholarly sort of fellow wandering around, tut-tutting at the breaking up of this fine collection. Of course, if they detect the mystic amulet beneath his clothes, they may jump to mistaken conclusions. Fitzherbert won't act as Blazon unless something occurs to inspire his concern or anger — but then, he may well go berserk at anyone who damages the house or collection. If several obvious super-beings appear, he'll use his watch to alert his teammates; who responds and when is up to the GM, but Swift Swallow could arrive in minutes, and the Golden Eagle would not be much slower.

(6) The sale has been reported in the British press, complete with photographs. If one of the "Indian carvings" should happen to be a long-lost item of power, it will have been pictured, and various people will have noticed it. Those taking an interest might include the Shapeshifters (again), Dr Samaine (also capable of adopting a mystical disguise), and American or international groups such as DEMON; equally, an Asian hero such as Imperial Lion could be alerted. In the latter case, the NPC hero will have to decide whether to protect or destroy the artifact, or take it himself to give it back to its rightful owner (illegal but perhaps the only safe course); villains will have to select methods for theft. A rich villain could buy the thing; if the PCs then recognise him, they're in a dilemma. If a fight develops over the artifact, something may even activate it unintentionally; the GM can decide the consequences, including whether the "mystic flare" attracts the attention of "sensitive" NPCs.

LIFE IN THE U.K.



It's useful to know how Britons think and how they are governed, but it is as important to know what they do and how they live. This shades into the question of culture, which doesn't just mean art and music (important though those are); it means the way people are. The "national character" is part of this, of course, but that's vague, generalised; the history and geography you can get straight from books. The things that are hard to get right and easy to see when wrong are all the trivial details of national life.

The writers of this section have had one problem. Not only has the twentieth century changed Britain at least as much as anywhere else, but the place is currently run by a determinedly reforming government, which keeps changing the rules on us. If we'd written this book ten years ago, we'd not only not have mentioned yuppies, we'd have said a bit more about trade unions and nationalised industries, we'd have described a more traditionalist financial sector, a medical system in less turmoil, a different legal system — and the Falkland Islands wouldn't have been mentioned. If you're running scenarios set in Britain, it's especially wise to keep up with the newspapers.

WORK AND INDUSTRY

"I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours."

— Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*

FROM REVOLUTION TO DECAY

The Industrial Revolution of the 18th-19th centuries was based in the north and Midlands of England, where iron and coal were close to hand. This industrial base of heavy engineering, mining, textiles and ship-building endured up to this century. Meanwhile, London, as a port and capital of the Empire, remained wealthy, but agricultural areas such as the west of England — and Ireland, then a part of the UK — became relatively poor.

However, the world depression of the 1930's hit the north hard, and since the war, the old heavy industries have suffered from new competition. In the '50's, the problem was limited because Britain had loyal markets in the Empire and a solid base of factories, less damaged by the war than their European competitors, but since then, the Empire has broken up and the rivals have grown.

Another problem was that British industry seemed weak at exploiting scientific advances, despite the brilliant successes of British theorists. This may be partly due to a national distrust of intelligence, but it isn't too surprising if sheltered British companies didn't see much cause to change. Finally, there was the conflict between employers and Britain's then-strong Trade (Labour) Unions, which could be even more resistant to change than the bosses. Although the loss of production due to strikes wasn't as great as myths suggest, it was one more problem. Meanwhile, the industries that did grow were often lighter; chemicals, food processing, electronics, often based in the south of England.

Since 1979, Britain has had a government that is very much in favour of money-making, and some regeneration of British industry has occurred, but this has involved either light engineering (such as electronics) or "service industries" such as the financial sector (still largely based in London). Despite attempts to encourage development in depressed areas, a great divide still exists between regions; when the Channel Tunnel opens, it may widen. The government has been very successful in reducing the power of the Unions, helped by the decay of the heavy industries where they were strong and their public unpopularity in the late '70's, but whether the pendulum will swing back remains to be seen. Unemployment in the UK is around 2.3 million, 8% of the workforce, but with much higher rates in some depressed areas — mostly the old heavy-industry regions and some inner cities.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

South & South-East (Including London): Services, government and finance, plus a mix of light industries, oil refining, and agriculture; mostly quite wealthy.

East Anglia: Lightly populated and largely agricultural, but growing, with high-tech manufacturing concentrated round Cambridge. East-coast ports have grown with trade with Europe.

South-West England: Largely agricultural, but with a strong services sector, and some manufacturing, including aerospace. Quite wealthy.

Wales: Agricultural, and thinly populated in the north; the coal-mining industry of the south Welsh valleys has fallen on hard times, but there is some industry there.

West Midlands: Birmingham, the "workshop of England", still focuses on manufacturing industry. "Metal-bashing" and pottery are the traditional concerns of this area.

North-West: An industrial region, now a patchwork of depression with areas of success. Manchester and neighbouring towns produce computers and glass, and have a growing financial sector; Liverpool is a major port, but badly hurt by recession.

Yorkshire & the North-East: The Yorkshire coal-fields are large, but the industry is much reduced by competition and the government's war with the unions. Some industries remain strong, and the coastal ports profit from the oil and gas of the North Sea, but parts of the area are some of the poorest in the country.

Scottish Lowlands & Borders: Glasgow's shipbuilding industry has decayed almost to nothing recently, contributing much to the city's decline, but some manufacturing remains important, aided by petro-chemicals, and Edinburgh isn't poor. The electronics business has grown here, though not as much as was hoped.

Scottish Highlands & Islands: A mountainous, thinly-populated region, traditionally making its living by fishing, sheep-farming, and more recently tourism, the north of Scotland has received one large boost lately; North Sea Oil. The result was temporarily to make Aberdeen into a rich city, although press reports exaggerated both the wealth and the damage from the subsequent slump.

Northern Ireland: With the "Troubles" deterring investment and the decay of its ship-building and other industries, Northern Ireland is a poor area, with high unemployment (around 18%). Agriculture remains important, and the government continually seeks to encourage growth and so reduce social pressures there.

STATE CONCERNS

Various government departments are concerned with policy towards British industry; the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food, the Department of Employment, the Department of Trade and Industry, and so on. The Department of Social Security deals with state assistance to those out of work, while the tax system is run by two bodies; HM Customs and Excise handles Value Added Tax, charged on sales, while the Board of Inland Revenue deals with Corporation and Income Taxes. The former is quite low in Britain (25-35% of profits); the latter starts at 25% of income over a basic allowance, rising to 40% on the highest levels.

An old, very common suffix on UK company names was "Ltd.", for "Limited Liability" (ie. the shareholders are not legally liable for all the firm's debts); today, that is often replaced by "PLC", for "Public Limited Company". Both roughly correspond to the American "Inc" (Incorporated).

After WW II through to the '60's, large parts of British industry were nationalised (taken into state ownership), including much of aerospace manufacture, the oil business, and coal mining. However, the present government has reversed this policy, selling off not only manufacturing firms, but also concerns that had been under state control for much longer, such as British Telecom and the water supply industry. The system used ensured that many of the new shares were held by ordinary people with no previous share-holdings, although many have sold their purchases off to "traditional" big share-holders since (at a profit). At present, much of the coal industry, the Post Office, and British Rail remain nationalised, but this may change, and government policy is to set profit targets for nationalised industries.

THE MULTINATIONAL APPROACH

Some areas of British industry are largely or entirely run by subsidiaries of foreign companies, noticeably the motor industry; others are more of a mixture. For example, American and Japanese companies have a large part of the British computer business, with only one UK mainframe manufacturer still surviving and most "personal" systems having foreign names on them, but some of those names are attached to devices built in the UK, and small UK companies have looked for "market niches" with some success. Meanwhile, Britain's native aerospace industry has formed several partnerships with European counterparts to work on specific projects that are simply too big for any one European company. In an increasingly tough commercial world, that may well be the pattern of the future; with all the EC countries uniting as a "single market" in 1992, it looks inevitable.

GONE SHOPPING

"...late and soon, Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers..."

— William Wordsworth

Visiting PCs out shopping in Britain shouldn't find it difficult; the country isn't quite as rich as the USA, but near enough. However, differences of custom and law exist...

TAXING PROBLEMS

The main "purchase tax" in the UK is Value Added Tax (VAT), which is very simple in theory, but keeps a lot of accountants in business in practice. 15% VAT is charged on most transactions, but sellers can reclaim any VAT from their own (business) purchases before handing the money over to the government, so the only money reaching the state is the tax on the "value added". Note that the end-purchaser of a product has no way of re-claiming VAT —except some foreign visitors, under various schemes to help exports. Some things are VAT-free, including food (except in restaurants), children's clothes, and books. (Needless to say, silly anomalies can come out of this system.) All taxes are included on shop price tags in the UK; unlike the US, what you see is what you pay.

One transaction that doesn't suffer much from VAT is housing/land sales. However, a lot of other taxes and odd charges apply, so the state makes something out of such deals.

MONEY IN THE BANK

British banks don't have one problem that restricts their US counterparts; with no state boundaries, they can operate country-wide. In consequence, most adult Britons, other than the poorest or most eccentric, have bank accounts. Although there is a lot of traditional resistance to non-cash payments, employers prefer them, and cash payrolls are vulnerable, so non-cash payments are common. (The exception is in small "services" businesses: many plumbers, builders, etc, charge less for cash, which they can "forget" to include on their tax forms.)

CASH IN HAND

Britain's monetary system was altered in 1971. In the old system, 12 pennies (d) made a shilling (s), and 20 shillings made a pound (£). Under the new (decimal) system, the pound remained the same, but the penny was increased in value to 2.4 old pennies, so that a hundred (new) pennies (p) make a pound (£). The shilling disappeared forever. The pound is worth about $1.60 at current exchange rates.

The coinage consists of: bronze-coloured 1p and 2p pieces, silver 5p (old shilling; some shillings are still in circulation), 10p (old 2-shilling piece; some are still in circulation), small seven-sided silver 20p and larger 50p pieces, and the "golden" pound coin. This is occasionally called a "Maggie", because it's thick, hard, brassy, and thinks it's a sovreign. British coins are a little larger than most countries'; there is sometimes talk of changing the designs for something lighter.

As the coinage is of recent origin, popular expressions for the different coins have not yet become settled. The penny is referred to as a "P", as in the phrase, "Have you got a ten-pee-piece?"

The green pound note was phased out in England and Wales fairly recently. In Scotland, however, three banks still produce their own notes; the Bank of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland, and the Clydesdale Bank.

Larger denominations of notes are £5 (blue), £10 (brown), £20 and £50. They are of different sizes, the old £1 being about the same size as the US$, the others successively slightly larger. (The "big white" £5, mentioned in old novels, is long gone.) Notes of £20 and higher are sometimes regarded with suspicion because of well-publicised fakes. The paper of the note bears a watermark in the same design as the note; the Duke of Wellington for the £5, Florence Nightingale for the £10, and so on. In addition, a band of pliable metal runs from top to bottom towards the left of the note. Scottish notes are unfamiliar to many people in England and Wales, and shop assistants will ask their manager before accepting them; "English" notes are commonplace and accepted in Scotland.

Other much rarer denominations of legal tender include the "crown" (25p), issued for special occasions such as the Royal Jubilee and usually collected as a souvenir rather than currency, the £2 coin, issued only in proof sets of coinage, and the Maundy coinage, specially minted sets of 1p, 2p, 3p, and 4p coins given by the monarch as alms during the Maundy ceremony. The last are legal tender, but since a set is worth around £50 to collectors, they aren't used. The "sovreign" is a gold coin minted for investors in gold; the golden guinea is a long-vanished gold coin (worth £1 + 1 shilling), occasionally referred to in traditional matters such as horse-racing prize money.

Postage Stamp

The British postal service is discussed under Communications. Because the modern system was invented in the UK, British stamps are unique in not bearing the name of the country. Standard stamps have a profile portrait of the Queen, and their value, on a background colour that varies according to value. Special issue stamps are larger, with the Queen's silhouette in one corner. Standard issue stamps from Scotland also have a small heraldic lion; Welsh stamps a dragon; Irish stamps a star containing a hand surmounted by a crown; Manx stamps a three-legged Manx symbol.

Most account holders have a "cheque card". If the person taking the cheque copies a code number off this onto the cheque and cross-checks the signatures on each, payment up to a limit (usually £50) is guaranteed. So a cheque book can function almost as cash, and many Britons carry relatively little of the latter. This also makes credit or charge cards less essential, but they are used. Banks will allow current account holders to go into overdraft (for a charge), although managers may quibble. Conversely, Banks didn't previously offer interest on current accounts in credit, but competition is making them change this.

The best known UK "high-street" banks are Barclays, Midland, National Westminster ("NatWest"), and Lloyds (*not* the insurance market). There are a few others, and some variations in Scotland; there are some small banks, mostly subsidiaries of the "big four", who offer more personal service to rich customers. These are all "clearing" banks, because cheques are "cleared" through them. The Bank of England is the state-run "central bank" that executes the government's financial policy, although it also holds a very few personal accounts.

SMALL PURCHASES

Shops in Britain are similar to those in the USA, but with more, smaller retailers in town centres; malls are spreading, but far from universal. Many Asian immigrants from mercantile castes have gone into small shop-keeping, often working very long hours and achieving success as a result. English shop-keepers have a resistance to long hours, and to providing services such as bag-packing that are common in the US — something to do with a modern British dislike of "personal service" jobs. Twenty-four hour supermarkets are a rarity, which might inconvenience visitors with odd schedules. Laws against most Sunday trading, although controversial and often flouted, are still enough to make Sundays very quiet. (They also have anomalies, such as the fact that it's legal to sell a soft-porn magazine or any part of a bicycle on Sunday — but not a Bible or a bicycle.) Also, it's not so long since it was legal for suppliers to dictate retail prices ("resale price maintenance"); this law makes an exception for books, although this rule too is under pressure. (It supposedly ensures the survival of small book-sellers and ensures diversity in publishing.)

The retail chain stores found in most British towns include Sainsbury's, Tesco, and Asda for groceries, Marks & Spencer for clothes and some food, Boots — a chain of chemists (UK equivalent of "drugstores"; those legally allowed to handle "serious" medicines are called "pharmacists") and Woolworth's (as known in the US; fading rather in the UK). Supermarkets and "off-licenses" sell alcohol; the latter often open into the evening, whereas most small British shops shut around 5-5.30pm. One trend that is developing slowly is towards EFTPOS (Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale), allowing shoppers to move money directly from their bank accounts to the shops', but this requires both massive computerisation and more public acceptance.

PCs who want more "off-beat" goods — weird electronic components, unusual foodstuffs, whatever — will have to visit larger towns, in "normal" shopping hours (9:00-5:00, six days a week). London is as large as you get in the UK, and has some "prestige" department stores who boast that they can obtain anything legal — given time and money. Of course, more effort, contacts, and cash will speed up processes. Illegal merchandise is also most easily found in larger cities — with the use of Streetwise skill, of course.

Britain also has mail-order catalogue firms, but they don't have the history that they developed in the bigger USA.

OUT FOR A MEAL

British restaurants open quite long hours, but all-night opening is very rare outside of busy city centres (and uncommon there). Larger towns also offer more choice. Hotels will usually provide guests with some kind of food at odd hours (for a price).

BIGGER BUYS

Dealers in larger items may be based in town centres (such as car dealers, especially those whose prices are high enough to cover the rent), just out of town (such as most second-hand car dealers), or on "industrial" sites (mainframe computer vendors don't run shops, but do need warehouses). Quick, "emergency" purchases from such will require some kind of finance (or trust) — cheque cards, and even credit cards, don't cover large enough payments. "Filthy Rich" characters may have special charge cards that make these things easier.

THE PROPERTY MARKET

The British tax system, especially as run by the present government, has a bias in favour of private house-purchasers, and a very large proportion of Britons own a house and have a mortgage payment on it; any British town has one or more "estate agents" handling property sales. Conversely, this, and maybe also the British rent control laws, make property rentals hard work and unprofitable for would-be landlords, so the rental market is restricted — frustratingly for the low-paid. "Council housing", rented out by local authorities at cheaper rates, has been reduced since the government required the councils to sell it off to occupants who wanted housing at cheap prices. Land development is controlled by planning laws — except for farmers (who are vulnerable to other financial and tax changes, but who have a powerful political lobby).

REGINA VS CAPTAIN MACHO

The British legal system is the product of over a thousand years of evolution, but this has not made it a streamlined thoroughbred. It is more like a camel designed by a thousand years of committees; no one knows all the laws which apply in Britain. The system has much in common with the USA, but Britain has no Constitution or Bill of Rights. There is also no Statute of Limitations. Certain minor offences must be prosecuted within six months, but murderers are never safe from legal retribution.

Two points which differ from American practice: entrapment by police is illegal; and from the time charges have been made, until the jury returns a verdict, the news media are severely restricted in what they may publish on a case. It is said to be "sub judice". Basically, the media are restricted to reporting what is said in court. This prevents juries becoming biased by outside opinions and allows a fair trial; it also deters investigative reporting of the sort that revealed Watergate. In general, Britain is less litigious than the USA; people go to law as a last resort. Action over a medical mistake is rare, because it must be shown that the error was negligent. Furthermore, people are responsible for their own actions; drunken drivers have only themselves to blame.

THE LEGAL SETUP

In England and Wales decisions on criminal prosecutions (Regina (or Rex) vs whoever) are made by the recently set up Crown Prosecution Service; in Scotland, by the Procurator Fiscal — these offices are comparable to the American D.A., although the powers of Procurators Fiscal go much further; they direct the actual police investigation.

Speculative action (in which lawyers act for a share of the winnings) is not at present allowed in England and Wales; it is rare in Scotland. There are two types of lawyers. Solicitors deal with minor matters such as wills and house purchases. They can appear in lower courts. In court, they wear black robes (over ordinary clothes). Barristers, who are obtained via a solicitor, deal with more important court appearances. In court, they wear robes and white wig.

Magistrates Court

All criminal cases go to the Magistrates court and are sent from there to a higher court. There are three magistrates; they don't wear special clothing. The magistrates pass judgement on minor crimes such as theft, minor criminal damage, minor physical assaults, and almost all traffic offences. Magistrates are lay people who are given some legal training; they have a clerk who advises on points of law. 40% of magistrates are women. The idea is that magistrates should be a representative mix, and employed people have a legal right to time off work for magistrate duties. Despite this, magistrates tend to be "local worthies" (it might be worth a one-point Fringe Benefit in game terms.)

Crown Court

This is presided over by a judge (who wears black robes like a barrister, and a bigger wig) with a jury of "12 good men and true" (about half of whom will be women). Barristers appear for prosecution and defense. The court deals with theft, assaults, murder, burglary, terrorism, etc.

County and High Court

The County Court deals with minor civil cases, the High Court with cases involving £5000 and more. There is a judge and no jury.

Court of Appeal

This consists of three judges and no jury. Under a recent innovation, the crown can appeal to increase a sentence.

Law Lords

The final court of appeal. There are 9 Law Lords, and usually 5 of them sit on a case. The Law Lords are senior judges, who are not actually members of the House of Lords, although they are called "Lord". Peers (members of the House of Lords) used to have the right of trial before the whole House of Lords, but Lords are now tried in the usual way.

THE SCOTTISH SYSTEM

The most important practical difference between Scottish and English/Welsh law is that Scottish juries can return one of three verdicts: guilty, not guilty, and not proven. If a case is found not proven, the defendant is open to another prosecution should further evidence come to light. The jury in criminal cases is 15.

The highest court of appeal in criminal cases is the High Court of Justiciary, and in civil cases the Court of Session. There is no right of appeal to the House of Lords. These two courts sit in Edinburgh, at the old Parliament House. The Sherrif court, presided over by a Sherrif, deals with most civil cases as well as criminal ones. The lowest Scottish court is the District Court, presided over by Justices of the Peace.

European Court, Strasbourg

Some cases go to the European Court, but this is a lengthy and expensive process, undertaken to create a precedent for lower courts.

SELF DEFENCE AND VIOLENCE

Central to British law is the idea of "reasonable force". Reasonable force may be used, but people have been prosecuted for killing burglars. It is a criminal offence to injure anyone, even a criminal. In consequence, people are not allowed to carry weapons for self-defence, and "Mace" is illegal. Licenses are required for all firearms, their components and ammunition, although air guns do not require a license. Shotgun licenses are granted unless there is a good reason for the police to object; other firearms require applicants to prove they have a good reason for having the weapon (eg for sport). Firearms and ammunition must be kept locked in a secure place. Carrying a firearm in a public place is illegal.

Computer Hacking

Computer hacking in itself is not a crime at present. Existing laws can be used against hacking used for fraud or destructive purposes.

Police Powers

The police can hold a suspect for up to 24 hours for a minor offence, 72 hours for a serious criminal offense, and 7 days for terrorist offenses.

Sentences

Although hanging was abolished for most crimes in the 1960s, a few offences still could lead to the death penalty: high treason, piracy, and arson in HM docks. Otherwise, the maximum penalty is "life imprisonment", which usually means around 20 years. Temporary insanity is a defence, but will usually result in committal to a mental institution "at Her Majesty's pleasure", which means until the doctors decide that the person is sane (maybe never!) The legal definition of insanity was compiled in the last Century and is hopelessly out-of-date; legally, an epileptic is insane!

SUPERHERO LAW

In current law, Superheroes accustomed to beating foes into submission would not be using reasonable force. It is likely that the law would be lenient towards recognised heroes using reasonable force against acknowledged villains, but not towards violence against normals, or reckless actions which put bystanders at risk. It is expected that people trained in martial arts will not initiate violence, and give a warning before responding to violence or threats. The same would probably be expected of those with superpowers.

Whether a superhero is charged for injuring criminals will depend whether the hero gave the criminals a reasonable chance to surrender; whether Killing Attacks were used; whether the criminal complained to the police; and even whether the police like the hero. Characters with well-known Codes against Killing and Stun attacks will be less likely to be prosecuted than casual killers with KAs. As a rule, heroes should first tell criminals to surrender, and surrending foes should be treated properly. Superhero and villain teams should note that battles may be considered Affray or Riot, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Supernaturally powered characters may be relieved to know that the only law relating to witchcraft is the Fradulent Mediums Act 1951. This penalises anyone who fradulently claims supernatural powers for reward (though not for entertainment). Real powers are not covered by law. Mutants need not try to escape the courts by claiming that a normal jury are not their "peers"; if Lords can be tried by commoners, so can mutants! Any legislation to restrict those with superpowers would probably follow spectacular and well-published activity, and would be likely to be draconian measures rushed through Parliament in a panic.

IT'S A CRIME!

Crimes are committed in Britain for similar reasons as anywhere. However, the nature of British crime is maybe a little different to (say) the USA.

VIOLENT CASES

To begin with, there's the lower level of violence. Britain has violent crimes, some of them the nastiest sorts, and the rate is increasing (as all over Europe and the world), but rates in Britain are still far lower than in the USA. (Northern Ireland, with terrorism, has a tenth the murder rate of New York.) This is partly to do with the scarcity of firearms, but not entirely; America also has higher non-firearm violence rates, while Switzerland, where national militia laws require every house to have a gun, has lower rates than Britain. The psychology involved is complex, but Britain is a less violent country than some.

This has been emphasised because it is important for game purposes, and in a game it might be "played up" even more, but it shouldn't be exaggerated. Britain has murderers, including the occasional serial killer or psychopath; it also has lesser crimes of violence. There are muggers, and burglars, but neither invariably carry guns. (Knives, clubs, fists are adequate for muggers who go after the weak.)

Britons sometimes "sentimentalize" this, talking about criminals "disliking violence" (because of the supposed "normal" British character). Unfortunately, there's no evidence for this; apart from the muggers with "melee" weapons, an unarmed burglar may well be ready to swing a punch or an improvised club at anyone blocking his escape. (Perhaps less often at a policeman; if captured later, the criminal will be in the hands of other police, and British police aren't all saints.) If superheroes were active in their world, criminals would probably respond; some might carry (bigger) weapons, while others might surrender on sight of a known costume ("you can't gerraway, so why collect bruises?").

PAVEMENT ARTISTS?

Many crimes of violence in Britain are either "domestic", or the result of insanity (or both). However, some are committed for simple profit. At the lowest level, this can be a "snatch and run" mugging. The more spectacular type, likely to involve firearms and members of the "full-time" underworld, is much rarer.

The traditional arm of the British hold-up man ("pavement artist" in criminal slang) is the sawn-off shotgun. Shotgun licenses are quite easy to obtain in the UK, and farmers often have a (breech-loading) shotgun around for pest control; stolen and other black-market shotguns are thus quite common. As the gun is used more to intimidate than for firefights, the limited number of shots doesn't matter; nor does the reduction in accuracy and range caused by sawing off the barrel for concealability. (In game terms, a sawn-off barrel reduces ranged OCV, but improves Concealment rolls.) However, over time, the black market has acquired a fair number of other firearms, and revolvers are now often used in violent crime, but fully automatic weapons are very rare, being particularly stringently controlled by law and not used for sport. Rifles and the like aren't unknown, but don't suit "hold-up" tactics; if things go wrong and crooks find themselves surrounded by police marksmen, they might try taking hostages, but they'd rarely be stupid enough to get into a shooting match.

Actually, many hold-ups have been committed with fake weapons — some collectors' models or well-made dummies, others quite ridiculous household items partly concealed under coats. Some such bluffs are seen through; others succeed in the confusion of the moment. (GMs could provoke PCs into lengthily sneaking up on a thug and beating him senseless, before telling them that the "gun" was a banana...) Criminals aren't able to get hold of much "bullet-proof" gear, or don't bother with it much given that their main concern is intimidation, but motorcycle helmets are sometimes used, combining concealment of identity with protection in fist-fights; at other times, fabric head-masks are employed.

The targets of armed robberies include banks, post-offices or sub-post-offices, building societies, and large shops. Really large, "obvious" targets, such as bullion stores, tend to be too well guarded, although sometimes a gang might plan an elaborate "job" after which they can retire. (Such a plan may be as much a complex burglary as a "hold-up".) The biggest robbery in British history was gold and valuables worth £26 million from a security company warehouse near Heathrow airport in 1983; the best-known was the "Great Train Robbery" of 1963, when £2.6 million worth of used bank-notes on their way to destruction were stolen from a train. Obviously, the detailed planning of such "jobs" is helped if the gang has "inside information" on the target. Occasionally, audacious gangs "hit" several smaller targets in one day (then, usually, run for a port).

Incidentally, the favoured destination for "retiring" British criminals is usually Spain, given the warm weather and weaknesses in extradition treaties. However, these may soon be tightened up. Brazil is often mentioned, less often actually used.

CLEAR IT UP

Police success tends to be measured by "clear-up rates" (so dishonest policemen look for ways to "write off" cases). In the UK, the average success rate is around 33% of all crimes — but, that includes around 75% of crimes of violence, and 90% of murders. (About 95% of all reported crimes are against property.) The rate of unreported crimes can, by definition, only be guessed at; women's groups suggest (in the UK and USA) that most rapes go unreported, for psychological reasons, and a lot of petty theft victims don't see any benefit in taking trouble when the criminal is untraceable. At the other end of the scale, financial institutions may not report large frauds to avoid having people lose confidence in them, especially when they can recover some or all of the money by identifying the criminal themselves and threatening to press charges. Incidentally, car accidents where no-one is hurt don't have to be reported to the police in Britain.

WHO'S RUNNING IT?

Organised crime is far less of a factor in Britain than the USA. It's sometimes reported that the Mafia have attempted to establish themselves, and they probably have some connections in place, but they don't have anything like the network of influence that they have achieved in the USA.

This is due to different patterns of immigration. Organised crime often starts within "minority ethnic" groups, both preying on them and hiding behind their suspicion of the larger community, expanding outwards later. Britain didn't have America's vast waves of nineteenth-century immigration, and its twentieth-century arrivals have not generated coherent criminal organizations. A possible exception is the Chinese community; Hong Kong "Triads" have worked in the UK, but they remain mostly limited to their own ethnic group as yet. Even worried British Chinese say that their activities are fairly limited.

The Jamaican part of the West Indian community provides the other possible exception. Following a period of social instability in Jamaica, local criminals developed a very violent style, and Jamaican criminals in many places round the world now represent a strong, violent force with a taste for automatic weapons and big cars. These "Yardies" aren't a very unified or organised body, more a label; some people fear that the publicity given to the "Yardie problem" is making it worse, by giving imitative young criminals a name to attach to themselves.

Otherwise, British crime is mostly "organised" on the level of gangs — and those often exist only for one "job". The strongest, most permanent gangs are based in large cities; Glasgow (especially the race-track) was notorious in the '30's, London is probably as bad today. The stereotype is the "South London Criminal", which offends the many successful operators from other parts of the city (anywhere north of the Thames). Successful crooks may move into "legitimate" areas such as night-clubs, which provide them with "fronts" for their illegal dealings; while it's impossible for an outsider to judge, it seems that no group has achieved predominance in London crime since the '60's.

RELIGION IN BRITAIN

"Your pious English habit of regarding the world as a moral gymnasium built expressly to strengthen your character in."

— George Bernard Shaw

Like most things, religion in the UK is a paradox resulting from centuries of compromise and accidents. Britain has two churches linked to the system of government which are among the least authoritarian in the country. Those churches used to persecute others, but Britons pride themselves on religious tolerance; a country where the head of state is also head of two Christian churches now hosts the largest Muslim cultural centre in the West.

Almost every religion, sect, and cult in the world has some representatives in the UK, but the more extreme groups tend to have the fewest followers. Even in Northern Ireland, where Catholics and Protestants seem to be at war, the two sides are based on two very conventional, "mainstream" religions. There are "Fundamentalists" in Britain, but they aren't as much of a political and social force as in the USA. On the other hand, you'll be able to find a devotee of any given belief somewhere in the place. Religious freedom extends to the existence of many schools run by and for members of specific religions (currently mostly Christian, although there is pressure from the Muslim community for Muslim schools); these can claim official funds (if they meet official academic standards).

HISTORY

The British Isles were long part of "European Christendom", and the Roman Catholic church was a power in the land. Many of the oldest intact buildings in the UK are churches; it's not particularly unusual to find a small parish church with foundations a thousand years old. However, Henry the Eighth, an ambitious king who had at first proclaimed his fidelity to Rome, came into conflict with the Pope, not least over a divorce he wanted, and in 1534 the Church of England split from Rome. Although "Protestant", this church retained a hierarchy; despite a couple of Catholic monarchs since, Protestantism has been incorporated into the British government. This led to some problems for non-Protestants, but the ideal of religious freedom was eventually accepted, and nowadays Britons are generally tolerant. However, the old Protestant-Catholic conflict still plays a part in the conflicts in Northern Ireland.

THE CHURCHES

Probably about a sixth (say ten million) of Britons are active Christians; proportions range from 13% in England, through 23% in Wales and 37% in Scotland to 80% in Northern Ireland. Many of these are members of the "established" churches — those which are linked to the state.

The Church of England, equivalent to the Episcopalian Church in the USA, is governed by bishops; the monarch is its head, and by law must be a member, and deans, bishops, and the two archbishops are appointed by her ("advised" by the Prime Minister). The clergy swear loyalty to the crown; the archbishops and twenty-four senior bishops sit in the House of Lords; none of the clergy (or those of the churches of Ireland or Scotland, of the Roman Catholic church) can become members of parliament. Less formally, the church is treated as the place for "routine religion"; 30% of babies are baptised by the church, non-churchgoers frequently have "C of E" weddings, and they may well end up in its graveyard. At present, all priests are male, although there is a strong movement for the ordination of women; parish priests are "vicars", usually addressed as "vicar" or "Reverend Smith" (or whoever) by laymen.

The Church of Scotland is also "established", but it has its own traditions, history and beliefs; it differs from the Church of England in being "presbyterian" — governed by councils of elders and priests ("ministers"). Both men and women can become ministers.

There are many smaller Protestant churches, including Methodists, Baptists, and United Reformed; there are also Pentecostalists and Quakers, and American imports such as Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. The fundamentalist "Free Churches" are very strong in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; this leads, for example, to opposition to any kind of business on a Sunday. There may be no ferry services to a Scottish island on a Sunday, nor may any shops be open or bus services running. The Scots tradition is fiercely Calvinist; one small Scottish church is currently in crisis over the disciplining of one of its elders (who happens to be the Lord Chancellor, a senior figure in the UK legal system) for attending a Roman Catholic requiem mass.

The Roman Catholic church restored its British organisation in the nineteenth century, and is now a highly active minority. Members range from immigrants from traditionally Catholic countries through converts to a few aristocratic families who kept the faith through centuries when it wasn't safe. There are also small branches of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

The oldest major non-Christian religion in the UK is Judaism, present since the Middle Ages; the community numbers about 400,000, the second largest in Europe. Despite centuries of prejudice, Britain never engaged in mass pogroms after a few nasty medieval incidents, and today, there are many successful Jews in British business and public life.

More recent waves of immigration have introduced other religions to the UK, although the pattern of belief in the immigrant communities sometimes includes some quirks. For example, British blacks of Caribbean extraction include many Rastafarians — but also a large number of Seventh Day Adventists, that Christian group having had been successful in missionary work in the West Indies. Immigration from the Indian sub-continent has given Britain substantial communities of Muslims (a large, devout group of about a million), Sikhs, Hindus, and Buddhists, some of these being enlarged by Western converts and others. Finally, there are various neo-pagans, Wiccans, and "witches", claiming direct links with the pre-Christian religion of the British Isles.

Actually, most of these last originated with an eighteenth-century fashion, and mix watered-down Celtic, Egyptian, and other ideas, but modern fashions for mysticism and "magic" have brought them converts and hangers-on; at their fringes are the "satanists" and suchlike, varying from horror-movie obsessives to nasty eccentrics who want excuses for child molestation.

CULTS IN GAMES

In a superhero or "occult investigator heroic" campaign, the satanists could be villains, while some of the pagans could be genuinely following ancient Celtic practices, or could tap real magic of whatever colour. It is suggested in such cases that a cult consist of several "circles", of hangers-on, silly dupes, ignorant believers, devout worshippers, and full initiates — making it all seem like a childish game to outsiders, presenting barriers to investigation, and providing a link between the most ancient and most modern of British beliefs.

A LITTLE LEARNING

"All skools make some sort of show at teaching the pupils things and the headmaster pin up a huge timetable of lessons etc. which make the heart sink..." <sic!>

— Geoffrey Willans, *How to be Topp* <sic!>

The British education system has a number of differences from its US counterpart. In particular, the whole nature of "tertiary" education, and attitudes to it, are different, which ought to be born in mind when dealing with "super-scientists" and suchlike in a British-set scenario. However, let's start young...

SCHOOL DAZE

Education is compulsory in the UK between the ages of 5 and 16; there's also some provision of facilities for younger children. In theory, parents can choose to educate their children themselves, but then they have to meet fairly tough tests of the quality of their teaching. Schools are loosely divided into state-run and "public" (ie fee-paying), with some borderline cases such as church-run schools which receive aid from the state. (These are mostly Roman Catholic or Church of England or Scotland).

About 8.5 million British children are in state education, while half a million attend public schools; many of the latter are "boarders", living away from home, but the trend has long been towards "day" education. There are also about 100,000 pupils in other types of school. Most state schools are mixed-sex; public schools are sometimes mixed nowadays, if only because boys' schools like including academically-successful girls in their "sixth form" (older age-group) classes. The government is currently trying to encourage technically-oriented urban "college" schools, ideally with business sponsorship, with limited success.

FURTHER ON

About 25% of 18-24 year olds in Britain are in "further" education; 4% in University, 6% in "Polytechnics", 15% in various other full or part-time college courses. The post-school education system in the UK breaks down into several categories. First, the Technical Colleges and suchlike are very much "local" establishments, providing practical and part-time courses of all kinds. Then there are about 30 Polytechnics, also providing full-and part-time courses, with some of the latter approaching university standard, but with a more "practical" bent than the universities, and without post-graduate researchers.

Universities are well established in Britain; Oxford and Cambridge go back to the 12th-13th centuries, four Scottish universities date from the 15th-16th, and the rest were founded between the nineteenth century and today, including many in the 1960's. One important difference between UK and US universities is that British students don't (usually) study multiple subjects, because there's no system of course credits; courses are on specific subjects, decided from the start. Actually, it's possible to switch, and "combined courses" covering two or three subjects are quite common, but there's nothing like the variation seen in the US. So there's no "course credit calculating", and maybe less variety and deeper study.

Another key difference is in attitudes to sport. UK colleges like to have successful sports teams, of course, and there's always stories of academics bending rules to get and keep athletes, but (with a few exceptions), college sports aren't major public events in Britain. With the different funding system (see below), the US system of sports scholarships is also unknown.

One unusual UK institution is the "Open University", which has been run for some years now. This is a fully-fledged university, but its students are usually part-timers, with no grants (see below), studying by post and for a couple of weeks a year in "summer schools". This enables people who didn't achieve as much as they might have in their youth to obtain full degrees — usually in four years.

The proportion of university students in the UK is low compared to the US, but note the slightly higher level of school education, and a far lower drop-out rate at universities. After (usually) three years (four in Scotland), a student will have a "BA" or "BSc" degree; the most successful may then go on to achieve PhD's or whatever, while those studying to become (say) medical doctors go on to other specialised study.

Students in full-time tertiary education in recognised subjects are currently entitled to a grant, with some variation in value according to parental wealth (but always covering course fees). Thus the general idea of students "working their way through college" isn't found in the UK, especially given the more intensive courses than in the US. Summer vacation jobs, however, are quite common (as grants aren't very large).

However, this system has become expensive, and has had many complaints against it, so the government is presently trying to introduce a system of student loans, repayable in later life. (Much on the US model.) But the proposed scheme has proved, if anything, even less popular than the grants, and attempts to get banks to finance it have largely failed. With other government cuts forcing universities to make economies and scrabble for funds, and the strong opinions of many UK educationalists, the future of British education is not easily predictable.

END PRODUCTS

The best products of the British educational system — the brightest school leavers, the university graduates and professional scientists — will stand comparison with anyone. Britain's academic history is impressive, and hasn't finished yet. However, the general level of the system is another matter; a far higher proportion of, say, German school leavers have decent mathematics qualifications than their UK counterparts, and there is a real fear that the UK is producing an under-educated mass workforce. Teachers' pay and status is relatively low, and recent spending cuts, especially in theoretical science, are causing many bright researchers to emigrate (the "brain drain").

ON THE SHELF

British public libraries are mostly run by local government. A major exception is the British Library, attached to the British Museum in London and previously in the same building. As a copyright library, receiving one of everything published in the UK, it's a major research establishment; it also co-ordinates book exchanges with other public libraries. Local libraries vary in size and quality, but can be good; those doing research may find them useful if they aren't in too much hurry. Manchester is particularly noteworthy, having the oldest free public library in Europe and some old, rare books in its collections. University libraries are less open, but very comprehensive; Cambridge and Oxford have copyright libraries with vast, priceless collections.

IN GLASS CASES...

There are about 2,000 museums and public art galleries (with permanent displays) in the UK in total, ranging from the massive complexes of London to small-town exhibitions and "folk museums" showing what ordinary life was like in past centuries. They are traditionally classed as education, although some go in for displays that critics regard as pure entertainment; they reply that they have to attract people to educate them, and tighter budgets have obliged them to try and attract more people. Actually, many have long had free admittance, but some have now had to introduce more or less voluntary charges, and others may prove their worth for subsidies by quoting visitor numbers.

Such subsidies have mostly come from the government; rich philanthropists giving to museums have been known in Britain, but not on the US scale. That said, the basis for many of Britain's great collections was often early private accumulations; this is true of the British Museum and the National Gallery. Other great names include the Tower of London (armouries and the crown jewels); the Tate Gallery (based near the Thames in Westminster, with a new "branch" in Liverpool's old docklands) for modern art; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, various specialist collections (most but not all in London), and many cities' museums and galleries round the country.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

"I go to the theatre to be entertained...I don't want to see plays about rape, sodomy and drug addiction...I can get all that at home."

— Peter Cook

Entertainment in Britain is, of course, not just fun, but also a business. However, the British approach to it is a little less businesslike, spectacular, or unthinking than some cultures'. That's a *little* less; Britons are just as capable as other nations of slumping in front of glossy soap operas.

A country's media has a big influence on the way others see it. Hollywood movies provide a common image of the USA, not just for their content, but also for their style, their opulence, glamour, and violence; Britain "sells" less celluloid to the rest of the world, but attracts tourists with its traditional theatres, and advertises its sense of truth and even-handedness through a very successful, even-handed world-wide radio service.

Partly because of this, a fairly substantial system of government support for the arts has developed over the years. In 1946, the then government set up the Arts Council, which administers most of this funding through grants. As a healthy theatre is good for the tourist trade, this could be justified on practical as well as moral grounds. However, the present government prefers to cut state spending in most things, and the Arts Council hasn't escaped, making hard times for many in the arts. One solution has been to encourage commercial sponsorship; this is now quite common in some areas, but isn't so much help for more avant-garde artists, or "classic" plays which sponsors don't happen to appreciate, and there have been cases of, for example, sponsors guests' behaving badly in the theatre.

Still, the British arts are alive and kicking. Many UK towns host annual arts festivals of one kind or another, the largest taking place in Edinburgh in summer — and that's the largest in the world.

THE WORD

As elsewhere, publishing in Britain is squeezed by "easier" media — TV, films, music radio. Now, it also has to worry about Muslim fundamentalists fire-bombing book-shops as a form of literary criticism. However, it's far from dead yet, and may be healthier than in the USA, if only because, as in other trends, Britain lags behind the USA.

The extensive public library service has no charges to book borrowers. Books can be bought in newsagents in any town centre, but "pure" book-shops' profit margins may not cover ground rents in some places. Of course, university towns have more bookshops; the best-known address of all, for new and antiquarian books, is Charing Cross Road, in central London, which, despite losing many of its old shops over the years, still has plenty.

TREADING THE BOARDS

Theatre in Britain has a long tradition; Shakespeare was working in an established business, and even Puritan prohibitions in later centuries couldn't kill it. Today there are about 300 professional theatres in Britain, a hundred of them in London, ranging from the prestigious National and Royal Shakespeare companies, through the West End showplaces, to tiny experimental companies, producing strange new dramas in rooms over pubs. The number of amateur productions is uncountable.

That said, only larger towns have professional theatres, and "strange" — or merely intellectual — productions are rare, with straightforward comedies and West-End hits the greater part of the market. Nor does British theatre have Broadway's spectaculars; while British musicals have had their international triumphs, only the big names can risk big, flashy productions. Becoming a "big show star" is an American dream more than a British one.

There are a number of loose categories in UK professional theatre. The "fringe" consists of small, experimental, often political or "strange" productions, in small venues in large towns or touring to festivals. The provincial theatre consists of mostly conventional plays, with companies touring or based in fair-sized towns. The West End in London is the traditional heartland of large, commercial productions of all sorts — the UK counterpart to Broadway. However, some West End productions may be the work of the Major Companies, most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and the newer National Theatre (NT). The RSC, despite its name, doesn't limit itself to Shakespeare, and divides its main operations between a theatre in the concrete maze of the Barbican, London, and others in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace in Warwickshire. The NT is based in its own building in the South Bank complex, London, another modern design. There are also many schools of drama, most famously RADA — the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

The Cabaret and Comedy scene in Britain isn't what it was in the days of the Music Halls (what Americans would call "vaudeville" or "burlesque"), but there's still a market, from entertainment at expensive dinners, through old-fashioned working-men's clubs (especially in the North of England), to cellar clubs in big cities, and up to the most successful entertainers with television contracts. The scene divides into "traditional" and "alternative" entertainers, the traditionalists being much like they have been for decades (maintaining old traditions at best, pandering to prejudices at worst), the alternatives, politically left-of-centre, seeking to convey a fresher approach, sometimes hitting the mark and sometimes not. At the vulgar end of the market, British sniggering about sex produces a market for camp or simply crude performers that the "alternatives" especially despise (or parody).

SOUND EFFECTS

Music in the UK is diverse and successful. Although the country hasn't produced many first-rank Classical composers, the tradition is strong, with orchestras in many large towns; the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is especially well-regarded. London, of course, has the London Symphony Orchestra (based in the Barbican), the Royal Philharmonic, and two others of world class, and several major music colleges. Opera venues include Covent Garden, London, and — during an annual festival — Glyndebourne, in the Sussex countryside, where rich opera fans, culture snobs and exhibitionists turn up in evening dress and picnic on champagne in the intervals of the (world-class) performances. On a less exalted plane, there are various traditions of musical performance, such as the North of England's fondness for brass bands, and the Welsh male voice choirs — Wales is, by stereotype, a very musical place.

In the area of Folk Music, British traditions are again quite healthy, although much material survives because of dedicated preservationists rather than unbroken tradition. Small Folk Clubs, based in pubs, are a large minority interest, as are specialist tastes such as Scottish bagpipes. A fashion for "World" Music is actually largely separate, shading into the rock/pop area and looking more to Africa than local sources.

A parallel minority interest is Jazz. Although this was an American import, British jazz musicians are competent, and everything from traditional bands through swing orchestras to modern experimentalists can be found.

British Rock/Pop music isn't quite so internationally successful as it was in the '60's, when the British re-exported rock and roll to the USA, but it's still healthy, with British and foreign groups together in the charts. The originality of the best UK pop has been explained by the "Welfare State"; young musicians could survive while working on nothing but their music — in which case, recent political trends may have a negative effect on the native business. An increasing cynicism is a feature of the present scene, with "manufactured" music dominating the charts. That said, British companies have never followed the American idea of scrupulously compartmentalising the market (into "AOR", "black music", etc), which may leave space for cross-fertilisation yet.

PICTURE THIS

The old-style visual arts — painting, sculpture, etc — are much the same in Britain as anywhere, ranging from the classical to the modern, traditional to experimental, populist to academic. As a centre of the world art market, not quite on a par with New York, London has many galleries, exhibitions, and auction-houses (including some "great names" such as Sotheby's).

THE BIG SCREEN

Cinema in Britain is periodically said to be undergoing explosive growth, but it couldn't ever be as big as Hollywood. The '50's attempt to establish a feature film production industry, based at Pinewood studios, died a slow death, but British technicians and specialists have long enjoyed a high international reputation. However, it's no longer regarded as quite so necessary to shoot a big movie's spectacular scenes in the UK (or as tax-efficient). Equally, British actors have often done well internationally, if only for their "exotic" accents; American producers have an irritating habit of casting them as villains against American-speaking heroes. Meanwhile, less ambitious UK productions (including costume dramas, Scottish-based comedies, and "art movies") often receive critical acclaim, and sometimes make international profits. Finance from Channel 4 (see below) helps many such productions, which are produced by small, enterprising companies without permanent studio bases.

As elsewhere, the great days of the movie theatre in the UK are passed, but there are still 700 cinemas, including a number of big multi-screen complexes, with a cinema in most substantial towns, and dozens in London (especially the West End). "Big" American films usually arrive in London a few months after the US. The "provincial" cinemas mostly limit themselves to big-name "guaranteed successes", but there are some surprise hits, and also "art-house" cinemas in larger towns. Despite the success of home video, audiences are rising; video rental shops, meanwhile, are passed their commercial peak of a few years ago, but still going — there's at least one in most towns and even villages. Films for public showing in the UK are "certified" either "U" (for general showing), "PG" (for "parental guidance", sometimes with a suggested lower age limit added), "12" or "15" (for lowest ages permitted in the cinema), or "R" (Restricted to age 18+ only).

BROADCAST

British radio and TV are modest as compared to American, at least in quantity, but many would say that their quality is the highest in the world. Others disagree, claiming that UK broadcasting is elitist and snobbish, or mostly mediocre with patches of talent, but if nothing else, a certain amount of snobbery helps sell costume dramas.

The BBC (British Broadcasting Company, originally Corporation) was set up to run the whole thing in the early, uncertain days of radio. It is mostly funded by sales of television licenses, which are compulsory for anyone who owns a television receiver (costing £21 for black-and-white, £62.50 for colour). Ideas have been suggested for changing this, but anything involving advertising is widely opposed, and a scheme for commercial sponsorship has been rejected; despite the current government's attitudes, BBC independence is widely valued.

Radio was long purely in the hands of the BBC, which continues to run the four national channels (Radio One for pop music, Two for "easy listening", Three for classical, Four for news, drama and other "talk"), plus 32 local stations and the BBC World Service. However, there are now also many Independent Local Radio stations (and many "pirates", based abroad or dodging official detectors), and local, "community" radio is being encouraged. The BBC World Service, part-funded by the Foreign Office, broadcasts world-wide in English and thirty-six other languages, and is very well-regarded for its impartial news reporting — to the extent of having annoyed the CIA and a few Britons by not hiding uncomfortable truths. It also monitors radio broadcasting from everywhere in the world, providing up-to-date information on what is being said to British news services and governments.

There are four main TV channels; two BBC (with no advertising), and two "Independent" (with commercial breaks). All of them achieve almost-complete national coverage — 99% of the population could receive a full TV service at home if they wished (and most do). The oldest channel (since 1936) is BBC 1, with a general mix of programs, including some regional variations; BBC 2, a '60's creation, transmits a more "highbrow" range of intellectual and minority-interest material. ITV (Independent Television, founded 1955) consists of week-day and weekend stations in London, thirteen other regional companies, and a national breakfast-time station. These stations show similar patterns of programs, many of which they buy from each other, but have local variations, especially late at night. Finally, the IBA owns Channel 4 (started 1982), which, despite its advertising, is required to produce minority-interest and specialist programs, and does quite well at this despite the obvious problems (and a peculiar fondness for snooker).

It might be guessed that the BBC, not having to please advertisers, would be less populist than the ITV channels, and maybe this used to be so. However, the franchise system requires an ITV company to demonstrate a minimum level of quality, while the BBC is embarrassed if it is accused of intellectual snobbery, let alone if it doesn't attract audiences, so the difference isn't always marked.

Satellite and cable TV is still in its infancy in the UK, and may not develop much more for some time yet. There is one active satellite company so far, Sky, and another is planned, but not many people seem willing to buy a receiver dish, and the whole subject has become something of a joke. Cable is mostly limited to distributing satellite and other programs to small residential developments. The future for both looks quite uncertain.

YOU BET!

Gambling isn't an art, but it is a form of entertainment; in the UK, it's also highly regulated. As a result, although it has its shady end, it's not heavily infiltrated by organised crime. There's no national lottery, although people can buy "premium bonds", which hold a fixed value and pay out random prizes every month. Apart from small-value fruit machines, the two big (legal) forms of gambling are on races and the "Football Pools".

Race betting takes place both at the races and in small "bookies", which can be found in most medium-sized towns. All operators have to be licensed, and pay special taxes and fees to the racing administrators. Detailed rules were designed to deter people from habitual gambling, even (until recently) limiting the quality of furniture in the shops. The horse-racing courses cater to customers ranging from millionaire owners to manual workers on their days out; the city-based dog-tracks are usually seen as more run-down and less prestigious, despite some fashionable popularity amongst flash yuppies.

The "Pools" are a peculiar institution, based on the weekly soccer scores (the Australian scores outside the UK football season). Prizes are usually modest, with the occasional big pay-out; the pools are largely but not solely a working-class interest, and the great British symbol of windfall wealth.

"Casino" gambling is very restricted in the UK, with only a very few clubs holding licenses. Illegal operations are, of course, interesting to professional criminals, and shady clubs of all sorts have seen violence over the years.

BESIDE THE SEA-SIDE

The British Seaside was created by one great transport development, and has been gravely wounded by another. Nonetheless, it is deeply embedded in the national phyche.

As early as 1750, the upper classes had developed odd fashions for sea-bathing for health. However, in the nineteenth century, the growing railway system made more people aware of the proximity of the sea-side. This applied to almost everyone; no point in the entire UK is more than 72 miles from the coast. Pleasant beaches may be a little further — but an early train could always get you there in a day, for a price that an ordinary working man could afford. And so, as substantial holidays became a part of working life, sea-side resorts grew to meet demand.

The archetypal British sea-side town set out to cater for a large-volume, low-cost market. Visitors would stay in cheap "bed and breakfast" boarding houses, and would spend their time on the beach, in fairgrounds, on fairground-style piers, or whatever, eating "seaside rock" (a hard "sugar candy") and fish-and-chips; later additions such as amusement arcades were really just more of the same. The atmosphere would probably have been quite familiar to an American who knew Coney Island or Atlantic City (before the casinos moved in). More genteel resorts would have had less gaudy entertainment, and more bandstands with brass bands, formal gardens and quiet hotels.

However, since the 1950s, things have changed. Cheap package tours, first by coach and ship, today by airliner, have put Spain and (more recently) Greece in the reach of the ordinary holiday-maker, and the British holdiaymaker now heads for foreign parts. On the one hand, Britons have been accused of vulgarising and ruining half the Mediterranean sea-coast — Britons abroad don't always behave very well, especially when young and hell-bent on enjoying themselves alcoholically — and on the other, the income of the traditional UK sea-side resorts has been severely reduced.

However, they haven't all gone bankrupt. Some poor or old-fashioned, or non-sun-worshipping people still use them, and other may go for short trips; the big resorts such as Blackpool have funfair facilities hard to match in Europe. The elderly may still choose to retire to Brighton or Eastbourne, and many of the biggest towns have gone after the conference trade. After all, they have hotels, halls, theatres and amusements, and they aren't as expensive as London. The two largest political parties alternatively use Blackpool and Brighton for their annual conferences, and Brighton has hosted two science fiction Worldcons.

The "sea-side" is more an English (and Welsh) than a Scottish phenomenon; Scotland has a cooler climate, few sandy beaches, and perhaps more of a Calvinist mentality. Noted English sea-side resorts include Brighton, in Sussex, the original Regency-era resort, a mixture of gentility and popular entertainment, fairly convenient for London; nearby Eastbourne, the epitome of genteel peace for wealthy retired people; Southend, on the mouth of the Thames, the London working-man's traditional day out; Scarborough, on the Yorkshire coast; and Blackpool, Lancashire, the sea-side town for countless northern workers, with hundreds of boarding houses, miles of coloured lights set up every year, acres of fairground, a tall iron-frame tower, and enough variety in its business to support some hotels that are luxurious by any standards, in an old-fashioned sort of way.

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY...

Traditionally, the British diet consists of substantial, rather plain meals, best when made from good ingredients. (Strangely enough, many Britons would say much the same about American food.) Although no longer universal, this approach isn't dead.

The reason? The British Isles are temperate, with fertile soil, and Britain has long been prosperous. British cooks have never had to make limited ingredients look good, or to economise on fuel — unlike, say, the Chinese, or more southerly Europeans. Spices were imported in the Middle Ages to make long-stored meat palatable, but they were expensive and couldn't be grown locally, so heavy spicing was rare, and became less popular as food storage improved. On the other hand, the country never had the vast wealth of food production of the modern USA, so the tradition of preparing simple ingredients lavishly didn't develop to the same extent. Meanwhile, taste in drinks was following a similarly straightforward path.

GRUB'S UP...

"On the Continent people have good food; in England people have good table manners."

— George Mikes, *How to be an Alien*

Inevitably, British cookery is linked to social class. From the end of the eighteenth century, the upper classes developed a fondness for more interesting cookery than the country produced, so ideas and chefs were brought in from France. As a result, the British tend to this day to think of expensive, high-quality restaurant cookery as automatically French, and a British food snob may expect a good non-ethnic restaurant to have a menu in French — possibly with translations. The rising middle classes tried to emulate this, but the poor working man couldn't afford to; furthermore, not being able to afford to travel, the working classes had very little contact with foreign food, and what they saw seemed "fussy" or "greasy" or "mean". In recent years, however, the increase in foreign holidays, cheap Indian and Chinese restaurants, and popular cook-books and sales campaigns by supermarkets, have begun to reduce culinary insularity.

Cheap restaurants are the most interesting part. From the nineteenth century on, Britons who had travelled to India began to bring back a fondness for Indian cookery. With waves of immigration from the area in the '50's and '60's, Britain gained a lot of Indians who discovered that there was a market for their cookery. Similarly, many of Britain's smaller Chinese community found places in the restaurant business.

The result is a vast number of restaurants and "take-aways" (selling food to "take out" only) — at least one of each in practically every town. The quality of the food ranges from the abysmal to the excellent, much of the latter coming from specialist regional or vegetarian restaurants; prices similarly range from the cheap to the most expensive specialist places in major cities. Cheap Indian take-aways have become the traditional favoured food of the youngish, slobbish British male after a night's drinking, doing little justice to the cooks' skill; in consequence, the average Briton may be more acclimatised to highly-spiced food than most Americans. To some extent, a tolerance of "hot" food has joined heavy drinking as a macho posture. Inspired by the popular success of Indian and Chinese food, other ethnic restaurants have begun to spring up in the UK over the years. Italian places have been moderately popular since the '50's; the Greeks and Cypriots got in fairly early with "kebab houses"; now, small numbers of many nationalities are to be found in larger towns — Mexican and Thai are fashionable. However, ethnic food has met competition from both traditional British "cheap meals out" and Americanised invaders.

The greatest traditional British take-away is Fish and Chips. This means fish (usually cod or haddock) fried in batter, and chips — what Americans call "french fries" (but plumper than the usual American version). This combination can seem greasy, but it's also tasty and filling; deep-frying is also applied to sausages and other foods, especially in Scotland (which has a very high rate of heart disease). More expensive "traditional" meals out tend to blandness; the most common choice is prawn cocktail (American: shrimps and mayonnaise on lettuce), grilled steak and chips, and "Black Forest" gateau.

This makes it hardly surprising that American-style hamburgers, pizzas, and suchlike have caught on in Britain. The invasion started in the '60's, but has accelerated lately; McDonalds and Pizza Hut are well-established, although it's said that their British branches are inferior to the American version. The burger chains are disdained by some Britons as selling bland stodge, but sell it they do — in quantity.

For lighter eating out, Britons use cafes, tea-rooms, or pubs. Further up-market are wine bars (yuppie haunts), the superior ethnic restaurants — and then the highest-grade (usually French) places, some of them attached to the plushest hotels. Standards vary, but top British restaurants are rated above their American counterparts, perhaps because food snobbery is associated with wealth in Britain.

At home, Britons are less adventurous than when eating out; stodge predominates. The old joke that "to eat well in England, you should eat breakfast three times a day"; refers to the traditional fondness for substantial breakfasts of cereals, fried eggs, bacon and sausages, toast (with marmalade), tea, and (sometimes) other cooked specialities, which are still found in most hotels and some houses. However, many Britons now resent the extra time required for a full breakfast, and will make do with tea or coffee and maybe cereal. The other old comment on British cookery is that the puddings are the best part; these sauce-soaked steamed creations are an acquired taste, but a widespread one. British cooks (mostly female — the British male lacks his French counterpart's interest in the task) are very adept at the making of cakes (sponge or fruit-filled — the traditional British wedding cake is a multi-tier, very solid, rich fruit cake) and at such traditional dishes as roast beef with Yorkshire Pudding (a baked batter pudding).

There are also a few genuine regional variations, such as the Scottish emphasis on oatmeal and other local ingredients from an agriculturally poorer region; Scots are particularly proud of the haggis (a meat-and-oatmeal stuffed sheep's stomach). Anyway, in recent years, cookbooks detailing exotic foreign recipes have sold well, and supermarkets have expanded their markets by publicising unusual ingredients, so the range and variety of British home food is increasing. In parallel, "convenience" foods and TV dinners have become more varied.

The question of quantity is another way in which British and American approaches to food vary. Britons traditionally enjoy hearty meals, but the idea is to finish the food presented; visiting the USA, they tend to be surprised by the sheer size of the meals served, either leaving some food (and feeling embarrassed) or feeling over-fed (and cynical about American waist-lines). The fact is that Britain isn't quite as wealthy a country as America, and food is slightly dearer; although Britons can very definitely afford to eat heavily (unless they are exceptionally poor — and poverty that extreme is probably more common in the US than the UK), Americans feel more able to over-spend on food.

A linguistic point; all Britons call the morning meal "breakfast". However, a southerner will call the mid-day meal "lunch" ("luncheon" is pretentious), and the evening meal "dinner" — or "supper" if it's late and light — while a Northerner will follow the older pattern of eating "dinner" at mid-day, and "tea" in the evening.

Two points about food preservation; Britons rarely try home-canning, so Botulism poisoning is very rare, while food irradiation is currently (controversially) in the process of becoming legal.

DOWN THE HATCH...

"The pubs know a lot, almost as much as the churches. They've got a tradition."

— Joyce Cary, *The Horse's Mouth*

The British attitude to drinking is similar to that of most Americans — but different from that of, say, the French. Some religions (Methodism, Islam) frown on alcohol, but otherwise it's a part of British social life; however, it tends to be limited to meal times and evenings, and most Britons dislike drunken drivers.

The great morning and afternoon drink of modern Britain is tea. This is better quality, and better made, than in the USA, and is drunk by all social classes and most age groups. However, a British labourer will drink strong tea in large quantities from large mugs, while the refined aristocrat will prefer a delicate brew from an elegant china cup. "Afternoon tea" is a light snack involving sandwiches and cakes, along with (usually!) the drink; although the quantity and quality of the ingredients might vary, most Britons eat such occasionally. Coffee is a popular rival drink, especially for people who need the caffeine, but is in second place. Soft fizzy drinks, including some American brands, are widespread, but are only really popular in hot weather and amongst children. Milk in Britain (occasionally drunk on its own, but used more for cooking and in tea and coffee) is usually good quality; in towns, it is delivered to people's doorsteps in the morning by milkmen using electrically-driven "milk-floats". British milk products are good, the cheese far more flavoursome than in America, but Britons don't have the French regard for cheese as gourmet food.

"Drink" in Britain traditionally means beer, and British beer is a darker, less fizzy drink than in the USA (or Germany), drunk at just below room temperature; the standard form is "bitter", a hop-flavoured ale, around 5% alcohol by volume (which Americans may find undrinkable or fascinating); drinks like this would once have all been brewed by small local breweries. However, mergers and takeovers have reduced the number of breweries, and the big brewers have found large profits in selling lighter, chilled lager beers; fashion and publicity campaigns have made such, often with German (or Australian, or American, or Czech) names, very widespread.

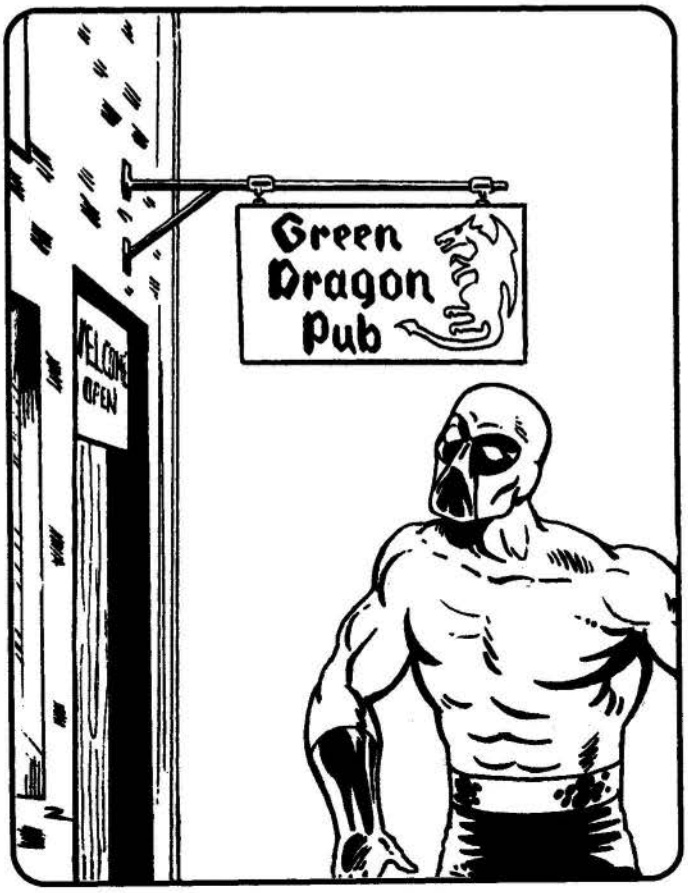
This in turn has led to pressure-group campaigns for "Real Ale" and also the resurgence of very small "Real Ale" breweries with enthusiastic managers. Meanwhile, other traditions have survived; the Irish community especially retains a fondness for "stout", a very dark brew (Guinness is the archetype, and has made the Guinness family rich), while in Scotland, bitter-type brews are termed "heavy" (as in "a pint o' heavie, Jimmie"); in the south-west of England, "proper" cider remains popular. The south-west is apple-growing country, and the cider is a very traditional drink; in its ultimate form of Somerset-brewed "scrumpy", it's legendarily potent, stronger than most beers, a great joke on unwary visitors. Spirits are mostly a minority taste, drunk as mixers — except for whisky.

Scotland is one of the great whisky-making regions of the world. (As is Ireland; the Irish spell it "whiskey".) The reasons involve tradition, and the quality of Highland water, which is "soft", without dissolved limestone. (Most British water is "hard", and hence chemically less acidic and more prone to "furring up" kettles and hot water pipes.) Although much Scotch production is routine "blended" stuff, the best "single malts" are expensive and highly regarded; one way to antagonise a Scotsman is to insult the drink. (Mixing a single malt with anything — except a little spring water — is the height of rudeness.)

All of these drinks, including spirits and suchlike, are much drunk in British pubs ("public houses"). These are comparable to bars in America or anywhere else, but they are also a peculiarly British phenomenon, and crucial to any view of British society. They range from shady urban drinking dens to idyllic half-timbered rural inns, and from concrete monstrosities decorated with gimmicks to unpretentious old bars selling carefully-kept fine beers, but they are used, more or less frequently, by British drinkers of all social classes. Many Britons regard one neighbourhood pub as their "local", and treat it with some loyalty. These used to be predominantly male haunts, but social developments have changed that. Any place selling alcohol has to be licensed by local authorities, and a license to sell for consumption on the premises is different to one for "out-sales" only; until recently, a law (dating back to World War I) restricted pubs' opening hours to lunchtimes and evenings, but this has been much relaxed lately.

Most pubs are owned by brewing companies, although the best are independent "free houses"; this situation has led the big brewers into conflicts with the UK monopoly laws, which they have so far won (by claiming that their support prevents the closure of many pubs). Some pubs concentrate on selling a small range of drinks; others may serve food of varying quality, or even have restaurants or small hotels attached. (A good hotel bar will function as a pub, although prices will be higher.) Rural pubs sell the most food; urban pubs concentrate on drink alone. Any character trying to use Streetwise skill in the UK, or just to get to know a neighbourhood, will have to visit one or more pubs. A tradition applies to pub names; they tend to be "abstract" (the "King's Head", the "Oxford Arms", the "Yorkshire Grey"), and to have an appropriate pictorial sign hanging outside.

The observant may note that wine hasn't been mentioned much. Some would say that wine isn't a British drink, but in fact, England produced the stuff in some quantity in the early Middle Ages, until the English throne gained possession of wine-producing areas of France, and climatic shifts finished what economics had begun. Once the French territories were lost, the British lost the habit of wine, although it's probably no harder to produce in the UK than in Germany. The taste survived, in various forms, as an upper-class habit, and wine is still seen as an expensive accompaniment to food, but higher incomes and shifting fashions have increased sales considerably in recent years. One feature of this has been the increasing number of wine-bars, selling more expensive drinks and perhaps more and better (or at least flashier) food in plusher conditions than comparable pubs (whose wine is often poor); another has been the small resurgence of the British wine-growing industry.



FOLK CUSTOMS

There are very many local folk customs in Britain. Some can be dated to the 16th Century, but few can be proven to be truly ancient. The Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, in early September, which includes dancing with reindeer antlers, dates from about 1000 AD; the oldest custom known. Many folk cermonies have declined in recent years, but others have been revived by local enthusiasts.

Morris dancing is one of the traditional practices which is still widespread. Men (there are few women's teams, and even fewer mixed ones; "purists" express horror at the idea) dressed in white, with bells around their knees, and carrying wooden batons, dance at village fairs.

THE TRADITIONAL YEAR

25 December - 6 January: Wassailing
This once widespread custom is now rare. It consisted of taking a communal "wassail bowl" from house to house, drinking the health of the inhabitants, and being toasted in return, and reciting traditional rhymes.

Late January: Up-Helly-Aa
Local men in Lerwick, Shetland, wear mock-Viking garb, and burn a "Viking" ship. It is a recent addition to an older bonfire festival.

25 January: Burns Night
The date when Scots celebrate their greatest poet. There is a meal of traditional Scottish food. Ideally, the haggis should be paraded around the table accompanied by a bagpiper. The meal ends with whisky toasts, speeches, and readings of Burns' poetry.

14 February: St Valentine's Day
The date for the exchange of romantic, humorous or insulting cards. Cards should not be signed.

Tuesday before Lent: Shrove Tuesday
Pancakes (akin to French crepes) are consumed. Pancake races, (people racing carrying a frying pan and pancake) are fairly common. The idea is to avoid dropping the pancake.

Lent
Even non-practicing Christians feel that they ought to give up some luxury such as sweets.

Fourth Sunday in Lent: Mother's Day
Most people buy a card or flowers for their mother. Simnel Cake, a traditional cake, is still eaten. Attempts by card manufacturers and florists to honour other relatives have not been so successful.

Easter Sunday
Easter eggs, boiled and decorated hens eggs, or the more popular chocolate type, are eaten. The custom of rolling eggs is in decline.

April 1: April Fool's Day
A time for practical joking. Newspapers often carry elaborate hoaxes.

SCENARIO: YANKS!

GMs willing to run a light-hearted scenario as a way of getting PCs to the UK could try the following. In the US, the heroes encounter some supervillain or group engaging in daylight robbery, and the fight is carried into a brewing plant. (Possibly the villain was robbing the payroll; perhaps things just happened to start outside. Either way, the GM should have no trouble maneuvering the fight into the building.) The PCs should win eventually, but not until the factory has been trashed, at which point they are confronted by a hair-tearing factory owner who declares that he's ruined, his insurance won't cover this, there's penalty clauses in his big contract, and so on. The GM should work at getting the PCs sympathetic towards the man, and willing to do him some small favour in recompense.

At this point, the manager says that his big new contract is to start selling his best brew to the UK — "seems the Limey's are gonna love it" — and if the PCs went over to put in an appearance at the big opening, as "symbols of America", that'd be great. (This hook should work better on jovial super-patriotic types than on grim crime-busters, but if the PCs don't have too many secret ID problems, then the offer of a cheap foreign holiday in exchange for a few public appearances should be quite a temptation.) How the PCs get to the UK and how they get through customs are left to the players and GM.

Once in Britain, the PCs discover that things aren't entirely cosy. The US brewer is in partnership with a dubious British conglomerate whose latest money-spinning master-stroke is buying up pubs in newly-gentrified areas of London, re-furbishing them as "theme wine bars", and trebling prices. The latest "local" to be subject to this assault (once the "Rose and Crown", now renamed "Yanks!") used to be not only an honest working-class haunt, but also a highly-regarded "real-ale" outlet, and the methods used to unseat the old landlord-owner included threats, sabotage of his stock, and bricks through his windows late at night.

The whole business has become a popular cause, and if the PCs are regarded as a symbol of anything American, it's cultural and financial arrogance. The bar, decorated with stars and stripes and plastic cowboy gear and selling thin cardboard burgers, should embarrass the PCs. The conglomerate, hoping to improve their public status, have secretly arranged for a bunch of very dim thugs to go on the rampage in the neighbourhood just as the PCs first arrive. (The thugs have to be stupid; why else would they agree to the job when a bunch of US superheroes are known to be visiting the area? Also, it enables their employers to set up a very obscure link which the PCs would be hard-pressed to trace.) When the PCs act to stop this, anyone assigned by the UK government to watch them (probably STOP or New Knights members) will doubtless intervene, on the grounds that this is a British problem, and foreign vigilantes may fail to respect British concerns. (Such intervention won't be stupid — if a PC is calmly restraining a thug, he'll be thanked, not attacked — but it may be a nuisance.) If the PCs have an "international" Hunted, such as VIPER, the local cell will also take an interest, in the hopes of proving themselves better than their American colleagues (and maybe using different tactics than the US branch).

Meanwhile, as the conglomerate's employees are no more honest than its managers, there will be any number of petty frauds and scams going on, as the PCs may notice. Cleaning these up, pacifying outraged demonstrators, and hopefully eventually restoring the original owner to a refurbished pub and negotiating a fairer import deal for the US brewery with a more honest UK business, should really eat into the PCs' holiday.

May Day

The traditional date for all sorts of festivities, especially May Fairs. Maypoles are still decorated in some parts, a custom that probably dates back to medieval times. Most May celebrations are more recent.

June in Leap Years: The Dunmow Flitch

A side of bacon, awarded to the couple in the village of Great Dunmow, Essex, who prove that for a year and a day they have not regretted marrying. The ceremony dates to medieval times, but died out and was revived in the 19th Century. The "Flitch Trial" is a mock court, with judge, counsels for claimants and bacon, witnesses, and a jury. One couple wins the flitch, while others share a second.

Three Days Before Ascension Day: Beating the Bounds

This used to be an important English custom, to teach the parish boundaries to children. In a few places, the parish boundary is still walked by the parishoners, and traditional boundary markers beaten.

June to August: Common Ridings

In Scotland, especially the Borders, this is the equivalent of beating the bounds. The boundaries are the common grazing and peat diggings surrounding Scottish burghs. The Common Riding of Selkirk includes a commemoration of the Battle of Flodden Field.

Midsummer: Bonfires

This has been revived in recent years in Cornwall. These are accompanied by "druidic" rituals; the Ancient Order of Druids (founded 1781) holds a ceremony at midsummer sunrise at non-druidic Stonehenge.

Third Week in July: Swan Upping

The monarch owns all the free swans in Britain. The exceptions are those owned since the 15th Century by two of the London Guilds — the Vintners and the Dyers. Each year, six boats are rowed along the Thames from Surrey to Berkshire, capturing swans, and marking the cygnets according to the ownership of their parents (the monarch's swans are unmarked). The rowers of the queen's boats are liveried in red; the Vintners' in green, and the Dyers in blue.

September or October: Harvest Festival

Invented in the 19th Century as a more moral version of the Harvest Supper given by the farmer to his workers. The church is decorated with fruit, vegetables and bread baked in the shape of an old-fashioned sheaf of corn, for a special service. The tradition is strongest in rural parishes.

31 October: Halloween

Children (and adults) have parties on the theme of witchcraft and ghosts, play bobbing for apples and other traditional games. In Scotland children dress up and go guising: performing a song or joke for treats (usually money, these days).

In recent years some children have tried to adopt "Trick or Treat", but they don't know the rules: they don't dress up, and are usually unaware that they are supposed to trick anyone who refuses them a treat.

4 November: Mischief Night

In Yorkshire and Lancashire, children pull tricks of the "knocking on a door and running away" type — simple, and designed to annoy adults.

5 November: Guy Fawkes'

A celebration of an attempt in the 17th Century to assassinate King and Parliament. Traditionally, families have bonfires and fireworks in the garden, along with foods such as parkin (a type of cake) and treacle toffee. In the weeks before, fireworks are on sale in newsagents', the only time in the year when they are available. On the bonfire goes a full-sized mannikin, made of old clothes stuffed with newspapers, which represents the famous conspirator. Children often trundle their mannikin around the area beforehand, begging for "A penny for the Guy" (sometimes there is no Guy to be seen; and they expect to get more than a penny!) In recent years there has been a trend towards municipal fireworks displays, which are both safer and cheaper.

Up to 24 December: Carol Singing

Groups of children go from house to house singing carols, expecting money in return. Larger groups of adults sometimes sing carols for charity.

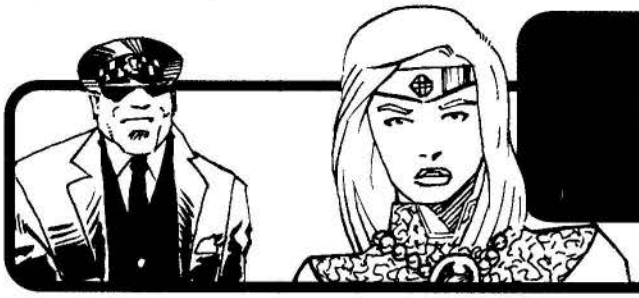
25 December: Christmas

Christmas in the UK is as important as Thanksgiving in the US. Cards and gifts are exchanged. Trees and decorations including holly and mistletoe (for kissing under) are tradtional from Christmas Eve to 12th Night (6 January), but are often seen from early December. Many people make an annual church visit at Christmas. There are parties on Christmas Eve, few on Christmas Night; people spend most of Christmas with relatives.

Santa brings children Christmas stockings (or, more likely, pillowcases) to annoy their parents with early on Christmas morning. Traditional foods for overeating at lunch include turkey and Christmas pudding (a large, roundish, heavy concoction of suet and fruit, sometimes presented with flaming brandy, and eaten with cream). Other traditional foods include Christmas cake and mince pies. After lunch, the children squabble, while the adults slump in front of the TV for the Queen's Speech. The traditional Yule Log, lighted on Christmas eve, is followed only by the most traditional families with access to suitable logs and large fireplaces. Ghost stories are popular on Christmas Eve and night.

New Year's Eve

A time for parites; the New Year is greeted with cheers, kissing, and singing "Auld Lang Syne" (usually badly). New Year Resolutions are popular and usually broken by January 2. In Scotland, New Year (Homanay) is a more important festival than Christmas. "First Footing", brings luck to the house for the rest of the year. The ideal "first foot" is a man, preferably dark-haired, tall, handsome and generous. He brings whisky, and in some areas coal and a loaf.



SOCIAL INSTITUTION

CALLED TO THE COLOURS

"I don't know what they do to the enemy, but by God, they frighten me."

— Attrib. to the Duke of Wellington

Since 1960, there has been no conscription in Britain. Every member of the British military is a volunteer. The idea of enlistment is distasteful to many Britons — the military are proud of being a dedicated, professional force, and civilians do not wish to be forced to risk their lives in combat. Both would probably agree that the British military is the finest in the world. The officers and men of the British armed forces are all servants of the Queen. In theory, the Prime Minister must request the Queen to order the armed forces to do anything.

Members of the armed forces are not allowed to get involved in politics. They follow the orders of the Queen and through her, of her elected government. Members of the communist party, and other extremist organisations, are not permitted to join the military, There are no trades unions for the armed forces.

The British military believes that machines are only as good as the men using them. Training the men is more important than having the latest gadget. This attitude is reinforced by budgetary considerations; new military technology is expensive, and if it is not properly tested, it may break down in actual use. British equipment tends to be durable and reliable in the field.

Because they rely on high-quality volunteers, the Forces emphasise good public relations and recruitment. Parties of school children may be given a trip at sea in a ship; a Harrier VTOL aircraft may appear at a local fair. Advertisements for officers appear in colour magazines, aimed at people of University level of education. About 90% of officers are recruited directly; the rest are promoted from the ranks. There are recruitment centres in most cities.

Members of the British military are not permitted to play with weapons in their spare time, nor do they take their weapons with them when they leave. An off-duty or retired serviceman is unlikely to be armed.

The women's services are support branches only. In war, they work in radio, radar and transport, but otherwise do secretarial duties. The women's services are the Wrens (Womens Royal Naval Services), WAACS (Womens Auxillary Army Corps) and WAAFS (Womens Auxillary Air Force). The Wrens have only recently been allowed to go to sea.

Illegal drugs are rarely a problem, and people using them are dismissed. On the other hand, drunkness off duty is treated leniently. Only when it leads to another crime — such as striking an officer — is firm action taken. Drunkeness on duty is a also a serious offence.

MILITARY DECORATIONS

Officers get crosses; other ranks usually get medals, although the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award, can go to any rank. The Victoria Cross is a modest little bronze cross, simply inscribed "For Valour". The George Cross is the bravery award for civilians (including police); it was awarded to the island of Malta during World War II.

Medals and awards are a recognition of bravery "above and beyond the call of duty". There is no award for being wounded in battle or in line of duty. Medals are sometimes awarded for specific campaigns: everyone who took part in the Falklands Conflict has the Falklands Star.

ALL THE NICE GIRLS LOVE A SAILOR

The Royal Navy (RN) is a senior service, takes precedence over the others at military parades, and so on. It is the fourth largest navy in the world, and also forms part of the British nuclear force.

Unlike the US Navy, alcohol is permitted on RN ships, though it is only consumed in port. The daily issue of rum was abolished some years ago. Naval ships visiting foreign ports very often "show the flag" in the form of cocktail parties for local dignitaries.

Ships are based at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Rosyth (Edinburgh) and Faslane (Glasgow). In the Portsmouth base, HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar, is a tourist attraction, as are Warrior, the first iron-clad ship, and Mary Rose, from the time of Henry VIII. Yellow lines are painted on the ground, to guide visitors, but they are not patrolled.

THE GLOBE AND LAUREL

The Royal Marines are the toughest of the British regular forces. They are trained in mountain, Arctic, jungle and desert warfare, and can operate anywhere in the world. At the end of the 9 month basic training (on which officers and men are mixed), there is a test. The test is continuous; rest periods are counted towards the time. The recruits carry a full kit of 100lbs plus any food or drink they need. They must:

1) March 30 miles over rough terrain in 8 hours (7 for officers). Then,
2) Complete a 1 mile (1.5 for officers) "Tarzan" assault course, of ropes and nets and scambling up 8' walls. Then,
3) Swin 200 yards (300 yards), keeping weapon dry. Still in the water, fire five rounds each hitting the "kill zone" of a man-sized target.

BRITISH MILITARY EQUIPMENT

Ships of the Line

The Royal Navy has various submarines, including some which are nuclear powered. The nuclear missile-armed Polaris class subs are HMS (Her Majesty's Submarine) Renown, Repulse, Revenge and Resolution. These are due to be superceded eventually by Trident-armed craft. Fleet-class "hunter-killers" are nuclear powered, torpedo-armed; the class includes HMS Churchill, Conqueror, Trafalgar, and Valiant.

Less glamorous are the Oberon class; small, cramped, diesel-powered, torpedo-armed, and very similar to WW II craft. These subs carry a mix of modern torpedoes and a cheap old-fashioned design that has so little electronics that it's all but immune to ECM.

Navy surface ships are painted grey (to match the British weather), and show numbers on their sides, but not names (for security reasons). Their names begin "HMS" (for "Her Majesty's Ship"; shore bases are "Her Majesty's Station"). They include three "Through-Deck Cruisers" — actually small aircraft carriers, but budgets didn't officially run to aircraft carriers — HMS Illustrious, Invincible and Ark Royal; these carry Sea Harrier jets, helicopters, and missiles.

The fleet also has fourteen "destroyers" (actually cruisers, see above); general-purpose ships, with missiles, 4.5" guns, and a helicopter. The "frigates" (really destroyers...) are smaller, more specialised, armed for anti-submarine or anti-aircraft work.

The Navy has two assault ships, capable of landing 650 The Navy's aircraft include Sea Harriers (much like RAF Harriers, but armed to defend against air strikes) and helicopters, sometimes with anti-ship missiles (treat as TOWs).

Land Forces

British infantry carry the 7.62mm semi-automatic rifle, listed in *Champions* as the 7.62 N (FN-FAL), being replaced by the newer SA80. Support arms include 7.62mm machine guns (as in the rules), Carl Gustav 84mm anti-tank weapons, LAW80's, and Milan missiles; use the LAW and TOW data from *Champions*. Grenades are also used. Battalion-level support includes mortars, recon specialists with sniping and survival skills (with night vision goggles), and engineers. Special forces (such as SAS) carry more varied, even personal, selections, including HK 54 submachine guns, and concussion grenades to disorient opponents during fast assaults. Troops are deployed from RAF Puma and Chinook helicopters, and supported by the army's own Lynxs.

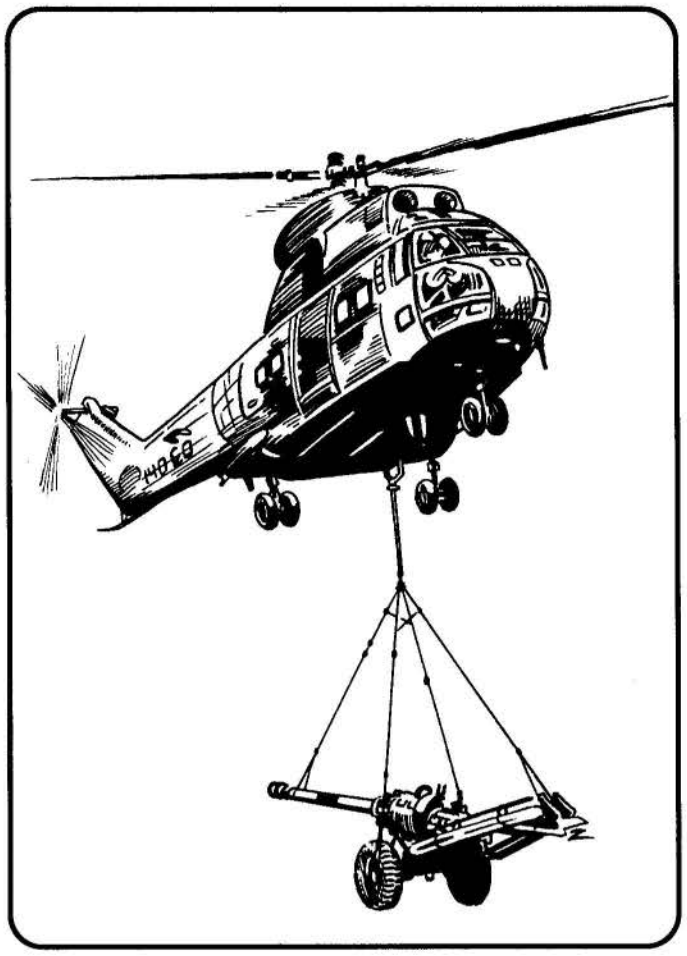
The army is currently replacing its Chieftain main battle tanks with Challengers; the M-1 in the HERO rules is close enough for either. Both have problems with gun aiming mechanisms, but high levels of crew skill can compensate. Recon and support work is carried out by various alloy-armoured tracked vehicles, including the Scorpion light tank. Artillery support includes 105mm Light Guns (which may be deployed by helicopter).

Air Force

Fighter development is such that a design is barely introduced before it is superceded. For example, the RAF is presently replacing all its American-built Phantoms with Tornado F2s and F3s, one version of a joint European swing-wing design, but the talking-point of the moment is another planned multi-national project, the European Fighter Aircraft (EFA), to replace the Tornado. For game purposes, the F-15 listed in the rules is similar to the Tornado, which carries homing missiles and a 27mm cannon. In addition, some subsonic Hawk light jet trainers might be armed with cannon in wartime for local defence.

Also capable of dog-fighting is the Harrier, a British plane built under license for the US Marine Corps, who helped develop it from its original ground attack role into an agile fighter. It's a subsonic (Max 2080), vertical/short take-off design, and the swivel-nozzle engines which allow this also make it capable of tricks such as stopping dead in mid-air and dodging sideways (it has no Stall Velocity). Armed with Sidewinders, Harriers in the Falklands defeated supersonic opposition. The Harrier can carry a large load of assorted missiles, guns, rockets, and bombs; for game purposes, treat it as F-15 sized, DEX 23, SPD 5, Move 52x8.

Long-range recon and strike work is given to aged but reliable Jaguars, and the GR1 version of the Tornado (with two cannons plus various loads — a fast and very accurate low-level bomber). Maritime strike is the job of Buccaneers — dated subsonic jets, but often armed with sophisticated long-range missiles. Maritime patrol is handled by Nimrods, upgraded '50's airliners packed with electronics and laden with homing torpedoes, depth charges, and Sidewinders for self-defence. The RAF's transport/support fleet uses a number of types, including US-built Hercules transports. The "Queen's Flight" of royal transports consists of small airliners equipped with all plausible luxuries (and anti-radar "chaff").



CHANGING GUARDS AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The army (never "Royal" army, unlike the other services) is divided into regiments, such as the Coldstream Guards, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and the Blues and Royals. Unlike the RN, where a posting is usually for two years, posting to an army regiment is usually permanent. Army officer cadets do a short period of training in the ranks, then attend officer training at Sandhurst for 18 months.

Many tourists see the Guards in their bearskins, riding horses at Buckingham Palace. The Guard regiments (The Horseguards, the Scots Guards, etc) perform ceremonial duties, but they are soldiers as well. The Horseguards use Chieftan tanks when away from Buckingham Palace.

Another famous group of regiments are the Paratroops. Their training is similar to that of the Royal Marines.

Special Air Services and Special Boat Services

The SAS and SBS are elite special forces. They are trained for anti-terrorist operations, operations behind enemy lines, reconnaissance, and so on. They usually operate in small groups of 2-6 people and carry weapons dictated solely by personal choice.

The SAS are world-famous for some highly pulicised operations; the SBS receive little publicity. Both, however, are sent to trouble spots. In a superhero world, it is likely that they would be used against super-powered terrorists.

Territorial Army Volunteer Reserves

The TAVR derives from the Home Guard of World War 2. It consists of part-time soldiers who train at weekends. In war, they would be taken into the regular army. In peace, their role is limited to training; unlike the US National Guard, the TAVR cannot be deployed by civil authorities.

Ghurkas

These are a remnant of the British Empire: troops recruited from the Ghurkas of Nepal. Nepal is a poor country, and the Ghurkas' pay is an important part of its economy. They are led by a mixture of British and Nepalese officers, promoted from the ranks. These diminutive soldiers (whose average height is about 5'4") are unfailingly cheerful, incredibly courageous, very fit, and utterly loyal to Queen and Country.

CHOCKS AWAY

RAF officers train at RAF College, Cranwell. Individualism is strong in the RAF, and there is less team spirit than in other services. Within NATO, the RAF conduct low-level strikes. They train extensively in high-speed, low-level flying. They avoid built-up areas, but cause a nuisance in remote areas. The war-time requirement for low-level flying is 30-50'. During the Falklands Conflict, the Strike Harriers often flew at 10-20', invisible to radar.

The Red Arrows are the RAF display team, flying tight formations and aerobatics in displays throughout Britain.

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

There are over 150 US military bases in the UK, including Cruise missile sites, US Air Force bases, intelligence bases, and Holy Loch, a base for US nuclear-armed submarines. These bases are held on unique terms: Britain receives no compensation for these sites, which are treated as US territory. US servicepeople based in Britain are exempt from trial in British courts. This applies even to off-duty personnel.

Around a number of US nuclear bases cluster peace camps, occupying common land, and resisting harrassment such as daily evictions. Some of these peace camps are for women only, others are mixed. Perhaps the most famous is at Greenham Common, where a women-only peace camp has caused the US military a lot of embarrassment, because they highlight lax security. Ordinary women have frequently cut through the fences and painted anti-nuclear slogans on the missile silos.

WHEN CONSTABULARY DUTY'S TO BE DONE...

...A policeman's lot is not a happy one.

— W.S.Gilbert

The modern police force was invented in London in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel (hence the slang "bobbies" and "peelers"), and this "Metropolitan" force was imitated all over Britain and the world. Although the UK does not have the US problem of state boundaries limiting police authority — a policeman on duty has much the same legal status wherever the job takes him — forces are run at a local rather than national level; while some people think that a national force would have advantages, others fear that it would be a tool of centralised state control.

THE FORCES

There are 52 UK forces, mostly organised by county or Scottish region (some amalgamated). However, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) covers all of Northern Ireland, while most of Greater London is covered by the Metropolitan Police (the "Met") — except, for historical reasons, for the "square mile" of the City of London, which has its own force. County forces are overseen by Police Authorities, representing local government and local magistrates, who appoint a Chief Constable and his assistants — with ministerial approval; the London forces and the RUC are supervised directly by the Home Secretary. Both local and government supervision of forces has sometimes led to controversy, with local politicians clashing with Chief Constables, and Home Secretaries being accused of using "their" police as political tools. The Met especially, as the largest force, has had problems with its public image and with corruption, although the latter was mostly rooted out in the '70's. The RUC has its own specific problems, of course.

Despite the organisation by area, some police work has been centralised — inevitably but controversially. No-one much objects to Scotland Yard running forensic labs for all forces, or co-ordinating drugs work, or liaising with Interpol; similarly, the Fraud Squad, jointly run by the Metropolitan and City of London forces, assists others freely. (London, the UK's business centre, is its natural base.) However, people opposed to a national force are suspicious of centralised information handling (such as police use of central vehicle licensing computers), and often hostile to collaboration between Chief Constables involved in policing controversial national matters such as large strikes.

There is one much-fictionalised organisation that co-ordinates police information internationally; Interpol. Based in mainland Europe, it has no agents of its own, just big filing cabinets. GMs may choose to give it much more extensive duties than in reality, however.

The Met was originally based in the old kings of Scotland's Westminster residence; in 1890 and 1967, the HQ moved, and it's now a tower block not far from Victoria Station — New Scotland Yard. Much central police co-ordinating work is done here, but it's not "Britain's police headquarters".

POLICE DUTY

With about 146,000 officers (plus civilian staff) in the entire UK — one per 400 citizens — the police have to try and work with "common consent", and despite complaints about parking tickets, most Britons generally respect them, and not just because of community liaison campaigns. However, there is some friction; for example, police relations with non-white citizens are problematic, preventing extensive recruitment from ethnic minorities, making for a self-reinforcing problem. The old idea of the constable "on the beat" (foot patrol) was superceded in the '60's by more use of cars, making policemen seem more impersonal; attempts to reverse this with "community policing" are underway.

The chief functional division in British police forces is between uniformed and plain-clothes Criminal Investigation Departments (CID). All policemen start out in uniform, but some eventually transfer to CID work (and sometimes back). Investigating crimes — "real" detective work — is seen as more glamorous, tougher, and also seedier. However, the two branches share stations, many jobs, and attitudes; the difference in anything but appearances should not be exaggerated.



THE ROLE(-PLAYING) OF THE POLICE

There are a number of stereotypes attached to the UK police, mostly with at least a little justification. Teaming up any two such during a game encounter with player-characters can make for entertaining dialogue. Any such figure will be a member of either an urban or a rural force; which of the two can make a difference, as, "community policing" ideas aside, a city copper may be less closely in touch with the area he patrols than the classic "village bobby", who knows everyone on his small "patch" — but the latter is a rather dated figure nowadays.

The Regular Copper

A constable or sergeant, this is a solid fellow, stern but friendly, rugged and very reliable. He uses a rather leaden wit to assert his authority, rather than violence; he is also very brave, chiefly because he has the imagination of a plank of wood. The London version has a particular line in dialogue:

'Ello 'ello 'ello, what's orl this then? Excuse me sir, but we carn't 'ave this round 'ere. I'm afraid I shall 'ave to arsk yew to accompany me to the station. Now, are yew goin' to come quietly, or do I 'ave to introduce yew to my friend Charly? ("Charly Wood" = police slang for a truncheon.)

The Young Copper

Youthful, fresh-faced, even boyish, this naive fellow hasn't lost his imagination yet, but he's almost as brave as his senior partner — perhaps because he has dreams of promotion. He believes all the police publicity about tolerance and duty, and he's also something of a sucker for a pretty face. The most brutal way he can lose his innocence is by encountering police corruption.

PC Plodd

The old joke version of the British policeman; totally without imagination, so stupid that he doesn't see crimes when they happen in front of his nose. He's lazy; if he has to solve a crime, he'll grab the most obvious suspect. This will be a foreigner if there's one around, as PC Plodd is also xenophobic.

The Modern Police Thug

PC Plodd was a joke; critics of modern British policing take the subject more seriously. The worst sort of copper, to this view, is indeed unimaginative — and also corrupt in little things, habitually racist, and often brutal. This isn't the "fat southern sheriff" of American lore, although it shares some features with that type; rather, it's a thinner, hard-faced, thuggish figure who joined the police for a sense of power, and exerts that power with pleasure and a lot of prejudice.

The Top Brass

Senior policemen are usually deeply involved in the local establishment; mature, perhaps paunchy, and in fiction at least, rather cold-blooded. They are assumed to have achieved their rank by being good administrators, rather than good detectives, but that may or may not be fair.

The Heavy Mob

The Flying Squad, Special Branch, and so on, deal in espionage, violence, and subterfuge. They are a paranoid's dream; with the best will in the world, they must be seen as grim, less friendly figures.

The Gentle Sex

Women police officers are stuck with rather a peripheral role, rarely rising high in the Force and often doing tedious or unpleasant duties. Stereotyped as hard-faced battle-axes or implausibly glamorous undercover experts, they actually represent almost 10% of UK police numbers, and are a varied group. They are unlikely to receive weapons training, but may be competent in a brawl.

Routine police work involves foot and vehicle action. The latter uses cars and motorcycles; vans and some pedal-cycles serve to move "foot" officers around. Vehicles are purchased by individual forces as needed. Fast motorway patrols are often jointly run by neighbouring forces; they may use unmarked cars, including the occasional very fast sports type. Some forces have a few helicopters or light spotter planes for monitoring roads or big public events, but these are expensive to run and may not be cost-effective.

SPECIAL UNITS

Some duties may be given to specialists units, temporary or permanent, such as the Fraud Squad (see above). The Special Branch deals with terrorism and "political" crime; in theory, each area force runs a part of this, but in practice it's a national body. The Flying Squad ("the Sweeney" in underworld slang) is a Met creation with counterparts in other forces; it deals with armed robbery, and often works with D11, London's specialist firearms unit. D11 not only provides marksmen, it also trains other Met members in firearms use. However, bodyguard work is shared by the Special Branch and the Diplomatic Protection Group, who as a result are routinely armed. Drugs Squads often work with Customs and Excise staff against smugglers, and so on.

ROTTEN APPLES

Corruption among British police in the form of cash bribes (let alone policemen robbing banks) is rare, especially since a determined Commissioner gave the Met a thorough clean-up, but it isn't the only danger. One contentious point is that senior policemen often have legitimate social contacts with a range of people, some of them maybe dishonest, and may be tempted to do favours for friends; many police are members of the Freemasons, whose traditions of secrecy and loyalty cause suspicion.

In the face of pressure for results, some policemen have used tricks such as persuading criminals who have confessed to one crime to admit to a few more, in exchange for lenient treatment. More widespread is the problem of police secretly adjusting evidence to ensure convictions — something only shown up in some cases by new forensic science techniques. All this isn't (generally) meant to convict the innocent, but rather, police seek to improve their figures and put the "obviously guilty" in jail; the dangers, however, are obvious. There are a few proven cases of police brutality towards suspects, either to extract confessions from the "obviously guilty", where police are disgusted by the crime (sex attacks or assaults on police, mainly), or where policemen indulge their personal prejudices. Note that, for very spectacular crimes, even the most amoral policeman may be more scrupulous, for fear of publicity and zealous lawyers — unless public pressure, demanding solution of the crime, makes for police over-zealousness.

Accusations of police misbehaviour are investigated by the independent Police Complaints Authority, or Procurators Fiscal in Scotland, or by officers from another force. These approaches can work well, unless police mutual loyalty gets in the way, or (as seems to have happened with a recent investigation into the RUC), political pressure is involved.

POLICE RESOURCES

Britons often boast of their "traditionally unarmed" police, but in fact, policemen have access to firearms if the situation is seen to justify it — mainly, when armed criminals are involved. Mostly, only trained police of some proven competence are allowed to carry guns — either ordinary "coppers" with training, or members of specialist units. All Northern Irish police carry guns; otherwise, armed police met in public either have a specific duty, or they are breaking the rules. Riots may lead to the issue of tear-gas firing weapons.

Police vehicles are standard, fairly powerful models, with some special equipment added. Colours tend to be white and blue, with regional variations. Police uniforms are dark blue, with white or light blue shirts; helmets are worn by men on foot patrol, being too tall for cars. They provide some protection and look imposing. Senior and vehicle police wear peaked caps with checkered bands, more rigid than the US pattern; WPCs wear domed hats. Mounted, motorcycle, and riot police wear motorcycle-style visored helmets, plus flame-proof suits for the latter.

Trained dogs are used for guard work, drugs and explosive searches, and so on; dog handlers are never armed. Dogs are trained to go for arms, not throats, to restrain. Horses are mostly used by urban forces, giving their riders good views, providing psychological effect, and being trained to act as passive barriers to surging crowds.

British forensic science is world-class, and invented such advances as the new "genetic fingerprinting" technique. UK police forces may be under-funded for this purpose, but otherwise can use "forensics" to good effect.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS

A problem with private investigators in games is that the fictional and real-life versions have so many differences — and this is as true in the UK as elsewhere. The first great fictional private detective was British; his deductive skills were so refined that no real being could match them. The later fashion for tough, street-wise investigators who go down mean streets while maintaining their own honour is an American creation. Meanwhile, real private detectives have usually been entangled in sordid divorce cases and tedious searches for missing persons.

However, there are differences between the real status of British and American "private eyes" that emerge in their fictional versions. The most important is that the Briton is very, very unlikely to carry a gun. British weapon laws generally make it illegal to wander round armed, and private detectives receive no special privileges. (Interestingly, Holmes and Watson operated before these laws became quite so strict, and Watson's service revolver appeared often.) Fictional detectives might stretch this principle, but in fact, given a less violent society to work in, they don't have to very often, and their real-world counterparts don't seem too troubled by their unarmed status either. The fictional British private detective ("private inquiry agent" is rather dated) is more likely to be a cerebral detective than a gun-toting tough-guy.

There is no particular British law covering private investigators, but they have professional associations and suchlike enforcing basic standards. Of course, they are also subject to ordinary laws of contract and "fair dealing".

SECURITY GUARDS

In the UK, these are usually provided for those who need them by private companies of varying sizes; the well-known names include Securicor and Brinks-Mat, both of whom have wide interests in security work and related fields such as communications. Large cash movements are made using armoured vans and staff in protective gear; the latter isn't necessarily bullet-proof, but will include a helmet to deflect blunt instruments and a visor to protect against ammonia sprays (a trick used by thieves who can't obtain guns or who don't want the practical complications they imply). Such guards aren't supposed to stand off gunmen, but their vans may include sealed, armoured compartments with one-way hatches (so holding up the guard doesn't give access to the loot); bags of money being moved to the van will be handcuffed to a guard. Private "site" security will again, usually, be completely unarmed, relying on video cameras, physical barriers, and alarms to detect and delay thieves while the police arrive; the guards themselves range from the quietly competent to the notoriously unimpressive. Many bank, post-office and building society offices have cameras and hidden alarm buttons, much as in the USA.

Bodyguard and "personal protection" work is a fairly small-scale business in the UK; again, restrictive weapons laws limit the capacity for violence on offer. The biggest (real) companies will focus more on the technicalities of physical security than on brute force. (That is, detecting and arresting assassins, sweeping for bugs and so on, rather than blowing people away.)

FRIENDLY SOURCES?

The British authorities have a fondness for secrecy, making British espionage operations into a famously murky subject. This has the disadvantage of making this section harder to write, but the advantage to a GM (or writer) of freeing the imagination. For example, officially, MI5 and MI6 don't exist...

Espionage is about several things: Collecting data on enemies or rivals, defending secrets from the same people, defending people and things from covert assault, and launching covert assaults on enemies. The last is what most governments (including the British) utterly deny, and is certainly the rarest, most obscure part, but it's also what most appeals to makers of fiction. Thus, the film version of James Bond is a long way from most British intelligence operations, but close to a lot of superhero and heroic games.

DEFENSIVE ACTIONS

In principle, defensive espionage is "police business", as handled by the FBI in America. In Britain, counter-terrorist and counter-espionage work (outside of Northern Ireland) is done by the police "Special Branch", set up in 1883 to oppose Irish Republican bombers — recurrent opponents. However, the "Branch" also has a wide range of "political" targets; although many have been genuine terrorists, Branch interest has sometimes extended to more or less extreme but non-violent groups, making them dangerously close to "political police". (The FBI experience is comparable.) It seems certain that this secretive, often armed section of the police force will always be controversial. Also relevant are Scotland Yard's Diplomatic Protection Group (specialist bodyguards).

MILITARY WHAT?

The (uniformed) armed forces are obviously concerned with defending themselves from covert attack or spying, and gathering information on rivals. The people responsible for this range from quite overt units such as the RAF Regiment, who run perimeter security and ground-to-air defences at RAF bases, through "staff" officers trained to study and collate data on foreign armed forces, to "field" units with a specific covert role, such as the SAS and SBS, elite troops with expertise in "recon" and secret missions. The SAS role has involved "plain-clothes" work against terrorism, but mostly all this is "uniformed" activity.

ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE

The groups who deal entirely in espionage go back to Tudor times, but evolved their current form between the early part of this century and the post-WW II period, starting as military bodies (hence the "MI" tags — for Military Intelligence), but not so today. They are co-ordinated by the Joint Intelligence Organization (JIO), which reports direct to the Cabinet Office; one JIO committee consists of the heads of the various organizations, and JIO staff collate data. Of the three main bodies under the JIO, the most overt is GCHQ, the Government Communications Headquarters, based in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. This deals with communications ranging from routine encrypted messages sent to British embassies abroad, through signals intelligence ("Sigint", perhaps using spy satellites), to code-breaking. While very secret, its existence is no mystery — it became front-page news when its staff were banned from joining trade (labour) unions a few years ago — and it has branches on some UK military bases abroad.

More obscure are MI5, the Security Service, and MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Although both are world-famous, the "official line" has always been that neither exists. This enables the government to refuse to discuss either's activities in Parliament (normally, Ministers are required to be very honest to Parliament), and generally helps secrecy. It also increases confusion; "MI5" and "MI6" are old department numbers, long out of date but still used as the only names that everyone recognises. However, the policy may also enable the agencies to cover up mistakes and illegal actions. Ironically, the present government's preference for secrecy has caused them to modify this policy; after a retired agent published a controversial autobiography (Peter Wright, *Spycatcher*), new laws to enforce secrecy were passed that admitted the existence of official security agencies. It is now said that MI5 finds "non-existence" more of a nuisance than an advantage, and may become more open, with named spokesmen dealing with the press and so on.

MI5 is concerned with (largely domestic) counter-espionage, covert anti-terrorist work, and some measures against "international" problems such as drug smugglers, often working with the Special Branch, who frequently handle the public legal work that the "non-existent" agency can't perform. Thus MI5 agents may be looked down on as "policemen" by the "spies" of MI6, whose job is information-gathering — although that most often means routine observation, study of foreign armed forces on public parade, and so on. MI6 provides government with data it can't get more openly; they just say that it came from "Friendly Sources", which has given MI6 the private nick-name of "the Friends" (sometimes said ironically; agents themselves talk of "the firm" or "the racket"). Actually, in fictional/game terms, MI5 is easier to portray as "glamorous"; its members are "defending Britain", and could "reasonably" resort to violence against violent and nasty enemies, whereas MI6 agents can most easily be fictionalised as "snoopers". Both are divided into departments; for example, of MI5's six branches, "F" branch is known to deal with counter-terrorism, and "K" branch with counter-espionage.

The British Secret Services have a high but flawed reputation, going back through their long history. The mystique is largely justified, but also cultivated; a reputation for infallibility helps to demoralise foes, and also to recruit friends. (A favourite approach is for under-funded MI6 station heads to offer their local CIA counterpart the benefits of their expertise and excellent contacts and local knowledge — in exchange for the CIA putting up the bulk of funds for the joint operation.) However, during the war, both MI5 and MI6 recruited some agents whose enthusiasm for fighting fascism — the enemy of the moment — was linked to a high regard for communism. The result was disastrous Russian penetration of the post-war services, compounded by later recruiting errors caused by secrecy, and a series of embarrassing defections and treason trials. Nonetheless, some successes were also recorded, such as the deft handling of defecting Russian agents. Today, with secrecy under review and high-level re-organisation following the JIO's failure to foresee the Falklands invasion, British intelligence cannot be complacent, but may be becoming more efficient.

IN PLAY

In a campaign involving "super-terrorists", MI5 will be the prime UK government operator, supported by Special Branch in the UK itself. However, observation of foreign military use of "super-beings" will be MI6's province (with reports going to military intelligence), and "super-technology" would interest GCHQ. These groups are often rivals — overlapping interests aside, MI5 and MI6 are sometimes required to investigate each other's internal problems, such as double agents — but they don't go in for open warfare. See below for some (fictional) characters with relevant interests, including the Clansman, Partisan, Harry Mortimer, and MI5 "Special Circumstances Agents".

THE BRITISH PRESS

"You cannot hope
To bribe or twist
Thank God! The British journalist
But seeing what
That man will do
Unbribed, there's no occasion to."

— Humbert Wolfe (In *Punch*)

Newspapers in Britain have a long and partly honourable history, going back centuries. At different times, the same newspapers have been paid establishment lap-dogs, radical crusaders, and dull fact-sheets. These days, many national papers are owned by a small number of millionaire businessmen, leading to worries about impartiality, but some independents remain; the problem for complete freedom is that profit margins are tight.

Most British newspapers are sold through newsagents — small, privately-owned shops which also sell chocolates and greetings cards, or chains which also sell books. A few large supermarkets sell a few papers and magazines, but there is no clear "late-night supermarket paper" category.

Britons are often guilty of over-much secrecy and failure to stand up to the powerful, which may make the press less able to oppose the Establishment. There are crusading journalists investigating corruption, and they are respected, but it's a little harder to do the digging in the UK than in the USA. All of which said, the press in the UK has more in common with that in the USA than it has differences. The tabloids have earned a name for intrusive, unpleasant attitudes; sensation boosts sales, but also means expensive libel cases. At present, the press is supposedly restrained by the Press Council, funded by the papers themselves, which adjudicates on complaints and can tell the papers to print apologies and retractions, but its lack of legal force has led to pressure for a right-to-privacy law.

NAMING NAMES

Apart from specialist magazines, there are four categories of UK newspaper:

(1) Local, covering one town and its surroundings, published weekly. Parochial, but less trivial than the US local press. May be owned by small companies; often compete with "free sheets" with some limited local news.

(2) City (Evening), based in a large town or city, produced six days a week in the afternoon, covering a mixture of local and national/international news — the latter in limited depth, but before the next day's "nationals". Have limited staffs for non-local stories (and so use agencies); main function is to provide daily local news. London has only one, despite its size; Londoners find that the London-based national press is enough.

(3) Provincial, daily or weekly; confined to one area but covering national/international stories. For example, there are five in Scotland, including the Scotsman and the Glasgow Herald.

(4) National; — less exceptional in the UK than in the US; the smaller size of the country means that it is easier for copies of a paper to be sent to every part within a day. Nowadays all the major national papers are published in the London. The traditional site for offices was in Fleet Street, but many have now moved to less central locations while modernising technology.

The national press is divided between tabloids and broadsheets, and between dailies (six days a week) and Sundays. The broadsheets are "respectable" — similar to, say, the *New York Times*; the tabloids are "down-market", scandal-chasing, closer to the *New York Post*, with bare-breasted pin-ups in some cases. Sunday papers have more pages; getting fewer "scoops", they compensate with background coverage — "in-depth" writing or magazine-style articles and sensationalism. Both daily and Sunday papers often produce a free colour magazine once a week.

At the time of writing, the British national papers are:

Daily Broadsheets

The Daily Telegraph — conservative (and Conservative); the paper of the "old guard".

The Financial Times — a small-circulation, specialist financial newspaper, much like the Wall Street Journal. Printed on pink paper.

The Guardian — Moderately left-wing, the paper for liberal intellectuals.

The Independent — only a few years old, but established in the centre of the market. Yuppie-oriented, but lives up to its name.

The Morning Star — the mouthpiece of the British Communist party, suffering badly from the recent upheavals in the communist world. Very small sales.

The Times — the old-established paper of the British establishment. Has lost its nineteenth-century crusading image and drifted right of centre.

Daily Tabloids

The Daily Express — Traditionalist, right-wing, populist, old-fashioned.

The Daily Mail — Also right-leaning, but slightly more "dramatic" than the Express.

The Daily Mirror — The paper of the working-class left wing; supports the Labour Party, but with a definite tabloid approach.

The Daily Star — A northern-based paper at the bottom end of the market. Too many bare-breasted girls and celebrity gossip stories for the right-of-centre politics to be noticed.

The Sun — the newspaper that the Star undercuts; Britain's biggest seller. Topless girls, Conservative politics, show-biz gossip, simple nationalism — a populist newspaper.

Today — a fairly recent arrival, based on extensive use of colour printing; still looking for a gap in the market.

In addition, the *Sport* (see under "Sundays") has some weekday editions, and is said to be planning more.

Sunday Papers

The Sun*day Express*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, and the new *Independent* on Sunday are Sunday counterparts to their daily namesakes, the *News of the World* takes the same role in relation to the *Sun*, and the *People* is a stablemate of the *Mirror*. The *Observer* (a broadsheet) is politically liberal, while the physically lighter *Sunday Correspondent*, a recent arrival, aims for a broadsheet-style, "middle-ground" market. The *Sunday Sport*, originating in Scotland, is Britain's nearest thing to the American "late-night supermarket" paper, starting out with lurid gossip and topless pin-ups (in colour), before the limited market for such led it to stories about reincarnations of Elvis Presley and UFO kidnappings (while keeping the pin-ups).

SUPERHERO NEWS

One traditional job for superheroes with secret IDs is as newspaper reporters, and this is certainly viable in the UK. Working for a national paper would allow travel; local paper reporters have quieter lives.

If you use the real-world newspapers — or something similar — in a superhero game, then consider their attitudes. The broadsheets would weigh the issues and offer opinions based on their own standpoints; the more conservative would be worried by independent and powerful freelance crime-fighters outside government control, the more liberal would be concerned at heroes willing to use their power in defence of the status quo and without much regard for the legal rights of their opponents. The tabloids, meanwhile, would take a "gosh wow" approach; the most populist would cheer on any ostentatiously British heroes, and all would chase any gossip on the subject, hard. Previously, when people in the news refused to give some tabloids (such as the *Sun*) interviews, the papers have invented interviews — and how is a hero with Secret ID going to prove that such is invented? Also likely would be libellous claims about heroes' private lives, at which point the PCs should learn that, while the press doesn't have a very good image in the UK, it gets more sympathy than people who beat up reporters. Still, this could be a good way of getting PCs to the UK — get them fighting weird libels in a British tabloid.

IN THE NICK

Superheroes who fight crime may be interested in what happens to those they catch; besides, they may sometimes be tried for crimes themselves. The first thing they'll notice in the UK is that "jail" is correctly spelled "gaol"...

When the "Guilty" verdict has been passed in a British court, a range of penalties may follow. The most common (in minor cases) is a fine, and there are a range of other options for lesser offences — "binding over to keep the peace" (the offender can be gaoled if he or she makes further trouble), "suspended" sentences (activated if the criminal commits another crime in a set period), "community service", and so on. "Electronic tagging" to impose a kind of house arrest is currently being evaluated, but has hit objections, especially from civil libertarians who fear that it will be used "as well as" rather than "instead of" gaol.

Nonetheless, Britain's gaols are crowded — mainly because they haven't been enlarged enough, but also because judges seem happier using them than the guidelines they are supposed to follow would suggest. However, any judge will have to respond to serious crimes with a gaol sentence. There are about 57,000 people in UK prisons. Some did not offend in the UK; some European countries have agreements about returning prisoners to serve their sentences in their home country's gaols, as "culture shock" isn't supposed to be a fair part of punishment.

The rule is that a prisoner is initially committed to a local prison by the court, and may be transferred from there to a more distant "nick", especially if higher security is needed. The range of prisons in the UK is large, from tough high-security set-ups to "Open Prisons" without physical barriers. Crowding in primitive conditions is their main problem, which is why twenty-six more gaols are currently being built. Sometimes, over-crowding forces the authorities to put prisoners in police cells, which are simply not equipped for long-staying residents.

Campaigners reckon that British prison conditions are bad, but not (yet) as bad as in the USA. The age of the buildings, often Victorian, and their lack of modern sanitation, are part of the problem; apart from the humiliation for the government of being sued by prisoners under basic health laws, this occasionally leads to riots and violent protests. However, murders, let alone murderous rioting, are fairly rare.

One important point to note is that the UK has no system of voluntary drug tests on prisoners. The only way for a prisoner to get early release or a transfer to a less severe prison is good behaviour; this can remove up to a third of a sentence. After serving a third or more of the basic sentence, well-behaved prisoners may also be released on parole, which means that they return to society, but are officially supervised, and any misbehaviour can lead to their being returned to prison.

In theory, British prisons can provide their inmates with some education or training, to give them an alternative to crime when they are released. The results vary, although some long-term prisoners have emerged with university degrees. Prisons are never mixed-sex; there are far fewer women than men in gaol (the ratio is 27:1), and so far fewer women's prisons.

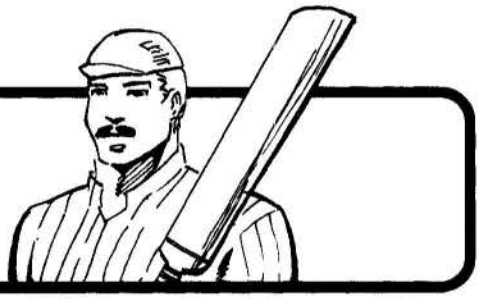
Well-known British prisons include Dartmoor, a forbidding long-stay establishment in the wilds of the West Country; Wormwood Scrubs, Britain's largest, and Brixton, central London's "local prisons"; the Maze, Northern Ireland, with a large terrorist population; Holloway, London's women's prison; and Parkhurst, Isle of Wight. There is also Broadmoor, Berkshire, a well-known "hospital for the criminally insane", which houses Britain's most notorious psycopaths, among other people whom the courts have judged both mad and a danger to the public.

GAME GOALS

There are a few things in all this that GMs should note. The lack of drug tests removes one much-loved source of super-villain or misunderstood hero powers. The prison education system could have implications; obviously, the authorities would ban any "course equipment" that could be used for escapes, but whether super-gadgeteers could circumvent this would be up to the GM.

The British prison system would have to adapt if super-beings existed; how, and how much, would depend on the number of super-criminals, their powers and power levels, and the technology available. At first, a few "hardened" cells in some or all gaols might be enough; these might eventually be replaced by specially-built blocks with "customisable" cells. Faced with larger numbers of super-prisoners, the government (or the EC?) would probably have to finance one, "central" super-prison, either adapting an existing building — somewhere relatively remote, such as Dartmoor or similar gaols on the wilder Yorkshire or Scottish moors — or building something new. One appropriate choice might be to take over a small, uninhabited Scottish island. The design would have to be at the limits of available technology; for plausible simplicity, GMs could adapt Stronghold (from *Classic Enemies*), or have guards equipped as STOP agents backed up by a few robots. Adapt the Stronghold designs for these, or build your own; if the prison is on an island, increased water movement and enhanced senses to compensate for bad weather would be useful. If the campaign's technology doesn't allow full artificial intelligence, have the robots operate under radio control from a command centre.

A SPORTING CHANCE



"The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton"

— 1st Duke of Wellington

Some sports are common to Britain and the USA (eg tennis, athletics, golf). However, several sports have not crossed the Atlantic to any significant degree. Baseball, American Football, basketball, and ice hockey are still, despite some recent interest, rare in Britain. Similarly, some sports popular in Britain are unfamiliar to the USA.

One important difference between British and American sport is that there are no cheerleaders in British games. Another is that apart from the Boat Race, University sports are mostly of interest only to the Universities. Consequently, sporting scholarships are not important in the UK. Most sports stadiums are decades old, some date from the 19th Century; there are few astrodomes. Players and audience are usually exposed to the weather, and sports events are often cancelled in bad weather.

CRICKET

This is perhaps the most "English" of games, played during the summer. At international level, the main countries that play are England (known as the Marylebone Cricket Club, or MCC, when playing abroad), Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In Britain, the game is played professionally by 16 English counties and 1 Welsh county.

The game is notoriously difficult to explain, and is full of jargon. It is played by two teams of 11 players; one team fields, whilst the other sends two players at a time to bat. The pitch consists of a large ground, with two sets of "wickets". If the ball goes beyond the ground, the batsman scores 4 runs (if the ball rolled) or 6 if if does not touch the ground (hence the expression to "knock someone for six"). The British climate is not really well suited to cricket. The most important phrases for cricket are thus: "rain stopped play", and "bad light stopped play".

Many famous fictional characters played cricket, including A J Raffles and Sir Harry Flashman. Genuine cricketing giants of the past include Sir Donald Bradman (Australia), Sir Garfield Sobers (West Indies), W G Grace (England), the Nawab of Pataudi (India) and Fred Trueman (England).

In London, Lords is the home of the MCC, and it is here that official rule changes are decided. The next most famous cricket ground is the Oval in south London, the home of Surrey County.

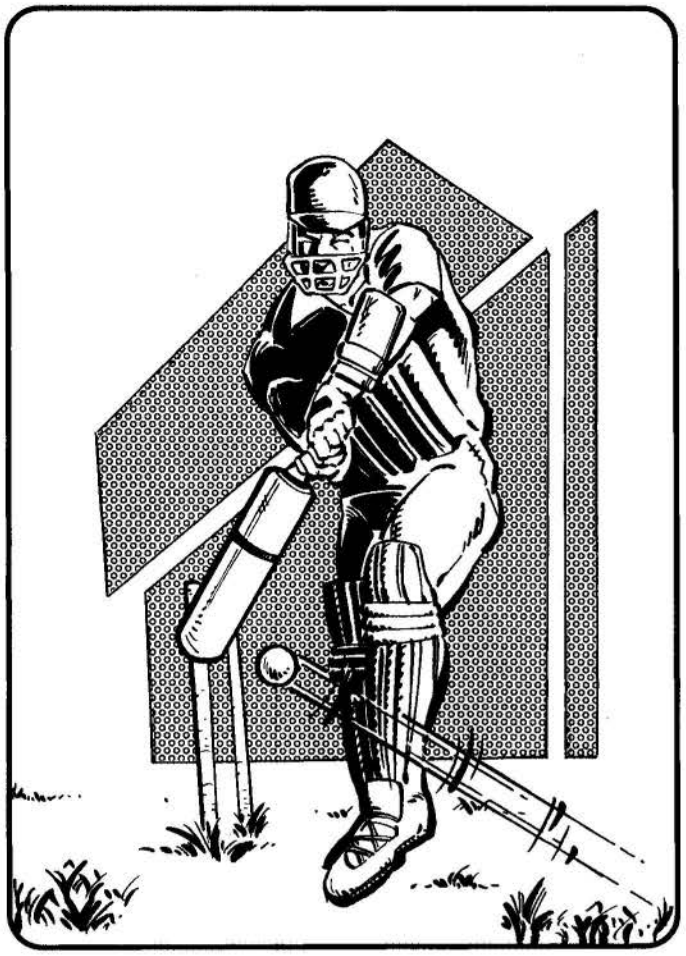
SOCCER

Usually called simply football, this is played in the winter (a season which, for soccer, runs from August to May). England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have separate international teams.

At a professional level, English and Welsh clubs form one league (with four divisions), as do those of Northern Ireland.

Crowds at football matches can be up to 100,000 for top flight international games, 30-50,000 for top club games, with fewer for the smaller clubs. Almost all the spectators stand, almost all are male. In the top clubs, spectators supporting different sides are segregated, and prevented from invading the pitch by wire-netting fences.

Much publicity is given to crowd troubles. The vast majority of the trouble occurs outside the ground after the match. Because of the design of the stadiums, crowd trouble rarely affects the game. Alcohol is not available inside the ground, and bottles, weapons, etc are confiscated.



English fans have a (partly exaggerated) bad reputation, even though the fans of some other European countries are equally bad. Within England, the most notorious clubs for violence are Chelsea and Millwall, both London teams. Much of the violence is caused by gangs of young men who deliberately engineer trouble by picking on opposing spectators. Vandalism of property also occurs. This violence is not a pretext for other crimes, however; theft at football games is probably no worse than any other crowd. Deaths in crowd violence are very, very rare.

Liverpool has been involved in two tragedies which were not simply a matter of hooliganism. In a match in Holland, a brawl in the crowd caused pressure on crowd barriers, which failed, and people were killed by a falling wall. In 1988, too many people were allowed into a British stadium, which led to people being crushed to death.

RUGBY FOOTBALL

There are two distinct forms of this game — Rugby Union, which is played by amateurs in teams of 15, and Rugby League, which is played by professionals in teams of 13.

The game is played in winter. American football bears a strong resemblance to Rugby; the two use a ball of similar shape, although the Rugby ball is larger and heavier. It is not striped. Only the person carrying the ball may be tackled. Rugby players do not need special protective gear. Two substitutions per side are allowed for injury. The game is generally more free-flowing than American football, and crowds get impatient when the game has too many stops. Most spectators stand, and most are male. Crowd violence is not a problem in Rugby, although why it differs so from soccer is obscure. The game is most popular in Wales (Rugby Union) and the north of England (Rugby League).

England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales are represented separately at international level in Rugby Union, and the other major teams are France, New Zealand, and Australia.

OTHER SPORTS

Polo is a game played almost exclusively by the very rich.

Showjumping is a sport very popular amongst the rich and near-rich. Britain produces a lot of the top world-class showjumpers. One famous showjumper was Princess Anne, who is of Olympic standard.

Winter sports such as skiing do not have a traditional following in the UK, since winters are not severe enough. Recently, skiing holidays in Europe have become fairly popular, and there are some skiing resorts in the Scottish highlands, although the snow there is not very reliable.

WHO PLAYS WHAT?

Football is traditionally regarded as the game for the masses. Rugby Union is regarded as being a more elite game. This is probably because in England it was the traditional game of grammar and public schools, while soccer was the traditional sport of secondary modern schools. In Wales, Rugby is universal. Cricket is largely a middle-and upper-class sport, except in Yorkshire, where it is popular with all classes.

SPECIAL EVENTS

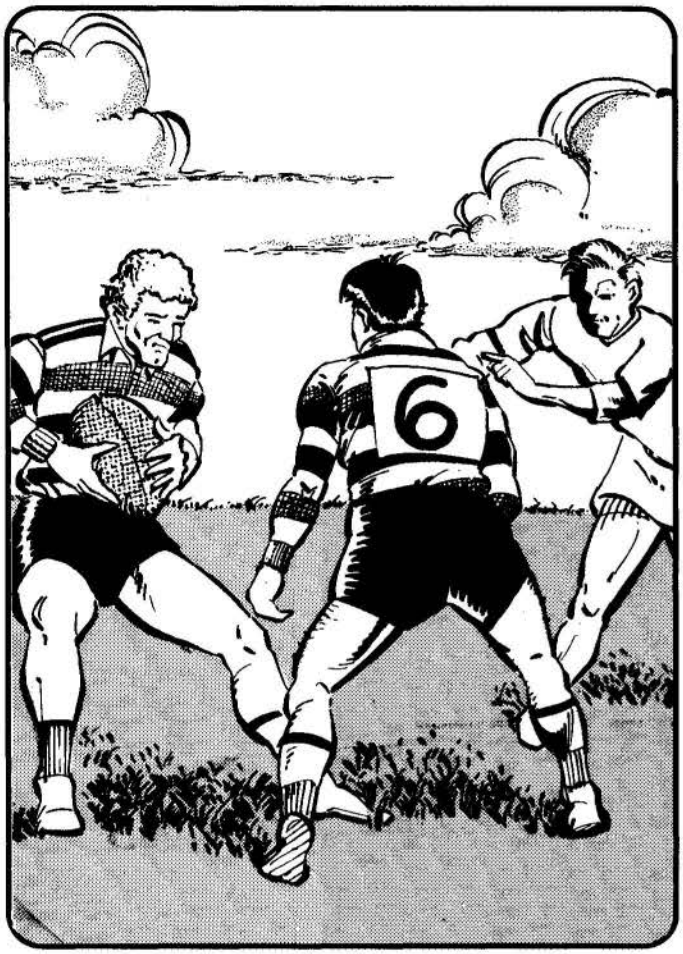
There are a number of sporting events that are very significant in the social calender of Britain. There are too many to give a complete list, but the ones given below are arguably the most important.

FA Cup Final

This event is the final of the Football Association knockout tournament. It is played at Wembly Stadium, in North London, on a Saturday afternoon in early May. The FA Cup is presented to the winning team, the winner being decided on the one game.

Test Matches

International cricket games are played during the summer. Each game runs from Thursday to Tuesday with Sunday being a rest day. A series will consist of 3 to 5 matches. Test matches between England and Australia are played for the Ashes, a symbolic award dating from the 19th Century.



Triple Crown

Rugby Union's international league, played between Wales, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and France.

London Marathon

The largest marathon in the world, run through London on a weekend in spring (April or May) by thousands of people from top runners to ordinary men and women who may never have run so far before. Many more people apply for entry than can be accomodated, so places are allotted by lottery. The race usually attracts a few people who find running more of a challenge when dressed up as a tomato, as well as paraplegic racers in wheelchairs.

The Boat Race

The Boat Race takes place between two 8-oared racing boats, one each from Oxford and Cambridge University. The teams are undergraduates; the coxes are often women. The race lasts about 18 minutes, and the course is a 4-and-a-quarter mile tidal stretch of the Thames at London. The race is on a Saturday in March of April. Popular interest in the race is increased when one or other of the boats sinks. The usual winner is Oxford or Cambridge, except in 1912, when both boats sank.

Henley Royal Regatta

This takes place at a town near London in a week in early July. Contestants are amateurs. The races are rowed against the stream, because if they were rowed in the traditional direction, stands could not be erected at the finish. The length of the course, 1 mile 570 yards, does not correspond to any internationally recognised distance. In spite of its anomalies, the Henley Royal Regatta is much imitated, and there are "Henley regattas" in Canada, USA, and Australia.

The event is more of a social occasion than a sporting event to most of the spectators, who crowd into the exclusive Stewards Enclosure by the finishing line. Men wear white trousers, striped blazers and rowing caps or straw boaters; women wear pretty dresses.

Cowes Week

The first week of August is devoted to sailing and socialising off Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

Wimbledon

Two weeks of the world's top professional tennis, in early July. The sport is not overshadowed by socialising as much as Henley, because the courts are surrounded by benches for sitting, rather than an area in which spectators are free to walk about and ignore sport.

Royal Ascot

In mid June, the major social event for horseracing takes place over four days at Ascot in Berkshire. The racing is a focus of international attention, with prize money attracting horse owners from all over the world. The Royal Ascot enclosure is limited to 3,000 spectators with the appropriate social qualifications and the "correct" form of dress. Royal Ascot is the main outdoor event of the London Season.

The Derby

The Derby is a race for three year old horses and fillies, run over one mile and four furlongs. It is run on the first Wednesday in June at Epsom in Surrey. Some thre-quarters of million people can crowd onto Epsom Downs to watch the event, without needing to pay for admission.

The Grand National

This is a steeplechase run at Aintree in Liverpool on the first Saturday in April. It is run over four miles, with thirty jumps. Because of the difficulty of the jumps, many of the horses fall, and it is quite possible for an outsider to win. Of all racing events, this has captured the public imagination the most.

Highland Games

More than seventy sets of Highland Games are currently held during the summer, mainly in the Highlands but also elsewhere in Scotland.

Events include athletics, bagpiping, and highland dancing. Tossing the caber, in which the competitor has to throw a tree trunk about twenty feet long and one foot in diameter, is the best known event. The object of this sport is to throw the caber so that it describes a perfect vertical semi-circle in as straight a line as possible. There is also a race up Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Britain, which takes place at the Fort William games in mid July.

PLAY UP, PLAY UP AND PLAY THE GAME!

The British are famous for their "sporting spirit", in which to take part is as important as to win, and in which losers are esteemed more highly than winners. In recent years, this spirit has all but disappeared from sports on which much money rides; even "amateur" athletes get hundreds of thousands of pounds in "expenses". The only sport which remains reasonably amateur and widely popular in Rugby Union.

On the other hand, the massive popular appeal of Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards, who came last in the skiing events at the 1988 Olympics, was due to his failure to win, rather than to his successful breaking of British records in these events.

THE OTHER HALF

Almost all events mentioned have been primarily for men. Women's sport in the UK remains neglected and underfunded. Indeed, the very success of, for instance, the women's international cricket team is considered evidence that women's cricket is not a serious sport. Women are not even allowed in as spectators to the members' enclosure at Lords!

Small numbers of women compete in almost all sports at an amateur level, despite the indifference, even hostility, of the sports bodies and press. The Football Association has used the argument that girls are not as good as boys at football, to prevent good girl players from playing in school sides. The sport in which women are taken most seriously is tennis, but even here, the Wimbledon prize is less for women than for men.

HUNTIN', SHOOTIN' AND FISHIN'

Fox-hunting is an immensely ritualised bloodsport, which dates from the 17th and 18th Centuries.

Before the hunt, one of the hunt staff goes around and blocks all the known holes in the area in which a fox might take refuge. When the hunters are assembled, the pack of dogs (called hounds) chase a fox across country, followed by the hunters on horseback and other people following the hunt on foot. The hunt finishes when the fox escapes, is killed, or when everyone gets bored. The clothing worn by the hunters (men wear red jackets, known, naturally, as pinks), hunt etiquette (it is a great offence to get between the "Master of the Hunt" and the hounds), and so forth, are far too complicated to go into here; if any characters (British or American) without a KS find themselves participating in a hunt without someone to prompt them, they will inevitably offend against hunt traditions.

A more recent tradition which has grown up around fox hunting is the hunt saboteurs, who lay false trails, sound horns, and generally get in the way, in order to protect the foxes.

A very few stag hunts exist in areas like Dartmoor, and are even more controversial than fox hunts.

When the otter became a protected species, most otter hunts were disbanded. A few converted into mink hunts, which are disapproved of by conservationists, because they operate in areas where otters live, and their hunting methods (chasing up and streams) disturb the otters.

Shootin' and Fishing

In Britain, shooting and fishing are only permitted with the consent of the owner of the rights. This is usually the owner of the land, although they can be sold or rented separately from the land.

As far as fishing goes, there are several exceptions to this. Some waterways and the sea may be fished by anyone, just as the tidal beach is not owned (private beaches are unknown).

Fishing is a popular pastime, for the rich who can afford to rent a section of a salmon river in Scotland, and for more modest anglers, who rent space on a river or local lake by the day.

Shooting mostly involves deer or "game birds" such as grouse. Large estates in the uplands are given over to breeding the latter for sport. Pheasants are raised in many woods for autumn shooting.

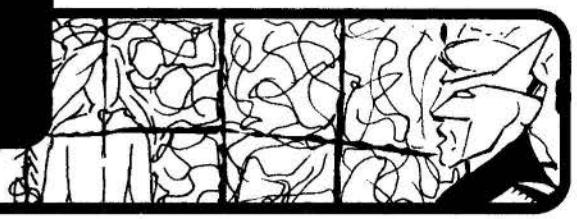
Closed seasons operate for the most important hunting and fishing quarries, usually for the breeding season, or over winter. The "Glorious Twelth" of August, the opening day of grouse shooting season, is famous. Other species have less well-known seasons, which may be different in Scotland and England. For deer, the seasons for males and females differ.

Other ancient laws governing hunting include forbiddding killing of deer by night or hunting of game animals (hare, pheasant, partridge, grouse and black grouse) on a Sunday or Christmas Day.

The Hunting Lobby

There is no organised hunting or gun lobby in the UK. Whenever there are proposals to restrict hunting or the use of guns, those involved campaign to maintain the status quo, but since restrictions usually come in the wake of well-publicised shooting incidents, public opinion is rarely roused in their support. In general, country dwellers are usually more pro-hunting, whether they take part or not, than those who live in towns.

POWER IN THE LAND



Britain is an old land, with many prehistoric sites, plenty of myths, and volumes of lore. However, being the product of multiple migrations and invasions, the British people have no single mythology or style of mysticism.

The earliest, pre-Celtic inhabitants of the islands doubtless had myths and beliefs, but all we know of them is what their graves and stone circles tell us; that they were concerned with death and maybe rebirth, that the sun and moon were important to them, and so on. Even the Celts are shrouded in mystery and masked by second-hand reporting, but they at least left behind a body of written myths.

THE IRISH CYCLES

Unfortunately, these were not only written down well into the Christian era, they mostly relate to Ireland, rather than the British mainland. Doubtless the mainland myths were similar, but the Irish cycles don't represent "UK mythos", and they really lie beyond the scope of this book. In any case, they are a large, complex subject, and would deserve a book to themselves. However, they are rich and fascinating, and it's not a bad idea to dip into a good book on the subject. The Irish heroes were a rugged, honour-driven, larger-than life bunch, not much like comic-book superheroes, but with features in common.

The *Book of Conquests* tells of a series of human (or superhuman) races migrating to Ireland, each clearing forest to make plains and forming lakes, mostly becoming locked in battle with the demonic Fomorians. Much attention is given to the Tuatha De Danann, the demi-divine People of the Goddess Danu, and their kings and heroes — Bres, the king who was so effectively satirised by a bard that boils appeared on his face and he had to abdicate, Nuada, the king who lost a hand in battle and had it replaced by one of silver but who also had to stand down (a king had to be without blemish), Lug the many-skilled, and so on. The Tuatha beat back the Fomorians, but were eventually supplanted by the ancestors of the Celts. These stories are full of ritual, wild magic, battle, and traditional taboo.

Much the same goes for the "Ulster Cycle" of myths, centred on a later era when the invincible but doomed berserker-hero Cu Chulainn defended his land and himself from enemy sorcerors, eventually to be defeated because of the many geases under which he laboured. Later yet comes the "Ossianic Cycle", which tells of bands of extra-tribal warriors, the fiana, such as the followers of Finn mac Cumal, who fought where they were most needed. All this begins to sound like a later hero of Britain.

AFTER THE CELTS

The other mythologies which have been told in Britain were brought by invaders who fought the Celts; the multitudinous religions and beliefs of the subjects of the Roman Empire, and the doom-laden, bloody mythology of the Vikings. Both, however, were invaders that seem to have put down few deep roots before being supplanted by Christianity. It was a Romano-Celtic defender who became the great figure of subsequent British heroic literature; that "later hero" already mentioned, the doomed leader of a band that rose above tribal loyalties — King Arthur.

AN ABIDING MYTH

Of all the British heroes, King Arthur is the most enduring and best known. There have been many attempts to discover the "Real King Arthur", by people ranging from authoritative scholars to the lunatic fringe. Although the evidence for his actual existence is poor, the legends endure.



People remake the Arthurian legend in their own image. To Malory, it was one of romantic chivalry, of knights in shining armour behaving as the knights of his own day might. The Victorians had moralising platitudes within an epic framework. Hollywood saw it as a chance for spectacle and pomp. Many modern writers have enthused over paganism and a "realistic" setting. The truth behind the legend has long since ceased to be important.

The setting of the Arthur legends is in the little-known days after the withdrawal of the Roman Empire, when the Angles, Saxons and Jutes began to settle in the country. Some researchers have suggested that Arthur was a British general, not fighting against the incoming invaders, but a leader of the squabbling British factions after the loss of central rule from Rome. Contemporary and near-contemporary writers do not mention Arthur at all; the earliest references are 9th Century. The heyday of the legend was in the 12th century onwards.

If the Arthur legend is to be used in a superhero campaign, the GM will have to determine which version of the legend to use. It will obviously be a matter of taste whether the Hollywood/Romantic, the squalid post-Imperial, the pagan, or some other version is preferred. Comics have tended towards the Hollywood myth, but other versions have their own advantages.

FAIRIES

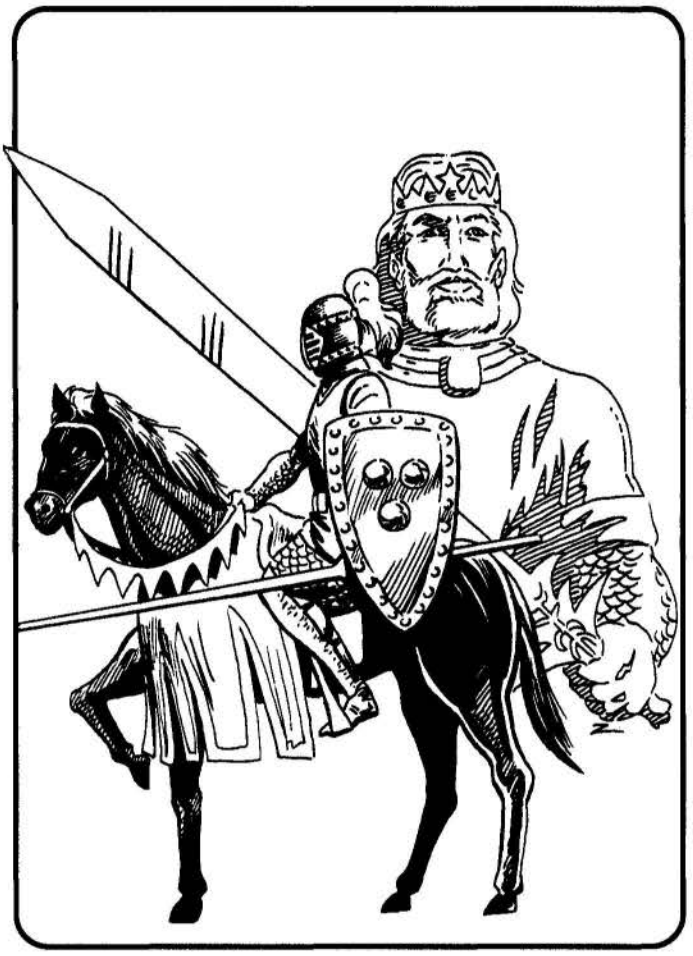
"Wee folk, good folk, trooping all together
Green jacket, red cap, and white owl's feather"

— William Allingham

Fairies are common throughout the British Isles. The Gaelic term Sidhe (pronounced "Shee"), is used throughout the Gaelic-speaking parts. Some fairies can bless or curse, others help in the house, and still others wait in lonely parts to murder unwary travellers. Even the friendliest fairy might take offense at some imagined slight, so it's no wonder that it was often considered safer to refer to them as the Good Folk, the Wee Folk, Themselves, the Strangers, the Gentryu, rather than risk attracting their attention by speaking of them directly.

Fairies often live in hollow hills and old barrows — secret doors lead into the side of the hill to the fairies' hall within. A mortal who enters might never leave, or might find that on leaving, although only a few hours seems to have passed, years have gone by in the world outside. Similarly, a mortal who dances in a fairy ring — a natural circle in grass caused by a fungus — might dance to death. Protection from fairies and their spells may be had from rowan or ash, iron, anything holy, like church bells or holy water, 4-leaved clover, St John's wort, running water, or turning items of clothing inside out.

Fairies often dress in green, although they also like red and white. Solitary fairies are often dressed in rags or entirely naked. Fairies may be diminutive, or as large as humans; many can alter their size. They tend to come out only by night, appearing by day in the form of a creature such as a butterfly, toad or cat.



Fairies like to steal human babies and leave senile fairies or fairy babies in their place. These changlings are ugly, stunted and wrinkled, they eat enormously, but don't grow. Sometimes threatening or beating the changling will restore the original child, at other times such nonsensical actions such as attempting to boil water in an eggshell will cause the changling to exclaim "I'm 600 years old, and I've never seen such a thing!", and depart, leaving the real baby in its place.

Some of the best known fairies:

Leprechauns are Irish fairy shoemakers, small and dark skinned, who typically wear old-fashioned breeches, jacket, and a cap or tricorn hat. Each leprechaun has a treasure, which a person who catches him may demand; however the leprechaun will attempt to trick the person and disappear. One farmer was shown a field of ragwort, and the plant under which the leprechaun's treasure was buried; not having a shovel on him, he used a red garter to mark the plant. When he returned, every plant in the field had a red garter tied to it!

Brownies come from the midlands of England up to Scotland. In Wales they are called Bwca, in the Scottish Highlands Bodach, and Fenodree on the Isle of Man. These small, ragged creatures perform domestic tasks by night, in return for a bowl of cream or cake left out for them by the housewife; however, if thanked or rewarded with clothing, they will desert the house. If ill-treated, they can become mischievous, when they are known as boggarts. Most brownies are male.

Pixies come from Cornwall, Somerset and Devon. They are small, and wear ragged green clothing and red hats. They delight in playing tricks, especially misleading travellers. Sometimes they do housework.

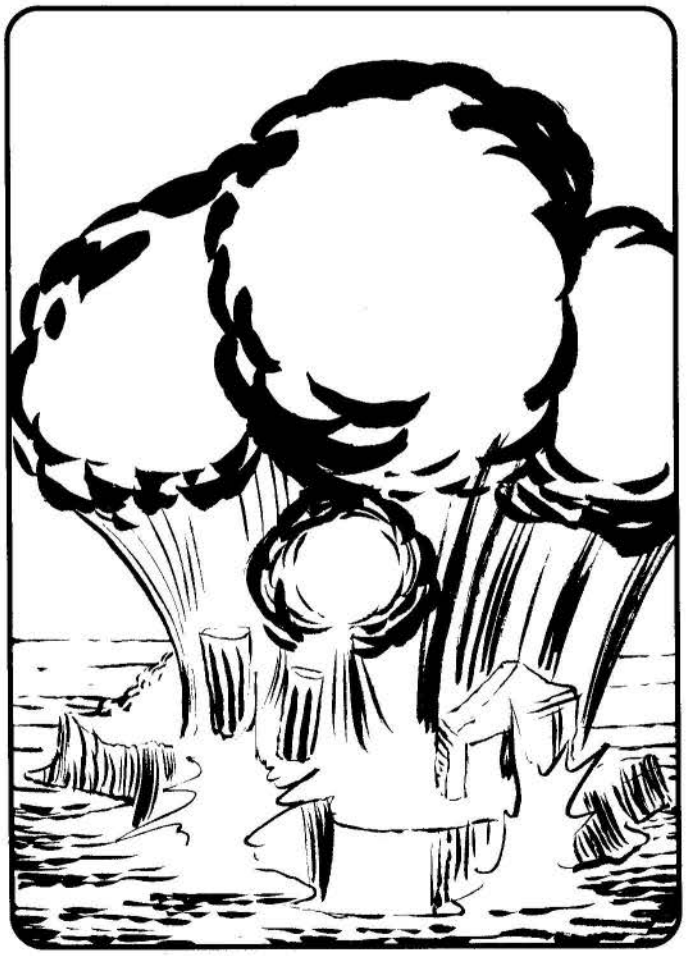
The knockers are Cornish tin-mining male fairies. Their knocking leads miners to rich veins, and they are generally friendly.

Banshees are Irish/Scottish fairies (the name derives from Bain Sidhe — female fairy) which bewail approaching death in particular families.

Redcaps are malignant male fairies which haunt the old peel towers and castles of the Scottish borders. They dye their caps in fresh human blood.

GIANTS

In Celtic mythology, giants were the first inhabitants of the British Isles, eventually killed off by humans. Giants are responsible for many features of the landscape — for instance, a giant and a giantess built St Michael's Mount in Cornwall. Some giants were man-eaters, others were gentle but rather stupid. Giant stories are commonest in Cornwall, perhaps because of the many megalithic monuments in the area, which seem to be made by giants.



LAKE AND RIVER MONSTERS

Whether derived from real creatures, invented to explain mysterious disappearances, or created by mothers to keep children away, many lakes and rivers are supposed to have monsters waiting to grab the unwary. Peg Powler and Jenny Greenteeth are green hags with long hair and sharp teeth which haunt the River Tees and Lancashire rivers repectively.

The Kelpie, or waterhorse, is a Scottish lake monster, a shapeshifter, which attempts to drown people. Sometimes it is a horse, which persuades children onto its back, then makes for the lake, where the children drown. Otherwise it is a handsome man who tries to seduce a girl; the clue to his nature is sand and water weeds in his hair.

THE LOST LANDS

A recurrent element in early British myth is the "Islands of the West". These are paradises which lie out in the Atlantic and are now lost to mortals. In the Celtic religion, they were originally the land of the dead, and had a variety of names such as the Irish Tir Nan Og ("Land of the young"). In later myths they were often populated by fairies, and were sometimes reached by mortals who returned to their own, only to find that centuries had passed. Some of these lands were floating islands, others normally submerged beneath the sea. The Irish Hy Breasail emerged off the western coast every seven years, but if touched with fire would remain accessible to mortals, instead of re-submerging.

The lost lands seem to have been inspired in part by physical evidence such as shingle banks, or actual remains of the woods and even dwellings which were inundated by the rising waters over the last several thousand years.

Lyonesse, from the Arthurian stories, was near the Scilly Isles, perhaps between them and Cornwall. In some legends, Lyonesse sank beneath the sea; in others, the land-route to it sank when Mordred's soldiers tried to reach it. The Scilly Isles they may have been a single island when people first found them, and their sinking formed the basis of the myth. Alternatively, the stories may have been inspired by St Michael's Mount, a rock outcrop (with a small town) on the Cornish coast. Its causeway approach is covered by the high tide. Some legends maintain that it is in fact the last remnant of Lyonesse.

Avalon, also from the Arthurian myths, seems to have been a typical Celtic western paradise, to which King Arthur retired when mortally wounded, and from which he might someday return. In the 12th Century, it was linked with Glastonbury Tor, originally a high spot amidst marshes.

Cantre'r Gwaelod ("the Bottom Cantred") was supposedly a city in Cardigan Bay, to the west of Wales, now drowned. Fairy islands were also supposed to be sited somewhere near Milford Haven, in Wales. Only a couple of centuries ago, there were stories of fairy inhabitants of these islands coming ashore to trade. (But then, it was simple fisherfolk telling the stories; GMs may to prefer to think about alien colonies with high technology.) Futher afield, Breton (French) stories tell of Ker-Is, drowned when dykes were unwisely opened, and the Greeks speak of Atlantis. For game treatment of this topic, see "Lyonesse and the Isles".

LAKE TOWNS

Similar stories concern lost cities beneath lakes. It is possible that these stories are a folk memory of the artificial islands used by Bronze Age people, which in some parts were still in use after the Romans had come and gone. These are most common in Ireland and Scotland.

In legends, these lake towns were either the dwellings of fairies (such as Nimue in the Arthurian myth), or simply cities destroyed by the catastrophe which formed the lake. One such legend is of the city or palace in Wales, founded on money obtained through murder, and later drowned in an act of supernatural vengence to form what is now Lake Llangorse in Wales.

LANDSCAPE

Folktales about the landscape explain some puzzling features as due to the action of some mythological or historical being. Wayland's Smithy, a neolithic long barrow, gets its name from a much later Anglo-Saxon hero/god. Other long barrows are known as "Giant's Grave", for obvious reasons.

The medieval scholar Michael Scot, who has been changed in folk tradition into a magician, is credited with reshaping the scenery in parts of the Scottish Borders. Similarly, King Arthur or Merlin, Robin Hood, and the Devil receive the credit for natural features such as oddly-shaped hills or artificial ones such as grave mounds or stone circles.

One set of Neolithic standing stones — Harold's Stones in Gwent — are said to have resulted from a trial of strength between a local magician, Jack o' Kent and the Devil, in which they threw stones from a local hill. The magician proved himself stronger than the Devil by throwing his stone the furthest. Alternatively, the stones are said to mark a battle between King Harold II of England and the Welsh. Standing stones are often reputed to be early war-memorials — Stonehenge was said to have been raised by Merlin to comemmorate a battle between British and Saxons.

The Devil himself often takes a hand in the landscape. Very many local churches are supposed to have been interfered with by the Devil during building — for instance when the stones mysteriously fall down during the night. The builders either find some magical remedy for the trouble, or move the building to another site. Churches which have detached belltowers are often explained in a similar manner: the Devil attempted to carry the tower off, but the bells rang, he dropped the tower, and there it stands to this day. In other stories, the Devil throws a stone at the church, it misses, and may be seen standing in the churchyard — explaining the occasional standing stone near a church.

Apart from being missiles employed by the Devil, standing stones, and particularly stone circles are very often explained as people turned to stone — for instance for dancing on the Sabbath. It often said that the stones dance again, at midnight, or when the village clock strikes thirteen.

In pagan times, standing stones or glacial erratics were often regarded as having a healing power. Stones with a hole in them, or which lean against others to form a gap were thought until recently to provide a cure for the sick if the sick person (usually a child) was passed through. A bramble rooted at both ends had a similar reputation.

Wells and springs, often dedicated to pagan deities thinly disguised as Christian saints, were very often thought to have healing powers or the ability to foretell the future. Sacrificial offerings were made to wells from Pre-Roman times onwards, and even today, the impulse to throw coins into wells is universal in Britain.

SUPERSTITIONS

Although superstitions have ceased to be important as they once were, their influence lingers on. Most general-purpose magazines carry horoscopes, even if most people do not seriously believe in astrology. Not many Britons will happily walk under a ladder, even if they justify it as fear that the workman may drop something on them.

Black cats, rabbits' feet, and four-leaved clovers are lucky, while Friday 13th is unlucky. Spilling salt is unlucky, and a pinch of it should be thrown over the left shoulder. Breaking a mirror brings seven years bad luck. In general, superstitious customs are similar to those in the US.

One well-known superstition is that if the Ravens ever leave the Tower of London, then the kingdom will fall. The ravens actually have a Beefeater detailed to feed them, to ensure the country's safety.

A single magpie (a black-and-white member of the crow family) is unlucky, two or more are lucky. Fortunately, magpies live in pairs or family groups for most of the year, so they are usually a lucky sign. An old rhyme goes:

"One for sorrow, two for joy,
Three for a girl and four for a boy [child]
Five for silver, six for gold,
Seven for a secret never to be told."

Weather superstitions are popular in newspapers with nothing better to print. Old country sages predict the coming weather from how deep the earthworms are burrowing, or whether the hedgehogs are hibernating early. One of the most famous superstitions predicts stable weather. The weather on St Swithin's Day (15 July) is supposed to define the weather:

"If on Swithin's day it chance to rain,
For forty days it shall remain.
If Swithin's say, it shall be fair,
For forty days it shall rain nae mair."

HISTORICAL MAGIC

Glendower: *I can call spirits from the vasty deep.*

Hotspur: *Why, so can I, or so can any man; But will they come when you do call for them?*

— Shakespeare, *Henry the Fourth, Part One*

There have always been legends of magic and witchcraft in Britain. Sometimes a reputation for magic became attached to a historical figure, particularly someone with a reputation for learning. Other legendary magicians, such as Merlin, may have been based on a real person; it is impossible to know.

THE HELL-FIRE CLUBS

Secret societies were all the rage amongst the idle and dissolute young rakes of the 18th Century. One type of society quickly became dubbed a "Hell-Fire Club" because it mixed satanism with the usual drunken debauchery. The earliest known Hell-Fire Club was operating from a London tavern in 1710. There were other such clubs in Dublin, Edinburgh, Cambridge and Oxford, (societies calling themselves Hell-Fire Clubs have operated at intervals in Oxford into the 20th Century).

The most famous Hell-Fire Club was founded by Sir Francis Dashwood. Dashwood was a member of a Hell-Fire Club in London in 1725, at the age of 17. He may have started his own society in London some time after this, but in 1753, he acquired the use of Medmenham Abbey, not far from London, from a yound protege of his. The Abbey had been converted into a manor house after the Dissolution; Dashwood converted it for his own uses, employing labourers from London who were sworn to secrecy.

There were small but luxurious "monk's cells", cellars stocked with delicacies and rare wines, a library of pornographic material. There was a chapel, kept locked and accessible only to the inner circle of the club, with decorations including obscene paintings and caricatures of the twelve apostles. Groups of "monks" (idle young rich men) and "nuns" (prostitutes and the occasional masked society lady) came from London to celebrate "black masses" as a preliminary to drunken orgies. It is doubtful whether anything more than half-serious blasphemous fun was intended; one member even went so far as to introduce a monkey, which he released as Dashwood was invoking Satan. The resulting terror, as the monks fled from this "manifestation", was as comic as it was pathetic.

The society came to an end in 1762, torn by internal quarrels, and amidst public scandal (the monkey may have escaped into the nearby village, causing panic among the superstitious villagers). The Abbey was stripped, and soon fell into ruins; papers of the society were burned.

THE DRUIDS

Despite their later reputation as magicians, the druids were primarily religious and social leaders. Very little is actually known about them for certain. Information about their practices comes from the Romans, who were not impartial observers, and they do not mention magical powers. One reason that the druids worried the Romans was that they were the only group with authority over all the tribes of the Celts, and could have united them against the Romans.

The druids had powers of judging court cases, and they performed the many sacrifices that the Celts felt to be necessary. Most of these sacrifices were of animals, but they also sacrificed humans, usually criminals and prisoners, who were burned alive in huge wicker cages. The oak and mistletoe seem to have been sacred plants, central to their rituals. The druids were astrologers and augurs.

Stonehenge is popularly associated with the druids, but this is mistaken; it was built long before them, and it was not used by them.

Merlin, King Arthur's advisor and magician, may have been based on a memory of the druids. Early versions of the legend make him a prophet and engineer rather than a magician.

WITCH HUNTING

The hysteria which led to the persecution of women (and men) as agents of the Devil and enemies of God was both briefer and milder in Britain than in mainland Europe. The Inquisition never operated in Britain. In other countries, tortured "witches" concocted lurid tales of pacts with the Devil, but in England, the use of torture in interrogation was usually illegal.

In Medieval times, paganism and sorcery were comparatively minor crimes in England. The first was punished by religious penance, while the second was a crime only if used for murder. In Wales, sorcery was accepted until the 17th Century, Scottish law, however, decreed that witches be burned.

The witch-craze in Britain began at the start of the 17th Century. In England, convicted witches were hung; in Scotland they were usually strangled before burning. A number of "tests" for witches were popular, if not always legal proof; witch marks, confirmed by pricking with a needle (they were numb); or a mole or wart (an "extra teat" to feed her familiar); and ducking (a witch would not sink). While torture was illegal in England, suspects could be kept awake for days and nights on end until they confessed. Needless to say, witch finders who worked for a set fee per witch could manipulate these tests to their own profit.

The peak of witchhunting in England was in 1645, when Matthew Hopkins, the "Witchfinder General" was at work. The social chaos caused by the Civil War fuelled peoples' superstitious fears. At several of the battles of that year, soldiers slaughtered and mutilated all the camp-followers of the opposing army, for fear that they were witches.

In England, witch belief began to decline after the Civil War. The unwillingness of judges to convict suspects led to occasional mob actions. Even this century, there have been cases of "blooding" suspected witches — it was believed that drawing blood from a witch's forehead would remove her power.

In Scotland, it was not until the Union with England that witch hunting began to die out. The last execution for witchcraft was in 1722. In Wales, executions were uncommon, but belief in witches remained widespread in the mid-19th Century. Ireland was fortunate enough to avoid the witchhunting mania. In 1736, the witchcraft laws were repealed, and the persecution of suspected witches forbidden.

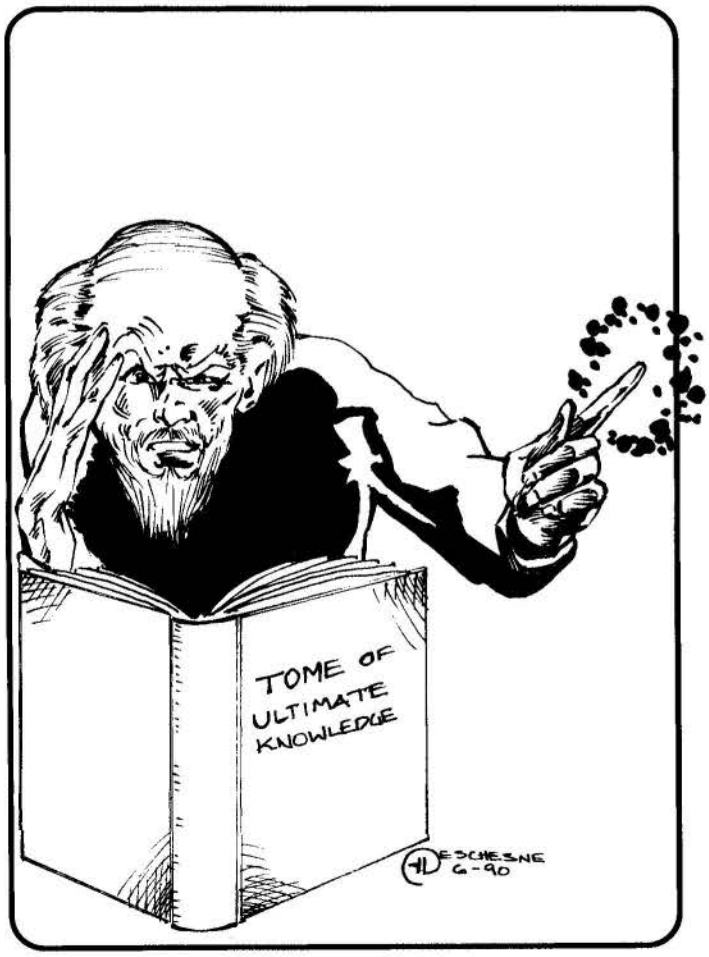
So-called witchcraft revivals of the 20th Century claim that tens of thousands of satanists or witches exist in Britain today. Most, if not all, of these groups are only a few years old, and their rituals are more imaginative than authentic.

WHO WERE THE WITCHES?

It is difficult to know for certain just who were the witches and what, if any, powers they had. An era which believed that a woman could give birth to rabbits (a celebrated case in 1726) could ascribe just about any powers to anyone.

One notorious case was of the North Berwick witches in 1589. King James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) was escorting his bride from Denmark to Scotland, and was delayed by storms. While the royal fleet was at sea, another storm blew up, scattering the fleet. An eyewitness described how the king's ship seemed to be driven against the wind, and it was only with great difficultly that the Royal ship made it safely to shore.

After the royal couple arrived safely, a servant from the royal palace was questioned under mild torture about her habit of staying out all night. She confessed to being in a conspiracy to murder the king. She named the conspirators, who were arrested for treason. Under torture, they revealed that the Earl of Bothwell (a relative of the king) had instigated the plot, and that the witches had thrown a dead cat into the sea to raise the storm. Although James was initially sceptical, when one of the witches recounted details of the conversation between himself and his bride on their wedding night, he became convinced of the supernatural power of witches. He promoted the persecution of witches in both Scotland, and later England.



Most witches were, however, humbler and less powerful. The Pendle Witches, executed in Lancashire in 1612, were convicted on the testimony of a 9-year-old child and a mentally defective man. Several of the witches were senile, one was disfigured, and all had lived in wretched poverty. Their "charms", for curing people, and so on, consisted of garbled versions of Latin prayers.

WIZARDS

In Medieval times, popular superstition confused scholarship with magic, and many a highly-learned and pious sage may have been surprised at the reputation for sorcery which attached to him. There were even charltons who used a reputation as a sorceror to get rich, dangerous as that might seem in witch-hunting days. In fact, "witches" were almost all poor, despised and ignorant women, while sorcerors, alchemist and astrologers were men of standing or with a powerful patron. So long as they were not obviously wicked, and were careful not to get involved in politics, they could get away with much more than the witches could.

MICHAEL SCOT

Michael Scot was a Scottish scholar, mathematician, and famous astrologer who translated important texts from Arabic and Hebrew, and wrote books on astrology and alchemy. He soon gained a reputation as a wizard, even though he was a clergyman, and briefly archbishop of Cashel in Ireland. He died about 1235.

Stories about Scot include hills which were formed or reshaped by his Devils, castles which were constructed by them, and his use of a Devil to transport himself to Rome to find out the date of Easter from the Pope. When the Pope did not believe Scot's story, Scot showed him his hat, still covered with snow from Scotland.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

A Scottish poet and prophet, of the 13th Century. He is the subject of a traditional ballad about how the Queen of Fairyland took him to serve her for seven years and rewarded him with the gift of prophecy. According to popular legend, Thomas never died, but eventually went back to Fairyland, where he lives to this day. LIke Merlin, there are tales of his buying horses to sleep beside the warriors of a mysterious king beneath a hill.

ROGER BACON

The last of the great medieval scientists, he lectured on science at Oxford, where he performed experiments and wrote copiously. Later he became a Franciscan monk. Bacon had the misfortune to live when the Christian church was moving from acceptance of scientific enquiry to closed-minded dogmatism. In 1278, Bacon may have been accused of sorcery; his movements were restricted, and his writings were surpressed. His work on flying machines and the spherical shape of the earth later influenced Leonardo da Vinci and Christopher Columbus. Bacon also described the telescope and spectacles, and introduced gunpowder to Europe, probably from Arabic sources.

Important as Bacon's writings were, popular mythology has laden him with a reputation for sorcery, and a far more spectacular achievement; the creation of one of the world's first robots. Supposedly, he created a brass head, which spoke cryptically three times before bursting into flames.

DR JOHN DEE AND EDWARD KELLY

Dr Dee became astrologer to Queen Mary I, although he was soon to be in trouble and briefly imprisoned for sorcery. When Elizabeth I came to the throne, Dee calculated the propitious day for her coronation, and remained in touch with her throughout her reign, advising her and helping to counteract wild superstitions. He translated Euclid, encouraged the study of mathematics, and the exploration of the New World. He offered to find a silver mine for Elizabeth, but she declined. He may have also dug for treasure at Sutton Hoo.

Dee was approached by the charlatan Edward Kelly, who became Dee's crystal gazer. Kelly's "spirits" soon impressed a minor European prince with hints that he might become king of Poland, and the prince insisted that Dee, Kelly, and their wives accompany him to his home. It was soon obvious that the Prince had no real power, and Dee and Kelly left, travelling throughout central Europe. Dee's reputation gained them access to the courts of the local rulers, where Kelly performed his tricks (which now included the ability to transform base metals into gold). Dee later returned to England, and became warden of Manchester College until his death in 1608.

Kelly's life is less well-known. His early forays into the supernatural included attempts to summon the dead. He eventually died after being imprisoned by the Holy Roman Emperor, who sponsored alchemists; he, at least, was not taken in by Kelly for long.

DANIEL DUNGLAS HOME

Daniel Dunglas Home has been described as the greatest 19th Century spiritualist medium. His life reads more like a badly-written novel than real life.

He was a Scot, given to dramatic gestures such as an abrupt conversion to Roman Catholicism, and nearly entered a monastery. He had a variety of careers, including stage performer, and was eventually expelled from Rome for "sorcery". He married twice, both times to Russian aristocrats. In between marriages he came to London where he met a rich, childless, elderly widow, who happened to be nutty about spiritualism. Home's "spirits" advised her that she should adopt him as a son, and on their advice she gave him £60,000; she later returned to her senses, and successfully sued him for the return of this money.

He was extremely cautious over who he would perform before, refusing trained observers. The poet Elizabeth Barratt Browning attended a session, and believed that genuine supernatural events occured, although her husband, Robert Browning, thought that they were accomplished by trickery.

Home's seances were fairly typical, although more skillfull than most. They were conducted at night or in a darkened room with the sitters linking hands around a table. Aside from spiritual communicaitons through knockings, typical events included table wobbling or levitation, ectoplasmic hands touching the sitters, and a spirit playing a concertina while Home held it up. Home's speciality was levitating himself.

It is not known exactly how Home produced these effects, but he owned several miniature mouth organs which could be played inside the mouth, and which could have produced the simple tunes supposedly played on the concertina.

ALEISTER CROWLEY

This English eccentric, "magician" and self-publicist revelled in self-coined titles such as "The Great Beast" and coined the famous tenet of black magic: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law". In 1898, he was initiated into a British occult society, but he soon broke away and established an order with himself (naturally) at the head. He boasted of his experiments in raising demons, performing black masses involving human sacrifice, attempts at recreating pagan rituals, and invoking spirits in the Great Pyramid in Egypt. He also wrote screeds of bad verse. He later moved to Sicily, setting up an "Abbey", where he dabbled in drugs and held "sacred orgies" (several of his "concubines" had to be hospitalised). The "abbey" was eventually closed down by authorities and Crowley retired to a house on the banks of Loch Ness. At his burial in 1947, his disciples sang hymns to Pan and Satan.

CRYPTO-ZOOLOGY

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosphy."

— Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Despite being a heavily-populated country, Britain is the home of persistent reports of sightings of creatures unknown to science. The best-known of these is the Loch Ness monster (which has its own section below), but there are others, while similar monsters are reputed to live in many other lakes in Scotland and Ireland. Apart from eyewitness accounts, however, the evidence for British beasts is even less tangible than for the American Sasquatch; even footprints are thin on the ground (a famous set of prints of "Nessie" were promptly proved to have originated from an umbrella stand made out of a preserved hippo foot!)

This may lead many sceptics to assume that weird reports are simply mistakes, hoaxes, hallucinations or optical illusions, but there are a number of other possibilities. One is simply that the physical evidence is there but has not been collected or recognised. Another is that many of the "beasts" are actually visitors from flying saucers stopping off to stretch their legs. The weirdest explanation is that the creatures are seen through a local warp in time or space.

Researchers in the paranormal have pointed to some common features in many cryptozoological sightings; the creature appearing in a perverse manner to people who have just run out of camera film; paralysis on the part of the viewers — otherwise level-headed witnesses have been quite immobilised by fear quite disproportionate to the creature causing it; and the tendency for pictures to come out blurred. It has been suggested that this is not coincidental, but some sort of paranormal effect. If so, then the sites of these warps appear to be connected with other paranormal activity such as UFOs, and with the ley-line network.

THE UFO CONNECTION

Sightings of UFOs are much the same in the UK as elsewhere. Saucer-like or elongated shapes have been reported performing aerodynamically impossible maneuvers, and conventional explanations for them include sightings of satellites, ball lightning, and other natural and artificial phenomena. It has been suggested that UFOs are often seen along ley lines and in places of mystical, cryptozoological and fairy significance. Glastonbury Tor has mystical and fairy connections, and has often been a site of UFO activity, and UFOs have even been seen (along with "spacesuited" aliens) along the banks of Loch Ness.

THE UFOS HAVE LANDED?

One phenomenon, which has been well documented recently, is flattening of cereal crops such as wheat. These flattened areas are often circular, and sometimes a central circle is surrounded by smaller, outlying circles. Some people believe that these marks are evidence of UFOs, but it now seems that they are produced by a natural phenomen, possibly a swirl of ionised air.

THE BLACK CAT

One of the most persistent cryptozoological sightings is of a black feline, about the size of a lynx or bobcat. The moorlands of Cornwall and Devon, Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor are remote enough for a rare, shy animal to be spotted rarely. Sufficent food could be provided by the mountain sheep, which are untended for much of the year; the work of a few predators would not be noticed.

Some people believe that the cat is an unknown native species, while others have suggested that it is a large, feral domestic cat, or an exotic creature which has escaped from a zoo, circus or private owner. Reports are most common from the south west, but there are occasional spates of reports from the heavily-populated south of England.

Some cryptozoologists have linked the black cat with the common ghost "Old Shuck", the black dog. Old Shuck, however, tends to haunt specific stretches of road, and to disappear in a ghostly manner; the cat seems to be altogether more physical.

CORNISH OWLMAN?

In 1976 and 1978, children repeatedly reported seeing a giant owl in the vicinity of Mawnan Church on the south coast of Cornwall. The first appearance of this beast was when it was seen hovering above the church; later it was seen in the woods near the church. Appropriately, it was spotted at night or in the late evening. The children described it as large as a man, with grey feathers and glowing red eyes.

Earlier, UFO-type lights had been seen in the vicinity, and nearby Falmouth Bay was home to a spate of sea-monster sightings in the summer of 1976, too, lending support to the suggestion that there may have been a warp to another world in the vicinity.

DRAGONS

The common image of the dragon is a bat-winged fire-breathing lizard that devours princesses and guards treasure, but this heraldic beast seems to have been purely mythical. British dragons were generally more closely related to sea and lake serpents. They seem to have become extinct in early medieval times.



British dragons proper were wingless beasts with poisonous breath. They often lived in pools, from which they could issue forth to ravage the countryside, although one of their favourite foods, with which more than one dragon was lured to its death, was milk.

Dragons are virtually unknown from Ireland, but were known to and used as symbols by both the British and English. The Welsh Red Dragon derives from a story/prophecy from the time of King Arthur, in which a red dragon (representing the British) fought a white dragon (representing the English) and eventually drove the white dragon out, a prophecy which has not come to pass. The British confused the matter by using the term "dragon" to mean chief, as in Uther Pendragon. Later, dragons were seen flying in the air as portents of the first Viking raids.

LOCH MONSTERS

Lake and sea monsters are perhaps the modern descendents or relatives of the dragon. It is not only in Loch Ness that a water monster may be found. Other Scottish lochs, including Loch Morar, Loch Awe, Loch Rannoch, and Gairloch have monsters similar to Nessie. From Eire, smaller creatures along the Nessie pattern, but only about 10' in length have been reported from small loughs in remote parts of the centre and west. These are supposed to amphibious, travelling between the lakes by night. If this is so, then obviously the monster cannot be a plesiosaur, for these creatures were entirely water-dwelling.

SEA SERPENTS

Cryptozoologists suggest that of the several types of sea-serpents, three have been spotted around the British Isles.

The "Long-necked" type is amphibious, and similar to the Loch Ness creature; it is also the most common and wider-anging species. It seems to be 15-60' long, with a long neck, small head (sometimes with small horns), a fatty hump on the back, four webbed feet, and no tail. It is a fast swimmer, and may migrate south in winter. It is probably a giant seal. In 1975 and 1976, one these creatures was spotted around Falmouth Bay in Cornwall; it was christened "Morgawr" ("Sea Giant" in Cornish.)

The "Many-Humped" type, commonly seen on the eastern coast of the US, seems to stay in or near the waters of the Gulf Stream, and sometimes turns up around Britain. It is about 60' long, slender, with a medium-length neck and rounded head, and a line of many small humps along the back. It is coloured dark above and white underneath. It has a lobed tail, no limbs, and may be a primitive form of whale.

The "Merhorse" has a long floating mane, and a horse-like, whiskered head, with very large eyes, and a slender neck; the rest of the animal is not well-known. It seems to be 30' or so long, and probably spends most of its time in deep water. It might be another member of the seal family.

MERFOLK

Merfolk have been seen in British seas for centuries. Even as late as 1947, a fisherman near Muck in the Hebrides saw a mermaid sitting on a floating herring box, combing her hair. In 1830, a mermaid was killed by a small boy of the island of Benbecula in the Hebrides. The local land agent ordered a coffin for her.

Mermaids are the subject of much folklore and are generally ridiculed by modern investigators, who claim that they are based on seals or dugongs. Dugongs are not found in British waters, while seals do not have long hair, human shape, or even a long fishy tail.

THE "DEVIL'S" FOOTPRINTS

On the morning of 8 February 1855, the people of Devon woke up to find a fresh snowfall. In the snow were the usual tracks of wildlife, domestic animals, and people. So far, so normal. What the people did not expect to find were the tracks which were nearly circular or horseshoe shape, yet which ran in the straight line of a bipedal gait.

The tracks were found around 18 towns and villages, and on both sides of the Exe estuary, some two miles wide at that point. The tracks covered about a hundred miles in all. The footprints were found in fields and gardens, at times they travelled up walls and along roofs, at others they seemed to pass through such obstacles as though they did not exist. There was near-panic for a few days, and the superstitious believed that they were the footprints of the Devil himself.

No convincing explanation has ever been put forward for these footprints. No known meteorogical conditions could account for such traces, while it seems inconceivable that some unknown creatures came out of hiding for this single night. The footprints were not seen again for nearly a century, until, in October of 1950, the same footprints were seen in the sand on a Devon beach. The tracks led down into the sea, and did not return.

THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

Of all Britain's creatures of dubious reality, the greatest is, of course, the Loch Ness Monster — "Nessie" to her many fans. Despite her competitors in other Scottish and Irish lakes and on the high seas, Nessie has caught the public imagination most. The idea that there is a large, unknown creature occupying Loch Ness in Scotland is widespread, and there is even some evidence for the it.

Loch Ness is a very substantial lake by British standards; sited in a deep geological rift. It is twenty-three miles long, a mile wide, and up to four hundred feet deep, and rather murky due to peat washed into it by mountain streams. Whether it could hide a large aquatic or amphibious creature is an interesting question, but it's conceivable. Incidentally, the loch is linked to the North Sea (specifically, to the coastal town of Inverness, a community of about 40,000 people) by a short river, the Ness, and more indirectly to the west coast by a nineteenth-century canal (built for fairly small craft, not modern shipping).

Stories about a creature in the loch perhaps start with that of St Columba in the sixth century (the saint supposedly tamed the monster), and may go back further, to Celtic legends of evil "water horses" (Each Uisge). In the twentieth century, a new road along the shore brought many more visitors — and sightings. Some of these produced blurred photographs, and a number of inconclusive scientific expeditions have been mounted.



If the monster is a real, entirely natural creature (or more likely, one of a small breeding colony), it could belong in various categories; suggestions have included giant eels, sturgeon, newts, and even invertebrates. However, the most appealing guess is that Nessie is a survival from the age of the dinosaurs — a plesiosaurus. This is more plausible if one accepts modern theories that dinosaurs were warm-blooded creatures, not reptiles, as Loch Ness, although it never freezes up, is as cold as one should expect a northern lake to be. Of course, it's possible to develop more weird theories, such as that Nessie is an extra-dimensional creature, a visitor from another planet, or a supernatural monster.

For game material on the monster, see the section later in this book.

GHOULIES AND GHOSTIES

Britain's particular claim to fame as far as the supernatural goes is ghosts. Witchcraft (see above) has a long tradition, but zombies and the like remain a foreign phenomenon. The Devil appears in the mythology especially of Scotland, where he is usually outwitted by a canny hero, but modern appearances, demon posessions and the like, are no more common than elsewhere.

Poltergeists are occasionally found in Britain, and are much like those elsewhere. They are associated with a disturbed child or adolescent rather than a place, and are not a long-term phenomenon.

Outside the fictional adventures of Count Dracula, vampires are rare. Highgate cemetary in London (which contains the grave of Karl Marx), a walled, rambling site containing many ornate 19th century vaults and now closed to the public, was the site of a vampire-hunt in the 1960s. Croglin Grange in Cumberland was the site of a 19th Century vampire incident; the vampire was traced to a vault in the local churchyard and burned.

Other possibly supernatural phenomena are dealt with in the section on cryptozoology. Fairies have regretfully to be consigned to the section on folklore.

GHOSTS

Occasional ghosts are reported from perfectly ordinary, modern buildings, but they are most numerous in historical, or at least old, buildings: manor houses, prisons, old farmhouses, public houses. It would be quite impossible to give anything like a representative survey of British ghosts, but some patterns can be found. Roman legionaries have occasionally been seen marching (once up to their knees in the floor of a building in York), but ghosts earlier than the medieval period are very rare.

Ghosts of famous people are common. Ann Boleyn, ill-fated second wife of Henry VIII, is seen walking the Tower of London, carrying her severed head; she has also been seen, head intact, at places with which she was familiar in life. Other ghosts of the Tower include Sir Walter Raleigh, and Jane Grey, the Nine Days Queen.



Borley Rectory in Essex is one of the most famous sites of ghostly activity. Much publicity was given to the case by investigator Harry Price, who is suspected of embroidering the evidence, but ghost reports predate his involvement. The ugly, red-bricked Rectory was built in 1862. Ghosts noted in the 19th Century included a nun, a headless monk, and a phantom coach; a variety of romantic explanations involving doomed and forbidden love have been given for these three. In 1928, the new rector contacted psychic investigator Price, who began investigations. The Rectory was destroyed by fire in 1939, and witnesses reported a pair of cloaked figures, a man and a woman, seen leaving the building at the height of the fire. The ruin was eventually demolished, but it is said that the haunting still continues.

Glamis Castle in Scotland, home of the Queen Mother, has several ghosts, including that of Earl Patie, who diced with the Devil on the Sabbath, and returns for a ghostly game in the hope of winning his soul back. The room in which the game takes place has now been bricked up. In the 19th Century, a secret room within the castle contained a terrible secret known only to the lord and his heir. It has been suggested that the first son of the lord, said to have died in infancy, was actually alive, deformed and mentally deficient. If so, he died in the 1870s aged about 50.

Other ghosts include grey or white ladies, monks, headless horsemen, civil war soldiers and phantom coaches. Spectral motor vehicles are rare. There is a haunted portrait in a building which now makes up part of the University of York. It is supposed to leave the wall at midnight to walk about the room. Photographs of the painting are said to come out smeared or undeveloped. Ghosts of animals are uncommon; ghostly cats are occasionally found, and a swine-herd complete with his charges walks near the spot where he was murdered.

The most important animal ghost is the Black Dog. This dog, Old Shuck as it is known in Norfolk, is a huge hound, often with glowing eyes. To see it usually a sign of bad luck, though in some parts it is protective. It is known in many of the counties of England, usually associated with specific places or stretches of road. It was a local version of this legend which inspired the Sherlock Holmes mystery "The Hound of the Baskervilles".

LEYS, ALL LEYS

In 1921, Alfred Watkins received a revelation. Standing on a hill in Herefordshire, he had a sudden vision of "criss-crossing lines of light". He developed this into a theory, based on the idea that stone-age Britons used long, straight roadways, trading routes, which he called leys, and that leys were marked by standing stones, notches in the skyline, ponds, and so on. He suggested that folk-lore recorded these tracks, and that leys could be traced on maps by finding alignments of sites.

This theory became popular in the '20's, and ley-hunting became a popular hobby. Later, dowsers said that ley-lines could be found by pendulum-bobbing over the ground or a map; perhaps ley-lines marked the course of underground streams? In the '60's, these streams became currents of "earth-energy", which primitive people could sense, control, and direct. Most such "streams" were said to be positive, "white", but some were "negative" and "black", causing corrosion of telephone lines, and headaches, depression, suicide and cancer in people. (Fortunately, some dowsers claimed to be able to cure "black streams".) By then, theorists were saying that ley lines were not even necessarily straight.

Ley-hunters require that a ley-line should contain five alignments within a ten-mile stretch. These are traced on 1"/mile maps using pencil lines — on that scale, about twenty yards wide. As a large object may only be clipped by a line, a map tends to contain more "ley lines" than a trading system would ever need, without the pattern that might be expected in a system of natural forces. Furthermore, the "ancient" sites which are used as markers may include Stone Age long barrows (from 3000 BC), Bronze Age sites (from 1000 BC), Norman churches, and even roads which date from the Enclosures of the 17th century AD, as well as boulders left behind Ice Age glaciers. This has led to suggestions that secret societies (perhaps the Knights Templar) kept the secret of ley lines alive from the neolithic to the medieval era. Alternatively, the markers may have been placed by people responding unconsciously to the natural forces — but why, then, are twentieth-century constructions excluded? The usual answer from ley-hunters to all this is "continuity of occupation".

(Actually, over the last 5,000 years, there have been a lot of social upheavals in Britain. Invasions by Beaker People, Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Irish, Vikings and Normans have each obscured previous cultures. Communities have been founded — "New Towns" are not a twentieth century invention — and rulers such as the Romans have tried to urbanise subject-people such as the Celts. Only defensible sites, such as hill-forts, have really seen "continuity of occupation".)

Ley lines have been incorporated into larger theories such as those of "zodiac figures" traced out on the landscape around sites such as Glastonbury Tor; they have also ranged in length from short "local" lines to hundreds of miles. The "zodiacs", incidentally, are supposed to be giant pictures formed of streams, drainage ditches, boundaries, and so on, arranged in circles and mirroring the traditional astrological patterns; cynics find the "pictures" vague and unconvincing.

WHAT ARE LEY-LINES?

Here, the theories become useful to campaigns. Some ley-hunters think that they may have been ritual alignments over short distances, limited by line of sight; others go further. Extreme views see the stone age as a golden age when non-materialistic, spiritual people practised a form of geomancy, harnessing the "earth force" through ley lines, releasing it through rituals, and storing it in special sites, the most important of which were Avebury, Stonehenge, and Glastonbury. The "earth force" could be used for healing, fertility, weather control, levitation (useful when building Stonehenge), astral projection, and space travel. It is claimed that UFOs are often seen along ley lines (tapping power? navigating? pointing them out to ignorant humans?); it is also said that 90% of all supernatural manifestations are seen along leys, so they may mark places where other dimensions impinge on our own. Perhaps UFOs, and the fairy-folk traditionally associated with stone circles, are really visitors from other universes...

If ley lines mark streams of power, then magic-wielding characters might tap them, and supervillain sorcerers wouldn't care much if, in the process, they unleashed a torrent of "black streams", leading to mass insanity and destruction of the 'phone system. If leys indicate weak points in dimensions, then they could be the starting-point for extra-dimensional invasions, and so on. See the character StarLine (of the Night Watch) in the "heroes" section for one development of the theme.



LOCAL HEROES (AND VILLAINS)

Andrea: *Unhappy the land that has no heroes.*
Galileo: *No, unhappy the land that needs heroes.*

— Bertolt Brecht, *Galileo*

THE ASSUMED BACKGROUND

This section provides an assortment of NPCs, heroic, villainous, and ambiguous, who can be used in scenarios involving the UK. We have tried to make things as "generalisable" as possible, to enable GMs to fit them into any campaign, but it has been necessary to work to a loose, "generic" framework. This is consistent with most *Champions* products; the "history" involved goes like this —

* At some date in pre-history, the Earth was visited by at least one extra-terrestrial race of incredible power and scientific skill, who decided, for reasons of their own, to intervene in Terran evolution. This race, called here the "Progenitors" (one word is as good as another), seem to have manipulated humanity or its ancestors, conducted various peculiar genetic experiments, and then departed, destroying most obvious signs of their visits. However, the Progenitors still exist, somewhere in the universe.
* Much later, during the long, slow fall of the Roman empire, there was a ruler in Britain called Arthur, who led a force of warriors against the invading Saxons. GMs can choose whether "their" Arthur was a Celtic warlord or an anachronistic medieval-style king with a retinue of plate-armoured knights; the section on Lyonesse assumes a fair level of power and the presence of considerable sorcery or psychic talents, but won't fit very well with the medieval or Hollywood versions of the Arthurian story.
* Although there were various kinds of colourful heroes at many times in history, true "superheroes" first emerged just before the Second World War. Earlier in the inter-war period, there had been a number of crime-fighters and explorers, but the combination of strange costumes, exotic powers, and secret identities first emerged in about 1938. It was largely an American phenomenon; during the war, the mood in countries where fighting took place was against the individual exhibitionist-hero.
* Since the war, the "superhero phenomenon" has spread, albeit slowly, and with it have come increasing but low-key contacts with extra-terrestrial civilisations, worries about threats from super-powered mutants, and so on. Some super-beings use magic, but tend to be quiet about it, so most people — scientists included — are sceptical on the subject, regarding it as, at most, a combination of psionic powers and Sleight-of-Hand. Psionic studies and "super-

gadgets" come from the leading edge of scientific research, but most results in these areas are the products of wayward genius, with little effect on society generally.

* The first real emergence of British-based super-heroes was in the 1960's, with a handful of mutants, a number of scientists achieving remarkable results in robotics, and scientific research accidents producing a few physically enhanced individuals. These fought a number of exotic criminals, most of them engineers with tastes for bizarre gadgetry. After this, things quieted down for a while.
* By the early '80's, a number of American supervillains had decided that the UK looked like a soft target, while several "native" problems had emerged. Fortunately, new British superheroes had also begun to appear. Today, many people would say that Britain has quite enough superbeings for a geographically small country.

Incidentally, the backgrounds for some of these characters involve "standard" characters or groups drawn from the *Champions* rules or from other HERO publications. In particular, you'll find references to VIPER, a powerful international conspiracy which uses well-armed agents and secret bases to pursue wealth and power, and DEMON, a widespread group of evil sorcerors who use agents and high technology as tools in their quest for magical power, and who take a particular interest in obtaining sorcerous artifacts for study and exploitation. If you don't want to use these or other material that's in here, just substitute something similar from your own campaign.

BRITISH ISLES (Superbeing Sites)

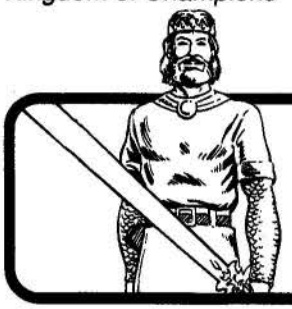


Adjustments for Different Power Levels

These characters are mostly designed for use in standard superhero campaigns; that is, games with characters built on about 100 points plus 100-150 disadvantages, and with 0-100 or so experience. (Some of these characters have a lot more points than that, but if so, either they're not built as combat machines, but for flexibility, or they are "loners" who are happy to fight whole teams of opponents.) GMs who are running campaigns at different power levels should feel free to adjust them accordingly. For low-power and "heroic" campaigns, this may even mean removing characters' super-powers and/or reducing them to "Normal Characteristic Maxima" levels, perhaps substituting guns for energy blasts and Persuasion skill for Mind Control. For very high power campaigns, just add STR, DEX, SPD, dice of damage, and skill levels, until you're satisfied.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS BOOK

Abbreviation ..... Game Terms
" ..... Inches (ie. hexes)
Act ..... Activation Roll
Adv ..... Advantage
AP ..... Armour Piercing
AK ..... Area Knowledge
AVLD Attack vs. Limited Defences (will usually be followed by a description of the appropriate defence in brackets)
DC ..... Damage Class
Disad ..... Disadvantage
EB ..... Energy Blast
FAM ..... Familiarity
FF ..... Force Field
HA ..... Hand-to-Hand Attack (added damage)
HKA ..... Hand-to-Hand Killing Attack
IAF ..... Inobvious Accessible Focus
IIF ..... Inobvious Inaccessible Focus
IR ..... Infra-Red
KB ..... Knock-Back
KS ..... Knowledge Skill
m ..... Variable Slot (in a Multipower)
NCI ..... Non-Combat Influence
NND ... (Attack with) No Normal Defence (will usually be followed by a description of the attack or the appropriate defence)
OAF ..... Obvious Accessible Focus
OIF ..... Obvious Inaccessible Focus
PER ..... Perception
ph ..... Phase
pow ..... powerful
PS ..... Professional Skill
pts ..... points
Rec ..... Recover (from Berserk/Enraged)
Red ..... Reduced
RKA ..... Ranged Killing Attack
R.Mod ..... Range Modifier
SC ..... Science
TK ..... Telekinesis
u ..... Fixed ("Ultra") Slot (in a Multipower)
UV ..... Ultra-Violet
w/ ..... with
w/o ..... without



THE NEW KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

Membership: The Clansman, Albion, the Gurkha, the Consul, and Silver Shadow. Sir David Mason is the team's head of administration.

Origin: When the British government decided that it needed an official superhero team of its own, it made one mistake; it left the team name to a middle-ranking civil servant, who promptly named the team "The New Knights of the Round Table". Fortunately, this mouthful has easily been abbreviated to either the "New Knights", the "New Round Table", or simply the "Knights". (The choice of name made the bureaucrat doubly unpopular, as none of the team's "field" members were actually knights of the realm, but the press releases were out before anyone thought of that.) Even more fortunately, the team has proved better than its name.

The New Knights were a result of government concern in the early '80s. An increasing number of super-powered beings were active in the UK, some of them criminals, few of them controllable. The police had developed STOP, which had scored some successes, but the Home Office noted that certain situations required very special responses; the Foreign Office observed the international operations of some super-beings; the Ministry of Defence had some worrying reports on the military potential of superpowers; and the Conservative Party Central Office had noticed the publicity advantages of superheroes to the government. On the other hand, the Treasury looked askance at any requests for funding for anything as strange as a "supergroup".

The (inevitable British) compromise solution was the creation of an all-purpose official team. This is vailable to any Minister on request, responsible to the Home Office except when sent abroad (which put them under the Foreign Office's control), but with a serving soldier in command who filed full reports with military intelligence. The announcement was made to the press (*The Sun's* headline was "SUPER-BRITS! Zap Off, You Yanks"; *The Guardian's* was "Government Announces 'Super-Team' Plans; MoD winning in funding battle").

The next problem was membership. The leader was Colin McNeil, one of the Army's finest serving soldiers (and its most doggedly loyal). He requested that a certain Gurkha corporal be recruited; while this was still being arranged, he was sent on his first mission.

At three o'clock one morning, an unidentified, non-human being was seen moving through London towards Buckingham Palace. A STOP squad had been alerted, but McNeil, with his experimental equipment, was close to hand; the eventual result was the recruitment of the Consul. He was soon joined by the Gurkha, and then came a report from an Norfolk hospital.

"Thou askest that I should serve my monarch?" inquired the patient, and accepted the offer and the code-name Albion. Finally, a retired hero asked his government contacts to help his daughter, and the team gained Silver Shadow.

The Knights have been given a base, a vehicle, and a career civil servant (Sir David Mason) as their public spokesman and administrative liaison. They have become a successful hero team, assigned to high-profile or unusual missions, and their status seems secure.

Tactics: Team tactics are based on the Clansman's careful analysis and preparation, often using Albion to scout the target area before going in as a team. Despite the non-military members' tendency to get distracted, this can work very well. Each team member is trained to exploit their strengths and cover their weaknesses.

Group Relations: The New Knights work together well, mostly on the basis of amiable mutual incomprehension. The Clansman may become exasperated with the others (except the Gurkha), but he quite enjoys the challenge of leading them; the Gurkha is calm and philosophical about the job; the Consul is reasonable with everyone; Silver Shadow feels she has a duty, and has a crush on the Clansman; Albion is just confused, and Sir David hides his superiority complex most of the time.

External Relations: The New Knights are always ready to assist any British official body with a problem, within limits. Mostly, they get on well with government, police, and military, although of course disagreements may arise. Their relations with STOP are cordial, but cool; there is a clash of temperaments between the Clansman and Hetherington. The former is a formal and correct soldier who goes "by the book", whereas the latter achieves results by bending rules and doing things his own way. The groups can work together, but their leaders sometimes register annoyance at each other. The Clansman also has the typical British armed services amiable contempt for other armed forces, especially those he sees as "unprofessional", and the rest of the team have picked up some of this.

Most of the New Knights quite like and respect the "freelance" heroes they've met (with exceptions), but the Clansman, at heart, distrusts their lack of discipline. Again, he's polite and obedient to orders, but he'll reprimand or arrest anyone who over-steps the mark. (He knows that minor laws may be bent when major crimes are being stopped, but he thinks that this should be a rare "necessary evil".) He worries especially about the London Watch's size, lack of formality, and international connections.

THE CLANSMAN

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
18	STR	8	10	Berserks vs. Casual Killers,8-, 11-
20	DEX	30	10	Enraged if innocents hurt,11-, 11-
20	CON	20	15	Hates to fail — may "play safe"
16	BODY	12	15	Highly conventional in behaviour
13	INT	3		& attitudes
14	EGO	8	10	Despises those who endanger
18	PRE	8		innocents
14	COM	2	20	Normal Characteristic Maxima
8+	PD	4	5	Distinctive Features (Military look
7+	ED	3		& manner: Easily Concealed)
5	SPD	30*	15	Watched, UK Government (more
10	REC	4		pow, NCI), 14-
40	END	0	5	1d6 Unluck
35	STUN	0	195	Experience

* Note has "Normal Characteristic Maxima"

Cost	Powers/Equipment	END
26	M/power (45pt pool), OIF (Backpack Grenad Thrower), (total of) 12 uses	
2 u	4" Radius Darkness, Stops Normal & UV vision, 4 uses each of 3 seg. (smoke)	
2 u	6d6 EB, Explosion, 4 uses (stun)	
2 u	3d6 NND (vs. "No Breathing" Life Support), 3" Radius Area, 4 uses (gas)	
29	3d6 Continuous NND, 12 uses each w/+1 phase, plus 2d6 NND linked, 12 uses (both vs. 5 Resistant PD), all OAF (Needle Pistol).	
21	M/Arts (Commando Training), used w/unarmed combat or knife:	
	Manoeuvre **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**	
	Cross +0 +2 5.5d6 or 2d6+1 KA	
	Throw +0 +1 3.5d6+v/5	
	Choke Hold -2 +0 2d6 NND	
	Disarm -1 +1 as w/STR 28	
	Block +2 +2	
7	1d6 HKA (2d6+1 w/STR & M/Art), OAF (Boot Knife) (2)	1
20	Armour (10 PD/ 10 ED), OIF (Costume)	
7	Flash Defence, -5 for both Sight & Hearing, OI (Helmet)	
7	Life Support, No Breathing, OIF (Mask)	
8	12" Gliding, OIF (Backpack Mini-Wing)	
2	+1" Running (to 7")	
1	+1" Swimming (to 3")	
3	I-R Vision, OIF (Mask)	
3	Radio Receive & Transmit, OIF (Helmet)	
	Talents/Skills/Perks	
3, 5	Lightsleep; Resistance, +5	
3, 3	Acrobatics; 13-: Breakfall, 13-	
3, 3	Climbing, 13–; Combat Driving, 13-	
3, 3	Combat Pilot, 13–; Concealment, 12-	
3, 3	Demolitions, 11–; Navigation, 11-	
3, 3	Paramedic, 12–; Stealth, 13-	
3, 7	Survival, 11–; Tactics, 14-	
3	Weaponsmith (Slugthrowers), 11-	
8	Transport Fams: All Ground Vehicles, All Air Vehicles, Boats, Scuba, Skiing & Parachuting	
11	Weapon Fams: Common Melee & Missile, Small Arms, Grenade Launchers, HMGs, Rocket Launchers, Man-Guided Missiles & Heavy Weapons	
6	KS: British Army Tactics & Codes, 15-	
3	KS: Super-Beings (as known to British Govt.), 12-	
2	KS: Army History, 11-	
4	Fam. w/Bureaucratics, Mechanics, Systems Operation & Tracking	
6	Languages: Conversational Gaelic & Spanish, Fluent German (native is English)	
20	2 Overall Levels	
8	1 Level, All Combat	
7	Contacts: Ministry of Defence Senior Official, 13-: Highland Regiment Colonel, 11-: MI5 Officer, 8-	
2	Fringe Benefit: Army Captaincy	

OCV: 6: **DCV:** 6: **ECV:** 5: **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	Char	Powers	Total	Disadv	Base
	32 +	268 =	400 =	300 +	100

Name: Colin McNeil, Soldier.

Personal Details: Born: 1955. Height: 6'2". Weight: 83kg. Hair: Red, clean shaven. Eyes: Brown.

Background/Personality: Colin McNeil decided early on a military career. Joining a Highland regiment from school, he rose rapidly through the ranks; he cross-trained with a number of other units, including the Royal Marines and the Parachute Regiment, where he continued to distinguish himself. By the time of the Falklands War, he was in the SAS, and his work there, although classified secret, earned him decorations. However, he preferred more conventional service, and transferred back to his old regiment when he started training for a commission. Then the government needed a leader for their super-team, and he received a personal request from Whitehall; it didn't matter that this too was "too unconventional" for him, he just couldn't refuse.

McNeil is a soldier to the core, a loyal servant of the British Crown who believes in "the book". The fact that his present command aren't all soldiers, and that their combat techniques are highly unconventional, doesn't change this; it just means he gets annoyed sometimes. Being a soldier doesn't mean he's a casual killer; he's currently under orders to use minimum force, and to protect the public, so that's what he does. In fact, he feels contempt for overly-violent "heroes", and will rarely cooperate with them.

McNeil is a trained tactician, and tries to use this advantage in fights, which makes him look cautious — he'd call it "careful", and he's good at snap decisions in emergencies. His loyalty is to the Crown, and the Crown works through the government, so he takes the legal orders he's given; if given an illegal order, he'd question it through the military hierarchy. He never states a political opinion, although he votes in elections.

Identifying Quote: "Shadow, come back, your job is to hold the left flank. Och, someone wake Albion up..."

Powers, Equipment & Tactics: Colin McNeil is a human being in peak physical condition, with superlative military skills. As the Clansman, he wears an armoured suit incorporating a helmet with built-in gadgets, and a back-pack which combines a multi-purpose over-the-shoulder grenade projector with a re-deployable paraw-ing. He carries a commando knife in his right boot (echoing the traditional Scottish "skene'-dhu"), and an experimental high-veloc-

ity dart gun which fires drugged needles (which do 5d6 NND when they hit and a further 3d6 residual drug effect three segments later). His equipment and skills make him a combat "Jack of All Trades" — and master, by superhero standards, of none. He uses military-style tactics; he always has contingency plans prepared, back-ups for possible casualties, and fall-back positions ready; when he can get his team to co-operate, this makes them slow but effective, especially as he believes that "time spent on reconnaissance is never wasted", and Albion is very good at it. In action, he'll use his grenades to delay and confuse opponents and set them up for his allies, his needler to wear down targets who look vulnerable to it, unarmed combat to remove problems with minimal fuss, and his knife only in emergencies.

His military preparedness extends to careful study of possible opponents. He has full access to UK Government files on known super-beings, and keeps his own notes on the subject. This gives him an idea of strengths and weaknesses; combat apart, he'll want to know about any "heroes" he meets, in case he has to use "the book" to put red tape in the way of casual killer-types.

Appearance: Colin McNeil is a well-built man, obviously in good shape, with stereotype Scots red hair in a military crop. His full-coverage costume is black, with a British army captain's badge on the shoulders, a small sword insignia on the upper arm, and a discrete British flag emblem on the left breast. His helmet is a very dark green, with a tinted visor; his other equipment (air supply, radio, back-pack and weapons) has a plain but well-maintained military look. He has an obvious Scottish accent and a precise, terse way of talking.



ALBION (SPIRIT)

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
8	STR	2	20	Medieval Mentality
18	DEX	24	15	Philosophical Curiosity
18	CON	6	10	Unfamiliar with Modern Society
10	BODY	0	15	No Smell, Taste or Touch Sense
23	INT	13	20	Susceptibility — 2d6/Phase from
23	EGO	26		"Anti-Magical" powers, Dispel
20	PRE	10		Magic, etc.
8	COM	-1	15	Distinctive Features (Invisible
10	PD	8		when out of body, acts weird and
10	ED	6		abstracted — Always Noticed,
4	SPD	12		Concealable)
6	REC	0	10	Watched, UK Government (as
50	END	7		pow, NCI), 11-
20	STUN	-3	5	Hunted, Minor Black Magicians
				(less pow.), 8-
			235	Experience/NPC Bonus

Cost	Powers, etc	END
40	EC (Spirit Powers):	
a-27	Desolid (vulnerable to magic powers), 0 END, Persistent, Always On	
b-27	Invisibility to All Vision, No Fringe Effect, 0 END, Persistent, Always On	
c-89	Mind Control, 15d6, Built-In Command, Affects Physical World, 1/2 END, Full Phase to Activate, Must Occupy & Remain in Victim's Body (-1/2), No Range (-1/2)	13
10	Mental Defence, -15	
10	Power Defence, -10	
30	Life Support for all conditions	
10	Regeneration, 2 BODY/5 minutes, Act. 14-	
20	Flight, 10" (Spirit Levitation) 2	
10	Detect, Magical/Mystical Forces, w/Sense & Range	
8	KS, Alchemy (INT-based), 19-	
4	PS, Magical/Mystical Researcher (INT-based), 15-	
16	Linguist (Native in Medieval English), w/Fluent Modern English, Latin, Greek & Medieval French, Conversational Spanish, Arabic & Classical Hebrew; Literate with Latin/English (native), Greek, Hebrew & Arabic scripts	
1	Fam. w/High Society	
26	"Follower" Automaton (Body), 130 pts + Disads.	
1	Fringe Benefit, Respected Government Advisor on Weird Phenomena	

OCV: 6; **DCV:** 6; **ECV:** 8; **Phases:** 3,6,9,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	116	+	329	=	445	=	345	+	100

ALBION (BODY)

8 STR	18 DEX	30 CON	10 BODY	1 INT
n/a EGO	10 PRE	10 COM	8 PD	8 ED
4 SPD	8/20* REC	60 END	30 STUN	

*Only while "Occupied" (-1/2).

Abilities: Automaton (only "order" is to act under Albion's control); Does Not Bleed; Transformation Attack: 5d6 Cumulative, Limited Class, Major — Any Metal to Any Other Metal, 1/2 END Cost (7/use), No Range, Only while "Occupied"; Regeneration, 2 BODY/Turn, Only while "Occupied"; Life Support: Immune to poison/drug gases, Radiation, Disease & Aging; Simulate (!) Death.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN & BODY, Rot/Decay Related Attacks; Catatonic Collapse when "Unoccupied"; Susceptibility — 2d6/phase from Anti-Magical Powers; Dependence — Must be "occupied" by Albion (or receive superlative medical treatment), 1/turn, 2d6; Distinctive Features (Unemotional Behaviour, biological abnormalities, habit of dropping dead; Concealable).

Name: Edward Chandos/??, Alchemist.

Personal Details: Born: 12??. Immaterial spirit; possesses a body with: Height: 5'7". Weight: 53kg. Hair: Black. Eyes: Green.

Background/Personality: Edward Chandos was a 13th-century alchemist, seeking to perfect his spirit in the quest for the Philosopher's Stone, which would also transform base metals to gold. Unlike most, he succeeded. However, all success has a price. There was an explosion, and Chandos does not recall what followed, until he found himself being pulled from the sea. His rescuers spoke strangely and had a strange craft, but the greatest shock to Chandos was to find himself in a new body — that of a woman.

The "attempted suicide" was taken to hospital for observation and counselling, and the doctors soon began to fear brain damage or schizophrenia. However, one young psychiatrist began to believe some of the patient's story, especially when the "woman" showed strange abilities; calls to the scientific civil service eventually led to a suggestion involving a new super-team, and Chandos became Albion, servant of the queen.

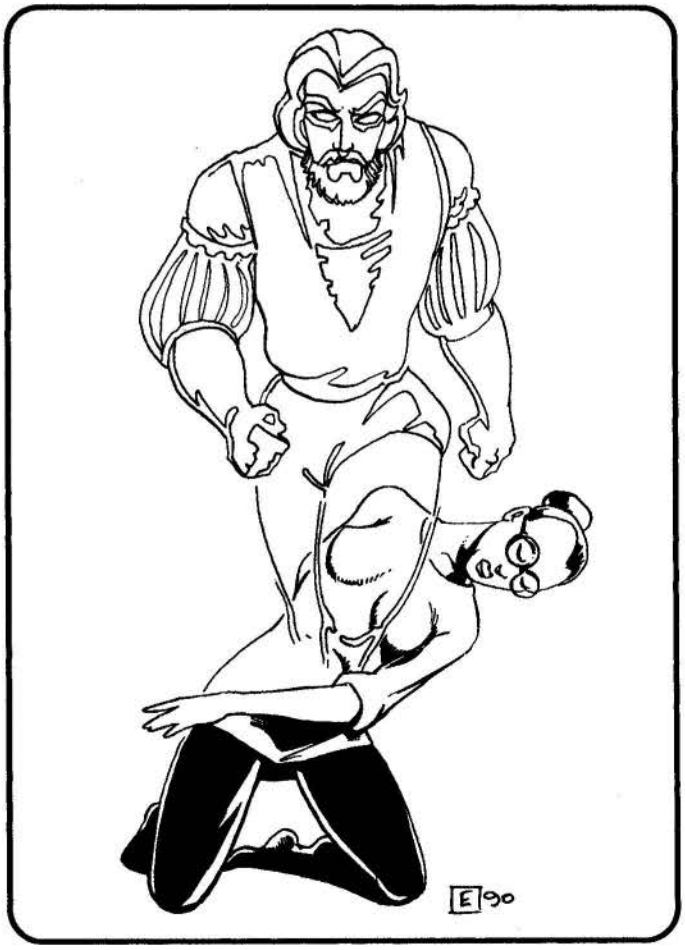
Albion is highly intelligent, but even so, he finds it hard to adapt to the twentieth century, and his attitudes are still very medieval; he thinks in terms of feudal loyalties, simple values, and severe penalties for evil. He also retains his love of mystic lore and general curiosity. He has an unfortunate habit of viewing "his" body as disposable — it's "just a tool". In battle, he tends to leave it behind, unless he needs his transmutation powers. He's not a soldier, and his habit of going his own way and getting distracted can annoy the Clansman. Still, he's sworn loyalty to the Knights, and he needs somewhere to live, a legal identity, and practical help in this strange new world.

Identifying Quote: "Thou callest me strange? Folk who fly in chariots of iron, speak invisibly through powers of lightning, and makest a philosophy that space and time are one? Strange indeed!"

Powers/Tactics: The public believes that Albion is a mutant or psychic possessing some kind of ESP or telepathic talent; those who believe in such things talk about magic. The macabre truth is kept secret; the spirit of Edward Chandos was empowered by the Philosopher's Stone to exist independently and to "possess" other bodies. Normally, this means psychic conflict with the occupier, so Albion makes use of one whose own spirit had just departed when he found it. (The woman, incidentally, had no close relatives.)

As a spirit, Albion is an immaterial being with various "ghostly" abilities. This spirit can only usually be harmed by "raw" magical energy — "disintegration blasts", bolts of "pure magical force", magical TK, and so on. Because "his" body is empowered by force of will, it effectively has great vitality and immunity to drugs and poisons (Albion isn't using the body's biological processes), but whenever his spirit leaves it, its functions cease, and it could eventually die (leaving Albion with the chore of finding another). Also, by using the power of the Philosopher's Stone through this body, Albion can transform some metals into others (but only metals known as such to alchemy — not sodium, potassium, uranium, etc, and not any "totally invulnerable super-metals" GMs may allow). This not only keeps Albion in money (ie gold), it allows him to wreck a lot of enemy robots, weapons, power armour, and so on, by touch — transforming them into inert lead or soft copper. The effect can be reversed by Albion himself, by certain mystical effects, or by alchemical processes that can be deduced from reference books. In the New Knights, Albion acts as an advisor, scout, and wrecker of ironmongery; he will follow the Clansman's orders, as a matter of honour, for as long as he doesn't get distracted by some oddity.

Appearance: Albion is immaterial and invisible; anyone who can somehow detect him gets an impression of a man in medieval garb. His body is that of a woman in her mid-thirties, of average female appearance, with dark hair worn in a tight bun; Albion dresses it in a loose white tunic and black tights.



THE CONSUL

50 STR	20 DEX	30 CON	21 BODY	20 INT
20 EGO	25 PRE	6 COM	10+ PD	10+ ED
4 SPD	16 REC	60 END	61 STUN	

Powers/Skills: STR at 1/2 END; 30pt Multipower (Momentum Control); 30pt u, STR 20 TK; 30pt u, Force Wall, 8PD/4ED; 30pt u, 15" Flight; 24pt u, +12" Swimming (to 14"); Armour, +13 PD, +13 ED; Mental Defence, -12; Knockback Resistance, -1" (from mass); Life Support, No Breathing, Immune to Vacuum, Disease, & Aging, No Need to Sleep; IR Vision; Microscopic Vision x10; High-Range Radio; Absolute Time Sense; Eidetic Memory; Universal Translator; Contact, Pho'Rarrtha'Kp Society, 14–; Contact, Government/New Knights Liaison, 11–; Fringe Benefit: Diplomat Status in Interstellar Society; High Society, 16–; KS: Interstellar Society, 13–; PS: 19th Century Diplomat, 17–; Familiar w/Bureaucratics & Conversation; Linguist: Native quality English, French, Pho'Rarrtha'Kp; Conversational Mandarin, German, Russian.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN, Magic; Berserks if hit by electrical attacks, 8-, Rec 11–; Always diplomatic & reasonable; Always Helpful; Ideas of Earth are c.1830; 1d6 STUN/phase, intense magnetic fields; Distinctive Features (Non-Concealable, Always cause reactions); Reputation (Weird), 8–; Watched, British Government, 14–; Hunted, Playtime (less pow), 8–; 1d6 Unluck; Public ID.(Alien Diplomatic Android)

Personal Details: Constructed c.1975. Height: 7'3". Weight: 205kg. Hair: Pale grey (synthetic), bald crown, "clean shaven". Eyes: Dark Grey, no visible pupils.

Background/Personality: The Consul is the New Knight who seems most archetypically British; urbane, formal, and rather out of touch with reality, but very polite and fair. The fact that it is a 7', blue-skinned alien android is incidental.

The Pho'Rarrtha'Kp are an advanced alien race from the far edge of the galactic core. They don't engage in expansion; always a peaceful folk, they made themselves near-immortal long ago, keep their birth rate down, and never hurry anything. Anyway, they are gigantic chlorine-breathing invertebrates who've found few worlds they'd ever want to colonise. However, they retain a degree of curiosity, exercised by despatching robot probes around the galaxy. They don't understand other races, but they study them.

Recently (in Pho'Rarrtha'Kp terms), one probe returned with observations of a planet occupied by humanoid oxygen-breathers who looked to be developing fast. The Pho'Rarrtha'Kp have some basic ideas about diplomacy, and thought that it would be polite to send a representative, but realised that one of their own kind wouldn't be suitable. So they built a synthetic being, and programmed it suitably. They made it very like the new race; little matters like exact size and external colour hardly seemed important. They are vague on the details of diplomacy, too; they thought that a good ambassador should make itself useful to its hosts, and didn't consider that it ought to be "neutral". The planet they were sending it to had a several competing "nations", but the Pho'Rarrtha'Kp selected one as the best contact; it had an expanding global empire, and was in the fore-front of technological development. Then they loaded the "diplomat" into a one-shot mini-ship and sent it off.

The Pho'Rarrtha'Kp wouldn't understand that data a hundred and fifty years out of date isn't good enough when dealing with Earth; the probe had taken the scenic route home, and its builders hadn't made any rushed decisions. Their android landed in the river just east of the capital city of the chosen country, propelled itself upstream, and set off to present its credentials at the local palace. It didn't understand the significance of the middle of the night, either, which maybe was a good thing.

"Halt! Who goes there? Friend or foe?"

"Err, friend, actually, old chap."



"Advance, friend, and be... recognised?"

Fortunately, the Clansman was literal-minded enough to listen to the android's story, and the would-be diplomat was taken away to talk to government representatives. They had a problem; the being was apparently friendly, quite powerful, and ignorant in certain areas (due to limited programming); it was keen to be helpful, and claimed diplomatic status; the Metropolitan Extra-Terrestrial Enclave, in New York, confirmed its data; and yet anything could happen if it was left to wander round in public. Any ideas of dismantling it for study were squashed on the grounds that, morality aside, that might be a stupid thing to do to the representative of a powerful alien race. It was the Clansman who suggested a solution.

The android said it wanted to be helpful; its powers suited it to membership of a superhero group. By recruiting it into the New Knights, the government could keep tabs on it, and keep it near to people able to restrain it if necessary. The android accepted, and has belonged to the group ever since, using the code-name "The Consul", appropriate to its semi-diplomatic behavior and punning on its computer-like nature. The press were told it was a "friendly visitor"; further details were declared Official Secrets, and the Consul was asked to refrain from comment.

The Consul understands about human law and morality, and naturally thinks that negotiation is preferable to violence, so it will always attempt to calm arguments, but it also realises that sometimes, force is the only answer. (It is, after all, programmed to act as a nineteenth century diplomat.) It will obey the Clansman's orders so long as it thinks they are based on full knowledge; when it uses its initiative, its actions are never stupid, but may be naive. The rest of the New Knights trust and like the Consul, although the Clansman remains cautious, and Albion is totally confused about its origins.

Identifying Quote: "I wouldn't do that if I were you, old chap."

Powers/Tactics: The Consul is a standard, even over-hasty piece of Pho'Rarrtha'Kp engineering; strong and resilient, it has a synthetic pseudo-organic body, an efficient computer brain, and can use almost any fuel. It also has built-in systems that allow it to manipulate momentum — its own or in its surroundings. Using these, it can fly through air, space, or liquid, generate "force beams" to move objects, or create immaterial "walls". In combat, it either tries to immobilise opponents and persuade them of their folly, or to disable really powerful foes at minimum risk.

Appearance: A Pho'Rarrtha'Kp idea of human appearance, the Consul looks like a smooth-skinned, blue, grey-haired, balding, sexless giant. When it expects action, it wears a plain grey body suit; if out socially, it insists on formal nineteenth-century morning-dress. It speaks with the polite precision of a trained diplomat.

THE GURKHA

Use the *Champions* character sheet for Green Dragon (pg. C29), but with 26 DEX, 20 CON, and 6 SPD. Modify details to reflect a Nepalese rural/wilderness upbringing, infantry and kung fu skills, and New Knights membership; reduce unarmed combat damage, but add an HKA to which the Gurkha can apply his Kung Fu, some kukri-shaped throwing blades, and Find Weakness (13-, all attacks), plus Missile Deflection (up to bullets) with kukri, Combat Sense, Defence Manoeuvre, and 5 DEF Armour (IIF, act 12-). The Gurkha's Disadvantages include extreme loyalty to his service, duty and friends, and the enmity of a large Triad, including his sensei.



Background: Prasad Karan was a Gurkha corporal in the British Army who was posted to Hong Kong. After losing in a street brawl, he asked a local to teach him Kung Fu, but eventually found that his teacher was a Triad member who expected his loyalty. Gurkha fled, and later met and impressed Colin McNeil.

The Gurkha is quiet, polite, and loyal. Western superhero life leaves him bemused, but he doesn't let it worry him.

Identifying Quote: "This is my honoured duty, sir."

Powers/Tactics: The Gurkha is a master of mountain wilderness, military, and martial arts skills. He combines Kung Fu with the use of a Gurkha Kukri (a machete-like blade), but being under orders not to take life unnecessarily, he often uses his fists. He fights carefully, knowing his relative vulnerability; he obeys the Clansman's orders, but is capable of working alone.

Appearance: The Ghurka is a small, brown-skinned Asiatic — wiry and graceful. He usually wears a military-style pale-brown costume, with short-sleeved shirt, sergeant's stripes, black belt with blades attached to it, and bare feet.

SILVER SHADOW

Use the characteristics for Shrinker (*Champions*, pg. C23), but with 18 CON, 14 INT and EGO, 10 PRE, 7 PD, and 7 ED. Silver Shadow has EC: Energy Reflection, with Missile Reflection vs. All Attacks, Back at Any Target; Force Field (25PD/25ED), 1/2 END; and 20" Flight, 1/2 END (gravity reflection). She also has +30 STR, Only vs. Grabs & Entangles, Linked to Force Field (Smooth Surface); Concealment Skill (12-), with +10 (to 22-), Only to hide self, Linked to Force Field (Reflective Surface); and -5 Flash (sight & hearing), Mental and Power Defences, all with 14- Activation and Linked to Force Field. She wears a lightly armoured costume (3PD/3ED), and has Judo, Pilot, and Breakfall skills, and 1d6 Luck. She has a Secret ID, a Competent DNPC father (8-), is secretly in love with the Clansman, and has a Code vs Killing.

Background: Anne Matthews is the daughter of Mark Matthews, a boat-builder who in the '60's was "Mark Nine", a minor British superhero. The chemical accident that gave him his powers (which faded before Anne was born in 1970) also affected his genes, and she developed mutant powers at adolescence. Concerned for her, he approached his old government contacts, and she was recruited to the New Knights. As the most junior member, Silver Shadow has often been kept out of serious fights, but her growing maturity and effectiveness cannot be ignored. She has been given a cover identity as a student of Management Studies at a college in Kent, convenient for the New Knights base; she's supposedly receiving government sponsorship as part of a trial project, and often has to "visit the sponsoring department". Her long-term career is still undecided; she currently feels that the Knights are too important to their country and the world to desert. She's also developed a fondness for the Clansman, much to her private embarassment — fortunately, he's not noticed yet (and both he and the rest of the team are too insensitive to do so easily).

Identifying Quote: "I really don't think they've got anything that can hurt me."

Powers/Tactics: Anne Matthews is a mutant, with the ability to generate a field around her body that can reflect almost any form of energy yet discovered, including physical impacts; she can also manipulate it to produce useful side-effects. By reflecting gravity back on itself, she can fly; by changing the shape of the field, she can reflect energy in a focussed form; she can (sometimes) reflect telepathic energy; she can cause the field over her eyes to only block light above a certain level, although sometimes she misjudges this. By using the field to "scatter" light from her surroundings, she can make herself hard to see. She can even cause the field to reflect back into her own body any energies that opponents



are trying to "drain". She has also had some combat training, specialising in Judo. She hasn't settled her tactical style yet; mostly, she tries to provoke enemies into giving her something to reflect, or skims around doing Move By or Through attacks.

Appearance: Anne is a pleasant-faced, rather quiet and unassuming girl. In her civilian ID, she usually dresses casually, in jeans and sweater; her costume as Silver Shadow is a grey mask, a bronze-coloured, loose-sleeved tunic worn under a short black cape (and over light armour), and yellow tights. However, when she uses her force field, she is entirely surrounded by a silvery effect that makes her look like a smoothly-flowing polished metal image — hence her code-name.

TEAM RESOURCES

The New Knights have (limited) access to the full resources of the UK government and armed forces. Thus their team facilities are "paid for" by a combination of experience points from each team member (not shown on character sheets), "Public IDs", and large "Watched: UK Government" disadvantages.

SIR DAVID MASON

The team's public liason, Sir David Mason is a normal, but with 18 INT, 15 EGO and 13 PRE. He also has a number of administrative skills, including Bureaucratics 15-, Conversation 12-, High Society 12-, PS: Civil Service 17-, and Conversational French, German, and Latin.

David is the very model of the British Civil Servant; tall, slim, middle-aged and blandly elegant, he rarely becomes flustered or even displays emotion. When giving press conferences (or talking to anyone else), he will never give away anything that he isn't supposed to. He is also very good at obtaining resources for the Knights. Despite his seeming blandness, he actually has a clever, witty, and rather barbed sense of humour; it is unwise to annoy him. He is very conventional by nature, and regards his present assignment as an unwelcome chore, but it raised him several grades in the civil service, and gives him plenty of opportunities to annoy foreigners and the press, which he secretly enjoys.

NEW CAMELOT

The team base is an otherwise-decommissioned RAF station, RAF Leabourne, in Sussex. It has been unofficially christened "New Camelot" by the press. The base was used during the Battle of Britain; it's now surplus to RAF needs. The buildings are two- and three-storey brick office blocks, with training rooms and a computerised radar and command and control system, plus "hotlines" to New Scotland Yard, STOP, Interpol, etc. The station is protected by advanced sensors, and guarded and run by a few infantrymen and an RAF Regiment missile system; these can hold off anything from reporters to small VIPER teams, but will fall back in the face of a super-powered assault. The station is often visited by "super-groupies", reporters, and sensation-seekers, who rarely get beyond the outer fence. Housekeeping is supervised by a Yorkshire-born manservant, Blaine (who is ex-army; normal, but with 12 DEX, 13 INT, 20 PRE, PS: Valet 17-, and a full set of Wrestling skills thanks to a youthful hobby, plus a distinct Yorkshire accent).



TRANSPORT

THE V-JET

Characteristics: 6x Size Increase (6.4 ton, -6 KB, -4 DCV); 40 STR, 18 BODY, 6 DEF, 20 DEX, 5 SPD, Move 52x8, Max 2080.

Equipment (all Bulky OIF): Radar with 360-degree sensing; Radio Listen/Transmit; Tanglefoam Sprays — DEF 3, 3d6 Entangle over a 12-hex radius, 2 charges, To Ground Level Only; Point Defence Pulser — Missile Deflection vs. Thrown, Projectile, and Bullet/Shrapnel Attacks (using pilot's CV); Four interior seats can be used for restraint, putting DEF 9, 9d6 Entangles on their occupants; All passengers have Ejector Seats.

Disadvantages: Hunted by Project: Armour on 8- (they'd love to take it apart for study).

The Knights use the inevitable prototype of a cancelled military transport design. This is a just-subsonic VTOL jet with twin Rolls-Royce Pegasus vectored-thrust engines.

The V-Jet is normally flown by the Clansman; if he is unavailable, the team calls on a top-class RAF fighter pilot (18 DEX, 4 SPD, Combat Pilot 14-, one Level with Aircraft Weapons).

Other Transport

Sometimes (when no pilot is available, or the V-Jet has been damaged), the Knights deploy in an ordinary ten-ton army truck, despite the discomfort. As their job (especially the Clansman's) may involve testing new government equipment, they are often followed by more such trucks, carrying scientists and army technicians, all busily monitoring.

THE LONDON WATCH



Membership: Dr Goldwing, Sea Change, Blazon, Yeoman, and Repulse are the "core" membership; Swift Swallow often works with the team; Mole is retired; Partisan sometimes associates with them; the Nightwatch act as a "backup" and allies.

Origin: While the New Knights are an officially-organised group, the London Watch are unofficial and disorganized — more of a private club. They teamed up when the Watchmaker decided to manipulate the freelance heroes active in London in the early '80's into fighting what he saw as a growing supervillain problem; despite their resentment of him, Dr GoldWing, Repulse, Swift Swallow, Mole and Yeoman saw the advantage. They soon took on the job of helping the amnesiac Sea Change; Mole later retired, but Blazon joined, and Partisan traded them his expertise for help.

Tactics: The Watch aren't as organised as they might be, but they are versatile and ingenious, and know each other well. They prefer stealthy or indirect approaches, as these cost them fewer bruises, but in battle they often rely on speed and power.

Group Relations: The Watch get on very well, at the level of a bunch of like-minded friends and allies; their team life can get quite soap-operatic. The others find Yeoman a bit loud, and Partisan a bit worrying, but prefer to keep them in line within the team rather than letting them go their own violent ways.

External Relations: A friendly bunch, the Watch don't go looking for enemies; Dr GoldWing and Blazon have many contacts in the international academic community, and the team works well with STOP, despite Hetherington's many ironic comments on their style. They are also friendly with Harry Mortimer. Their dealings with the New Knights are more formal, if only because the government team has orders to monitor "their kind".

DR. GOLDWING

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
18	STR	8	10	1.5x STUN, Magic
21	DEX	33	10	1.5x STUN, Ego Attacks
20	CON	20	10	Enraged if women hurt 11-, 11-
13	BODY	6	20	Code vs. Killing
8	INT	18	15	Old-Fashioned Heroic Code (Very Common, Moderate)
14	EGO	8		
20	PRE	10	15	In Love with Sea Change
18	COM	4	10	Distinctive Features (Disguisable: Tall & Handsome)
8	PD	4		
8	ED	4	15	Reputation (All-round hero), 14-
5	SPD	19	10	DNPC (Sarah Gold — Normal w/ Useful Skills), 11-
8	REC	0		
40	END	0	5	Watched, Tabloid Press (less pow), 11-
32	STUN	0	10	Hunted, DarkWing (as pow), 8-
			10	Hunted, Dr Mantis (as pow), 8-
			10	Public ID
			290	Experience

Cost	Powers			END
103	Power Pool (Gadgets), 80 point pool, Focussed Powers Only (-1/4 for IIF as minimum), Only change in laboratory (-1/2)			
30	Martial Arts: Boxing & Jiu-Jitsu			
	Manoeuvre	**OCV**	**DCV**	**Damage**
	Jab	+1	+3	5d6
	Hook	-2	+1	5d6
	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
	Slam	+0	+1	5d6+v/5
	Choke Hold	-2	0	2d6 NND
	Disarm	-1	+1	STR 28 Disarm
	Escape	0	0	STR 33 Escape
8	High-Range Radio, IIF (wristwatch)			

Cost	Powers	END
	Skills	
3,3,3	Breakfall 13- Bureaucratics 13- Climbing 13-	
3,3,3	Concealment 15- Combat Driving 13- Combat Pilot 13-	
3,3,3	Criminology 15- Deduction 15- Electronics 11-	
3,13	Forensic Medicine 15- Gadgeteering (to change pool) 20-	
3,3,3	High Society 13- Inventor 15- Mechanics 11-	
3,7,3	Paramedic 15- Survival 13- Tracking 15-	
7	Transport Fam: Small & Large Ground Vehicles, Snow-Cats, Boats, Hovercraft, Air Vehicles and Horses (Note — Gets one from Combat Driving)	
16	Linguist (native in English) w/Fluent French, German, Spanish and Watch Battle Language, Conversational Italian, Welsh, Russian, Mayan and Swahili	
13	Scholar w/KS 15- w/British Law, International Law, Modern History, Archaeology & Demonology (all INT-based)	
13	Scientist w/15- w/Medical Science, Genetics, Chemistry, Electronic Engineering & Geology (all INT-based)	
6	PS: Doctor, 15–; PS: Explorer, 15- (both INT-based)	
15	Traveller w/Ar.K 15- each for London, New York, Europe, North Africa, Central America & Antarctica (all INT-based)	
6	Weapons Fam, All Small Arms, Heavy Machine Guns Common Melee Weapons & Throwing Weapons	
2	Fam w/Computer Programming & Streetwise.	
20	+2 Overall levels	
10	+2 levels, Weapons from Gadget Pool	
	Talents	
5,3,3	Cramming x1 Lightning Calculator Speed-Reading	
	Perks	
5	Contacts: METE Scientist 12-: Chief Superintendent Hetherington (STOP) 11–; 4Fringe Benefits: Firearms License, all small arms: Passport w/all major visas	
10	Money: Wealthy	
40	Vehicle (the "Golden Eagle"), 200pts plus Disads	
22	Vehicle (armoured Range Rover), 110pts plus Disads	

OCV: 7; **DCV:** 7; **ECV:** 5; **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

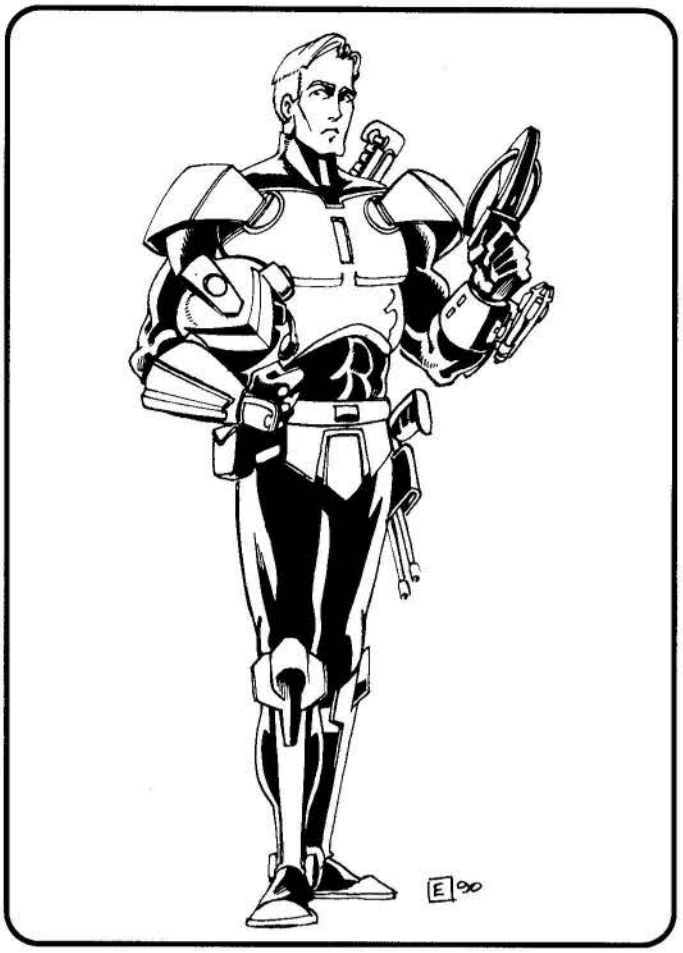
Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disads		Base
	134	+	406	=	540	=	440	+	100

Name: Dr Jason Gold-Wing, Medical Scientist.

Personal Details: Born: 1953. Height: 6'5". Weight: 86kg. Hair: Blond, clean-shaven. Eyes: Blue.

Background/Personality: One of Britain's most respected public figures in the 1930's was Dr Julius Wing, a medical scientist whose enthusiasm for field work made him "the last of the explorers". Dr Wing (who spent the war advising the government) never married, and vanished mysteriously in 1954 leaving no close relatives.

The press and public were, therefore, intrigued when it was announced in 1974 that Julius Wing had, in fact, married in 1952, to the international perfumier and businesswoman Patricia Gold, and that he'd left a son; the couple had wanted privacy, it was said, and then the (presumed) widow had thought that their son should not suffer from too much publicity. Now, with Patricia Gold dead of cancer in 1970, the solicitors left in charge of her affairs had agreed that the existence of the heir could be announced on his twenty-first birthday. Jason Gold-Wing proved to be a brilliant medical student, surprised to learn the details of his own history but not unhappy; people saw his resemblance to his father, then mostly forgot about him.



However, the story wasn't true. In fact, in a hubristic act of brilliance, Dr Wing had secretly created a clone of himself. Then one of his research assistants disappeared; investigating, Wing found that the man was part of a South-American based Nazi conspiracy. They'd become interested in his work because he was using material captured in Berlin in 1945; only now did Wing realise that it came out of the concentration camps. Appalled and guilt-ridden, he decided that he was no fit parent for any child. Calling on an old friend, Patricia Gold, he begged her to help arrange for the clone's up-bringing, then turned to some very mysterious exploratory research. Maybe he did die in Asia in 1954, but the story of those last, solo explorations may never be known.

The young Dr Gold-Wing knew nothing of this, and made a successful career in medical research; his versatile mind and physical skills made him a good field researcher, like his father. Then, while working in Central America, he heard that a relative, Sarah Gold, the other heir to the Gold fortune and a professional archaeologist, had disappeared. Investigating, he found that she had been kidnapped by a rogue scientist, Dr Carl Mantonis, who was plundering a research site she was investigating. Gold-Wing saved Sarah (and the site); Mantonis, driven off, vowed revenge.

Sarah and Jason formed a close but platonic friendship, and when Jason returned to London in 1980, they happily shared part-time use of the Gold family estate west of London and a town house in Knightsbridge. Then Mantonis returned in his new guise as "Dr Mantis", and Jason was forced to use an assortment of gadgets to defend himself; the press saw and exaggerated, and a new hero was made. Shortly afterwards, "Dr GoldWing" was persuaded by the Watchmaker to lead a new super-team.

Later, Sarah, recalling an instruction from her aunt Pat about her "cousin", gave him a clue that led him to learn more of his true origin; by then, he had the self-respect to absorb the shock. He has, very slowly, formed an emotional bond with Sea Change, something they are both only just coming to terms with.

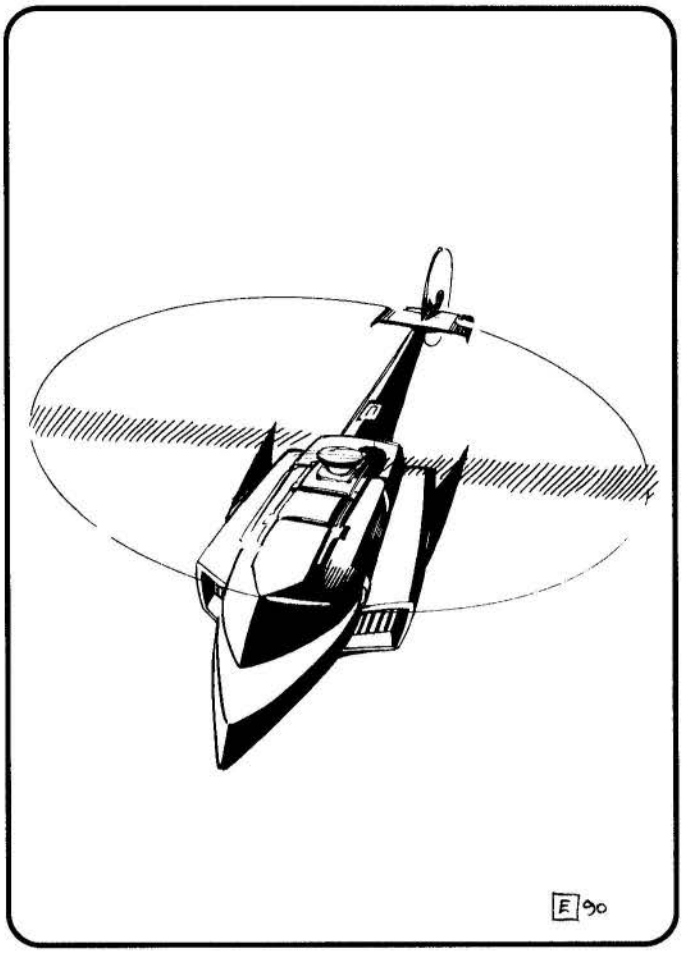
Dr GoldWing had an odd up-bringing, involving Patricia Gold, her employees, and boarding schools in various countries. Further, it seems that his sense of empathy with his clone-original has made him tend unconsciously to imitate Dr Wing. The amazing thing is that he's quite sane, albeit rather old-fashioned; courteous, chivalrous (but not stupidly so), and very protective of women. His scientific rationalism gives him difficulty with the idea of magic or psionics — the shock of their use against him can be severe. A dedicated doctor, he hates killing; he's been known to get into arguments with the rest of the Watch about permissible violence. He sees the leadership of the team as a public duty.

Identifying Quote: "Our opponent has a fascinating paranormal talent. Unfortunately, he also has the charm of a puff-adder."

Powers/Tactics: Dr GoldWing is an exceptional "normal" human, with the ability to accomplish more than most people in almost any area. As a hero, he uses gadgets he designs himself, a custom-built helicopter, the Golden Eagle, and a very special Range Rover. Although he has a full firearms license, the British laws make him careful what he uses in public, going for non-lethal gadgetry that doesn't look like guns — the authorities have never bothered attempting to challenge his equipment, as his activities are accepted as being in the public benefit.

In combat, Dr GoldWing mostly holds back, using gadgetry to annoy and divert opponents until can deliver a devastating stroke; he accepts that others in the Watch are better brawlers than himself. However, he's willing to mix in when he has to.

Appearance: Dr GoldWing is tall, athletic, and good-looking, with blond hair and a reserved, urbane, very British manner — he's been offered work in Hollywood more than once. In his day job, he usually wears a white lab coat; in the evenings, he favours white suits and open-neck shirts; when expecting combat, he'll usually be in bullet-proof armour with pockets full of gadgets and tools.



THE GOLDEN EAGLE

Size: 4x2, DCV -4, Mass 6.4 tonnes (-6 KB).

Characteristics: STR 40, BODY 18, DEF 12, DEX 21, SPD 5, Move 34x4, Max 680.

Powers: Change Environment to daylight-level illumination, 8" Radius, 0 END, No Range, OAF (arc-lights); Darkness for Normal Sight, 5" Radius, 8 uses of 1 Turn each, No Range, IIF (smoke jets); +4 to Pilot's PER, OIF (scanners); High-Range Radio, OIF; I-R Vision, OIF; Radar Sense w/360-degree Sensing, OIF.

200+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (super-tech look: not concealable); Public ID; 1d6 Unluck; Watched, ReDirection Cartel (as pow, NCI), 8–; Watched, KGB (as pow, NCI) 8-.

Vehicle Total: 246 points.

The London Watch often arrive at fights in and around this helicopter. With its performance, manoeuvrability, and gadgets, the Golden Eagle is a true adventurer's vehicle. The ReDirection Cartel are interested in its technology; the KGB, for tortuous reasons, think it may owe something to Russian creativity.

THE RANGE ROVER

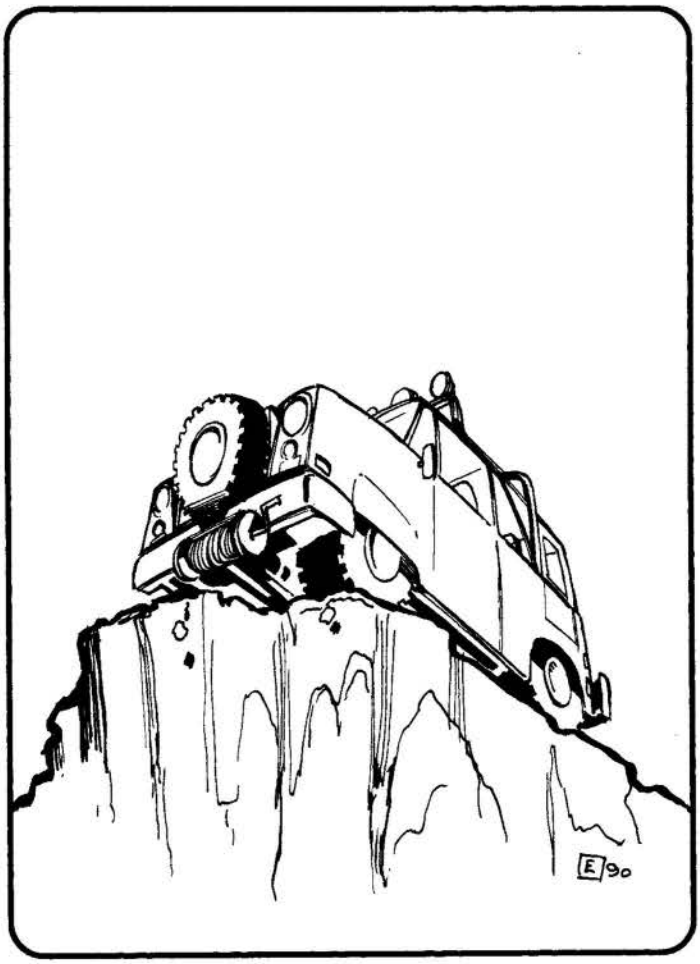
Size: 2.25x0.9, DCV -2, Mass 2000kg (-4 KB).
Characteristics: STR 35, BODY 17, DEF 7, DEX 21, SPD 5, Move 16x4, Max 320.
110+ Disadvantages: Public ID (well-known from press reports).
Vehicle Total: 120 points.

The British-made Range Rover is a useful, comfortable all-terrain vehicle; armoured and highly modified, it provides Dr GoldWing with a useful runabout.

Dr GoldWing's Gadgets

Over the years, Dr GoldWing has created a vast array of devices; the following is a selection of his favourites. Note that most of the weapons are designed not to look like guns.

1. **Neurostunner:** 8d6 NND (vs Force Fields), 12 charges, OAF, Reduced by Range: 32pts.
2. **Body Armour:** +8 PD, +8 ED Armour, OIF: 16pts.
3. **Cloud Grenades:** Darkness vs. Normal & U-V Sight, 2" Radius, 3 charges each of 2 phases, OAF: 8pts.



4. **IR/Flash Goggles:** I-R Vision & -5 Flash Defence, OAF: 4pts.
5. **Oxygen Mask:** Life Support: No need to breathe, OAF: 5pts.
6. **Binoculars:** Telescopic Sight: +4 PER vs. Range Mods, Concentrate at 1/2 DCV while in use, OAF: 2pts.
7. **Mind Shield:** -8 Mental Defense, IIF (ear-piece): 4pts.
8. **Thermal Entangle-Cutter:** 1d6+1 AP HKA (2d6 w/STR), 3 charges, Full Phase to use, IIF, No Knockback: 9pts.
9. **Secret Armour:** Armour (6 PD/6 ED), Act 14-, IIF: 10pts.
10. **Jacket Parachute:** 9" Gliding, IAF: 6pts.
11. **Shoe-Heel Gas Bomb:** 4d6 NND (gas), 6" Radius, Continuing, 1 Charge of 1 Turn Duration, IIF, No Range: 27pts.
12. **Shoe-Heel Smoke Bomb:** 5" Radius Darkness vs All Sight senses, 1 Charge of 1 Turn Duration, IIF, No Range: 20pts.
13. **Nose-Plug Filters:** Life Support: Breathe in Gas, IIF: 4pts.

When he knows he's going to have to fight, Dr GoldWing will usually carry items 1-8 from the above list — he doesn't mind surprising opponents, but he regards it as a limited tactic. In normal social situations, however, he will limit himself to a few low-power, hidden tricks (say, 7-13 above) — "just in case"!

(Note also: there are a few "Special" Powers bought through the above pool, which is, strictly, illegal. However, as an NPC, Goldwing has obtained "special GM permission".)

SARAH GOLD

Dr GoldWing's "cousin" is a striking, competent woman, who takes some interest in the running of the Gold family investments, but more in archaeology. She's friendly with the Watch, especially Sea Change, whose Lyonessean knowledge has helped with much of Sarah's work; Sarah's thesis on Celtic Ogham script, which gained her a doctorate from Oxford, was made possible by Sea Change.

Sarah has 14 DEX, 15 INT, 14 COM, 3 SPD, KS: Archaeology 15- and Ancient History 13-, and a couple of languages, plus familiarity with Bureaucratics and Conversation. She's studied Savate for self-defence (4d6 Low Kick, 6d6 Side Kick, Block). She has a powerful streak of curiosity concerning matters archaeological, and could be a useful plot-element in scenarios involving archaeological sites or relics; if she's hurt or captured, the Watch will soon be on the scene.

SEA CHANGE

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
13	STR	3	20	2x STUN, Heat/Flame Attacks
20	DEX	30	5	1.5x BODY, Acids and Corrosive Dessicants
23	CON	26		
10	BODY	0	20	Code vs. Killing
18	INT	8	15	Perpetually Exuberant, Swash-buckler
15	EGO	10		
13	PRE	3	15	In love with Dr GoldWing
14	COM	2	20	2d6 STUN/Phase, Dessicants
13	PD	10	5	Dependence: Immersion in Water, 1/Hour, 3d6
10	ED	5		
5	SPD	20	15	Distinctive Features: Blue-Green Hair, Silver Scales on parts of skin (Conceal w/Disguise, cause strong reactions)
8/20*	REC	12		
46	END	0		
29	STUN	0		
			10	Watched, Project: Armour (as pow, NCI), 11-
			10	Hunted,Shark Squad (as pow), 8-

*Only in water (-1)

Cost	Powers	END
75	Multipower, 75pt reserve (hypnotic shimmers)	
7 u	12d6 Mind Control at 1/2 END	3
7 u	6d6 Flash vs Sight at 1/2 END	3
5 u	6d6 AVLD (Flash Defence) at 2x END	14
7 u	7" Radius Darkness vs. all Sight Senses	7
17	Shapeshift, any shape, Living creatures only 3 (-1/4), viewers with Mental Defence notice on a PER roll at +1/ 5 Defence (-1/2)	
10	+10" Swimming (12" total)	2
4	+5" Running (11" total), x4 END	+4
5	Life Support: Breathe Water	
3	Life Support: Safe Environments; High Pressure & Cold, only to levels found in normal Earth oceans (-1)	
4	Radio listen & transmit, IIF (wristwatch)	
20	Mind Link w/Any 4 Aquatic creatures	
	Skills & Talents	
3,3,3	Acrobatics 13- Breakfall 13- Paramedic 13-	
3	KS: The Oceans* 13-	
3	KS: "Western Isles" History* 13-	
7	Languages: Native Lyonessean, Fluent English & Watch Battle Language; Literate, Ogham & Latin scripts	
6	+3 levels w/Mind Control Offensive ECV	
6	+2 levels w/Any Water Movement (Swimming, Acrobatics in water, etc)	
4	Combat Sense, 16-, Only in water (-1)	
	* INT-based	

OCV: 7; **DCV:** 7; **ECV:** 5; **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disads		Base
	129	+	202	=	331	=	231	+	100



Name: Pearl O'Shane, Oceanography Consultant.

Personal Details: Born: 1963?. Height: 5'4". Weight: 59kg. Hair: Blue-Green (metallic). Eyes: Blue-Green.

Background/Personality: Sea Change (her true name cannot be pronounced by ordinary humans; "Pearl O'Shane" is an bureaucratic convenience arranged by STOP) is a Lyonessian (see separate section). Amazingly, she nonetheless has a strong sense of curiosity, nurtured by her unusually broad-minded teacher, J'Soolarrl'los. Before she could be assigned a career, she had a flaring row with the High Council over the idea of contact with the surface world, and actually accepted exile with induced amnesia. On the surface she met and joined the London Watch; over the years, she has become increasingly involved with Dr GoldWing, a fact that both of them are only just coming to terms with.

She received a call for help from the dying J'Soolarrl'los and her old friend Gelth'Guelle'Lth when the Shark Squad stole the Power-stone of Lyonesse, and subsequently recovered much of her memory, "helped" by encounters with the sort of demons she'd heard about in history lessons. An open-minded type, she doesn't share the common Lyonessean paranoia about magic, but she wouldn't study it, either. She lives in an old mill-house (with pond) in the grounds of the Watch Base, and insists on paying rent — earned by consultancy work for which a water-breather is uniquely equipped. She's fierce in defence of the Watch, the only family she's ever known, but otherwise light-hearted.

Project: Armour have a standing order to investigate Sea Change's origin (they don't like powerful mysteries in their area of operations); the Shark Squad class her as a serious nuisance, because she's effective underwater, and she trashed several of their operations after finding out what they did to Lyonesse. (She no longer bothers going after them, as they keep coming to her.)

Identifying Quote: "Pah, catfish! Can't hit what you can't see!"

Powers/Tactics; Sea Change is a Lyonessian with uncommony powerful psi-talents and training, and the usual adaptions to undersea life (and can be taken as a model for such). She is similar to some early Isles experiments that entered folklore as "kelpies". She can generate light-and-psi effects, most of which appear as flickering shimmers like light on the water; these can dazzle, stun by overloading the optic nerves, or hypnotise. By spreading these shimmers, Sea Change can block vision. By focussing psionic illusions on herself, she can appear to change shape, although only to living forms (opponents with mental defences can see through the illusion). By mental effort, Sea Change can accelerate her running speed for short bursts. Finally, she has a sensitivity to her surroundings when under water, and a limited telepathic ability to communicate with water creatures. She also has a (small) Watch-issue radio wristwatch.

Sea Change acts as the Watch's underwater specialist and a hit-and-run fighter, disrupting opponents' tactics, working from cover or while "shape-changed"

Appearance: Sea Change is pretty, with a permanent mischievous grin; her Lyonessean features look exotic rather than grotesque. She speaks with an odd, Welsh-like accent. She has a good figure, which is fortunate given her taste in costume — flowing gowns in public, low-necked one-piece suits for adventure. (Her Lyonessean metabolism makes her resistant to cold.) Only a computer knows of her resemblance to Nimue, the Arthurian "Lady of the Lake".

BLAZON, "THE KNIGHT"

13/60 STR	13/23 DEX	10/28 CON	10 BODY
20 INT	18 EGO	10/30 PRE	10 COM
3/30 PD	3/30 ED	3/5 SPD	5/18 REC
20/60 END	22/55 STUN		

Second figure in all cases is OIF (Armour).

Powers and Skills: 1/2 END Cost for STR, OIF (Armour); 30pt Multipower, OAF (Weapon): 2d6 HKA (4d6 w/STR; Sword form): 2d6 RKA (Spear form): 1d6+1 HKA, 1-hex Area (2.5d6 w/STR; Morningstar form): +30 STR, only to punch (Mace form); Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED), OIF (Armour); +3" Running (to 9"), OIF (Armour); Instant Change, same clothes, IIF (pendant); Radio Listen & Transmit, IIF (Watch), Concentrate (1/2 DCV) to use; Mind Link to Horse, any dimension, IIF (pendant), Horse also has link; Eidetic Memory; Riding 12/14–; KS: Medieval History* 17–; KS: Heraldry* 17–; KS: UK Law 11–; AK: London 8–; PS: Teaching 11–; PS: Cricket* 13–; Fam w/High Society; Contacts: College of Heralds 12-: Oxford University History Professor 11-: Head of L'Institut Thoth 8–; Linguist: Native in English: Fluent/Accented French, German, Latin, Watch Battle Language: Conversational Italian, Spanish, Classical Greek, Welsh, Scots Gaelic, Medieval French; "Follower": Flying Horse.

* INT-based.

Disadvantages: 2x STUN, Magic; Accidental Change if Historic artefacts/sites damaged 11–; Berserks if Historic artefacts/sites damaged 11-, 11–; Obsessive Interest in History; Code vs. Killing; Susceptibility, Strong magnetic fields when in armour, 3d6/phase; Hunted, DEMON, 8–; Secret ID.

Name: Brian FitzHerbert, Historian.

Personal Details: Born: 1936. Height: 5'8". Weight: 69kg. Hair: Mid-Brown, clean shaven. Eyes: Brown.

Background/Personality: Brian FitzHerbert was one of Britain's leading authorities on Medieval History and Heraldry. One day, poking round an Oxford junk-shop, he found a pendant with an odd heraldic design on it. He was interested; the coat of arms it showed, while valid, wasn't one he knew. The shop-owner said it had come from a roving colleague. Brian shrugged and bought it.

That evening, Brian studied the pendant. Then, as he stared at it, it shimmered, and seemed to grow around him. Brian looked down at a full suit of "High Medieval" armour — an impossibly light, flexible suit that he knew was proof against almost anything, and which gave him vast strength. A new hero was born! Later, he found he could summon a special steed — a horse with white feathered wings. Fighting for good — when it involved historical relics, or when he could tear himself away from his research — Brian met and joined the London Watch. Of course, the evil sorcerors of DEMON would love to take the armour for themselves...

Brian has used various terms for himself; "The Knight Reborn", "The Knight of the Flying Steed", "The Knight of Truth and Might", and so on. However, he also uses "Blazon" for brevity; it's a term much used in heraldry.

Identifying Quote: "Yield, varlet, for you face the Knight Unconquerable!" (Or, as Brian Fitzherbert: "Hmm, you know, this is a really fascinating subject...").



Powers/Tactics: Brian FitzHerbert is a capable academic (and a keen cricketer), but Blazon's powers all come from the items the pendant can summon. His armour gives him strength; his horse lives in a "pocket dimension" until summoned, flies or gallops like the wind, and can itself fight. At his side hangs a sword which, at his mental command, transform into other weapons, such as a spear that magically reappears in his hand after being cast. (He rarely uses this, because it can be so deadly and because he feels that few foes are worthy of it — although he'll use it on anything that his punches don't stop.)

GMs' Note: *the origin of this power is a mystery, worth a scenario in itself. It must have been made by an arch-mage, but why? For who? Was Brian fated to find it? What price must he pay?*

Appearance: Brian FitzHerbert is a terribly unworldly academic, with a taste (if that's the word) for battered tweed suits, and an abstracted air. However, the gleaming armour of Blazon makes him a formidable sight, and gives him the confidence to challenge foes in style. It looks like ornate jousting armour from the late Middle Ages, but in it, the Knight can move rapidly.

BLAZON'S HORSE

30 STR	13 DEX	28 CON	20 BODY	8 INT
5 EGO	15+ PRE	14 COM	6+ PD	6+ ED
3 SPD	12 REC	56 END	44 STUN	

Powers, etc: +15 PRE, Only for offensive purposes when rearing, charging, etc; 2 levels, Growth, 0 END/Persistent/ Always On, Char Effects Included Above; 1d6 HKA, 0 END Cost, Reduced Penetration (2x1d6 w/STR; Bite, Hooves, etc); Armour (18 PD/18 ED); +6" Running (to 12"); 18" Flight, 1/2 END; Extra-Dimensional Movement, Self Only, between the pendant's wielder and a safe "pocket dimension", 4 uses/day; Mind Link, To Anyone with the pendant, Any Dimension, Subject must also have the power (ie the pendant); +3 levels, H-t-H Combat.

Disadvantages: Berserks in Combat, 8-, Rec. 11–; Mind-set of aggressive animal; No manipulation & other problems of horse physiology; Distinctive Features (Winged Horse!).

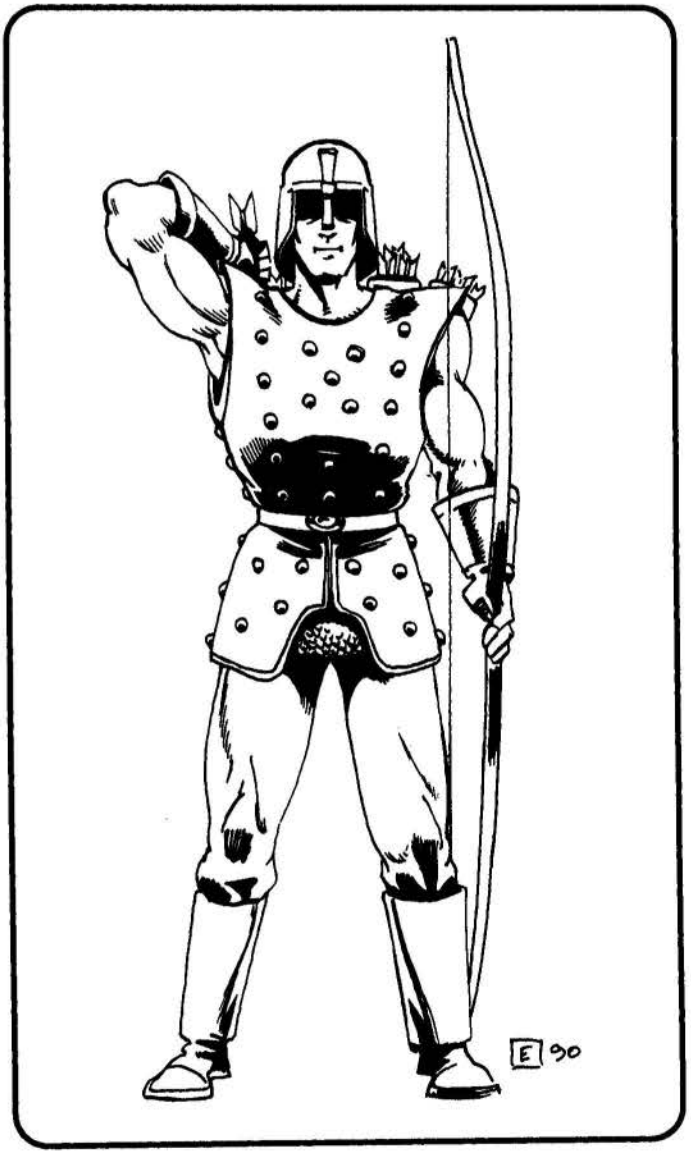
YEOMAN

Use the Characteristics for Starburst (*Champions*, pg.C18), but with 15 CON, 6 PD, and 6 ED. Yeoman has a staff (+3d6 HA, 0 END, and +5" Superleap, OAF), and a longbow which fires ordinary arrows (1d6+1 RKA, AP, Autofire, 16 uses) or a few "trick" arrows (75pt Multipower with AP RKA, Explosive, Gas, RKA plus Drugs, and "homing" RKA with Extra Range and No Range Penalty). He wears armour that looks like medieval infantry gear (8 PD/8 ED, OIF, Act 14-), has Missile Deflection vs. Thrown, Swinging (11", OIF), Find Weakness (all arrows, 12-), and a wristwatch-radio. He has Martial Arts, useable with staff or unarmed (Def Strike, Off Strike, Block, Throw, and Choke Hold), and acrobatic, adventuring, and security skills, plus skill levels. He's a swashbuckler and show-off, but he hates being hurt; he has a normal DNPC with useful skills, and is Hunted by CUIRASS and Watched by the New Knights.

Background: John Dent was an amateur athlete and champion archer with a job as a security guard. While working at a research company, he and a scientist (Dr Simon Mann) discovered that it was a front for Project: Armour, and Mann helped Dent become Yeoman to fight them.

Yeoman is undisciplined, and hasn't got the ethics of some heroes. In early days, he often used excess force, but team pressure (being pushed into a Central American river by Mole's wife-to-be) led him to moderate his ways; nowadays he tries to use subtler means. However, he still enjoys trashing a target with a shaped-charge arrow, and he reacts badly to severe danger or being hurt. His violent tendencies were noticed by Clansman early on; the New Knights have been watching him ever since.

Identifying Quote: "This is a tank-buster arrow, and I never miss, mate!"





REPULSE

Use the Characteristics for Pulsar (*Champions*, pg. C25), with 13 INT and 10 ED. Repulse has Karate and a Multipower including: 8.5d6 Double-Knockback EB, Reduced by Range: 5d6, Cone Area, Double Knockback EB, No Range: 6d6 Explosion EB, Double Knockback, Personal Immunity, No Range: STR 40 TK: Force Wall: Force Field: and Flight. She wears Armour (5 PD/5 ED, Act 14-, OIF) and a watch radio, and has Criminology, Bureaucratics, Paramedic, and PS: Accountant. She is vulnerable to Mind Control and tends to defer to "authority", but gets angry if she is manipulated by others.

Background: Siobhan Williams was born into a Naval family; her mother was an "officer's wife", and Siobhan was the second of three daughters. It was a happy but conventional home, with much talk of "duty", but her parents didn't treat their daughters as surrogate sons. At 18, Siobhan, an intelligent, independent girl, went to university; maybe, like her parents, she saw this as a stop-gap.

However, studying physics, away from home, she saw that she had wider choices. Then her mutant telekinetic powers surfaced one evening when she thought she was being mugged. As she blasted an innocent drunk because of this mistake, she began with a sense of guilt and duty. (The drunk recovered, but didn't remember what happened.) Because of her mixed feelings about her parents, she didn't want to reveal her powers to the authorities; she decided on a secret identity.

Repulse has become an efficient, methodical crime-fighter; Siobhan Williams has become an accountant. This "boring" career may be compensation for her melodramatic secret; she sustains the double life by not needing much sleep. If her full schedule leaves Repulse lonely, she doesn't complain.

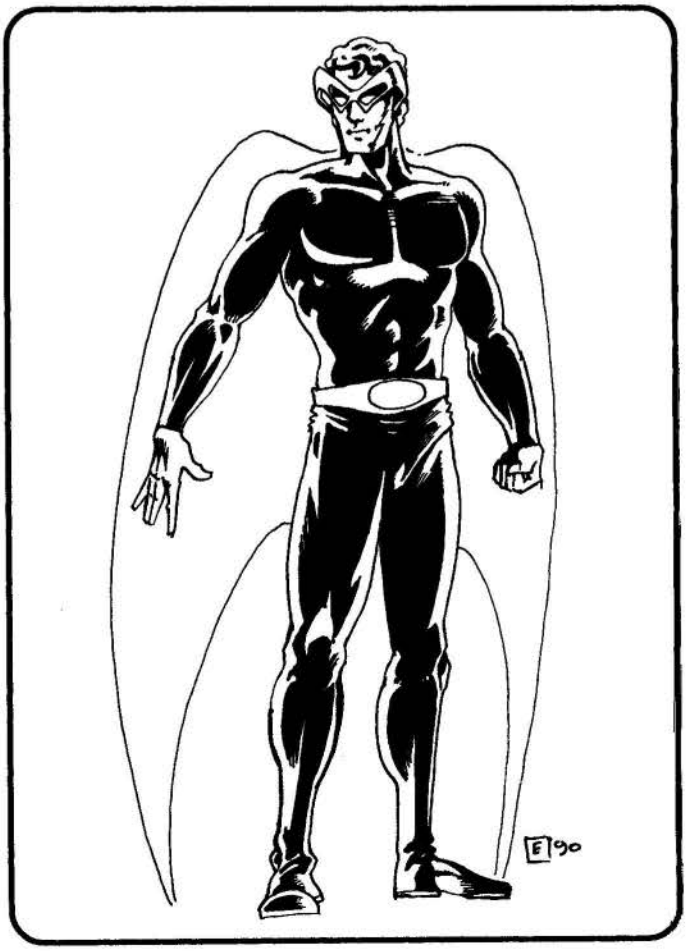
Identifying Quote: "Another super-moron, huh? No problem."

SWIFT SWALLOW

Martin Hirundo is a Skilled Normal (*Champions*, pg.134) with 15 STR, 14 COM, and Criminology, Gambling, Streetwise and AK: London. His amulet (IIF) gives 30 DEX, 6 SPD, 24 REC only at end of phase 12, 30" Flight, 7" Flight with x128 Noncombat (896"), +15 PD proportional to Flight (+1/2" move), 2 BODY Regeneration (Act 14-), and Life Support (No breathing, immune to vacuum, pressure & radiation); his mask (OIF) gives +4 Sight PER, +6 Telescopic Sight, and I-R Vision; and he has a wristwatch radio. The amulet is a "key" to Progenitor machines (Fringe Benefit), and he has 4 levels in Flight. He berserks vs mind controllers, always keeps his word, is defensive of his foci, and has a Reputation as a hero. He also has a (very) competent wife (Pippa), and is Hunted by Brown Fox's underlings and the KGB.Character created by Oliver Macdonald.

Background: Charles Edward Martin, born in the East End, was bright but no scholar; he drifted into a job as a croupier in a West End club that turned out to be run by Brown Fox. He then got mixed up with a runaway Russian scientist (deceased), a pretty young private detective named Pippa Stewart, and some weird relics. After being badly beaten by his employer's thugs, he somehow "triggered" the relics, saved Pippa from the thugs, and eventually created for himself a new ID and married Pippa. As Martin Hirundo, of Hirundo & Hirundo, he's a private detective with a career to make; as Swift Swallow, he's been described, rather unfairly, as the Watch's token Cockney. The amulet and mask, paraphernalia of a Progenitor messenger, seem to accept his use of themselves...

Identifying Quote: "Search me, guv, I'm outta me depth 'ere. Pippa, you make anything of it?" (Also, "Oh no, not another martial artist...")





MOLE

33/43 STR	21 DEX	33 CON	10 BODY	10 INT
10+ EGO	5 PRE	10 COM	7/9+ PD	7/9+ ED
5 SPD	18 REC	56 END	44 STUN	

Second figure in all cases is w/Density Increase (Hero ID only).

Powers and Skills: +5 EGO, Only vs. PRE attacks, pain, fear, etc (-1/2); Density Increase x2, 0 END, Hero ID Only (Must be on for Hero ID); 75pt Multipower, Hero ID Only: 72pt u, 8d6 EB (vs PD) + 2d6 NND (vs. Density Increase or inorganic body), all 1/2 END, Reduced by Range (Vibro-blast): 31pt u, 1.5d6 HKA, 1/2 END (3d6+1 w/STR: Vibrating Claws): 75pt u, 10" Tunneling thru' DEF 10 w/Option to Close, 1/2 END; Armour (6 PD/6 ED), Hero ID Only; -4" Running (to 2"), Hero ID Only; Detect: Mass Densities, w/Sense, Range, Target, Discriminatory & 360 Degrees; Radio Listen & Transmit, Concentrate (1/2 DCV) to use, IIF (watch); Life Support: No Breathing, Hero ID Only; Instant Change, last clothes; Contact, Dr Goldwing 13–; Immunity to Alcohol; Demolitions 11–; AK: Wales 11–; AK: London 11–; PS: Miner 12–; Basic Watch Battle Language.

Disadvantages: 2x STUN from Sonics; Code vs Killing; Extreme Fear of Heights; Blind; Cannot Jump; No Sense of Smell; Susceptible, 2d6/phase from Coal; Distinctive Features, Concealable, Cause Prejudice; DNPC: Wife (Gill), Normal w/useful skills, 11–; DNPC: Young Daughter, Incompetent, 8–; Hunted, Progenitor Cyber-Systems (less powerful), 8–; Experience.

Name: Owen Edwardes, Ex-Miner.

Personal Details: Human Form: Born: 1945. Height: 5'5". Weight: 58kg. Hair: Black, clean shaven. Eyes: Brown. "Mole" Form: Height: 5'9". Weight: 186kg. Hair: none. Eyes: Permanently closed.

Background: While Owen Edwardes worked in a South Wales coal mine, driving a new shaft, the cutting machine hit something; there was an explosion and cave-in. And yet, rescue workers reached all the trapped men. Only Owen, at the front when the explosion happened, was badly hurt; blinded for life, in fact.

A lot of people would like to know exactly what happened that day. Nuclear waste? No-one could find any trace of radiation or of dumping-shafts. The government acted secretive, but they didn't know; the mining union asked questions, but got nowhere. All Owen knew was that he was stronger and tougher, he couldn't get drunk (but was allergic to coal), his sight and smell had been replaced by the ability to "read" vibrations, and he could transform into a shaggy, long-clawed thing with vibration powers that could tunnel faster than a man could run. Convalescing at a specialist hospital in London, he experimented; he also became friendly with Gillian French, a rather plain nurse with good bone structure.

Then he met the newly-forming London Watch, and became the superhero "Mole". One mission involved a pre-human "Progenitor" computer system , which reacted oddly; it seems that his power "should" only be used "with authority", and now, such systems sometimes detect and attack him. Soon after, he proposed to Gill.

As a hero, Mole was restricted by psychological problems (he refused to travel by air, could barely tolerate being in a ship over deep water), and his quiet nature. After a predictably weird wedding, Mole announced his retirement from heroism; he and Gill now live in the North Welsh mountains with their infant daughter. Mostly it's a quiet life, but Mole is always willing to help old friends or defend Wales, if the need arises.

Identifying Quote: "Now, boyo, are you going to give up and come quiet, then?" (Note that he comes from an English-speaking area of Wales.)

PARTISAN

Use the Characteristics for the Clansman (of the New Knights, above) for Partisan. He has a long list of military and espionage talents and skills, specialising in stealth and disguise, and sometimes carries "standard" military equipment (treat as a gadget pool). He also has a Send & Receive Radio in a false tooth (IIF). He has multiple Contacts and fake IDs. He is almost permanently in conflict with a number of terrorist groups, he's slightly over-confident, and he has a crippled son.

Background: Jack Bray, the London-born son of a policeman, made the army his life, and had a long and distinguished SAS career. He was dutiful but dispassionate about his work against terrorists in Ireland — until the day when, by complete coincidence, a bomb in London killed his wife and crippled his young son. Honourably discharged on psychological grounds, he began a deadly private war. This is totally unofficial, and he is sometimes in conflict with the authorities, but he is also sometimes used by more devious secret service units who can't do something themselves.

On occasion, Partisan has worked with the Watch, and Dr GoldWing fitted him with a false tooth radio. However, the connection is intermittent; the team doesn't know all about Partisan's more violent escapades, and certainly wouldn't help with them if they did.

Partisan is still, at heart, a professional; he disdains excessive violence. He doesn't consider himself a superhero, and can't face such beings in combat with confidence — so he'll hide, snipe, and rig the odds if he has to. His specialisation is infiltration; he's unnervingly good at disguise, a social chameleon. People can't even remember his eye colour clearly...



WATCH RESOURCES

Watch facilities are paid for with Gold family money, and often designed by Dr GoldWing. In game terms, the points come from each team member (contributions not shown in character data), with some additions from sources such as "Watched: UK Government", "Watched: UK Press", and so on.

THE WATCH BASE

The Watch operates out of a Gold family estate in Berkshire, west of London. This consists of a large house, originally built in the 19th century, with large, wooded grounds. The house has been refurbished inside for the team, and has had to be rebuilt following at least one supervillain assault.

Actually, the Watch Base doesn't "feel" like a superhero HQ. The labs, workshops and radios are tucked away in the basement, and the decoration is tastefully modern, with authentic Victoriana and antiques blending in. Each team member has a private bedroom with bathroom, decorated as they choose, but most of them went for something matching the rest of the house (Sarah talked Yeoman out of his worst ideas). The library is excellent — treat as a history/archaeology "lab" (16- roll); Dr Goldwing's labs have a 12- roll in each of his sciences. Sea Change's mill-house is near the main block, with underwater facilities in the mill-pond. The Watch have radio links to STOP HQ in London.

The gardens are tended by a middle-aged couple (normal DNPCs), while other work is done by a dozen brawny characters (bought as agents), who were actually once a CUIRASS cell in training (use CUIRASS stats). The Watch infiltrated and turned the cell, and the ex-agents are on probation on condition that they stay out of trouble. They try, but if the base is attacked, they may borrow some of Dr GoldWing's inventions...

Officially, security is provided by the Watch themselves. There are cameras with Infra-Red scattered through the grounds (Concealed with a 16- roll). The base has no large computer (just a couple of micros); the Watch are too informal to keep volumes of data, and generally prefer to use their own brains.

THE SKIMMER

When the Golden Eagle isn't available, members of the Watch use a simple ducted-fan "flying raft". Although they are registered trainee pilots, this is bending a few laws, but they've avoided trouble so far. It's DCV -3, Mass 3.2 tonnes (-5 KB), 35 STR, 16 BODY, 6 DEF (doesn't protect passengers from above or from half of side shots), 15 DEX, 3 SPD, Move 10x16, Max 480, and has Radio Listen/Transmit and Radar Sense w/360-degree Sensing, both OIF. It also has Distinctive Features (super-tech look; not concealable), Public ID, and 1d6 Unluck.

WATCH BATTLE-LANGUAGE

This simple, efficient form of communication, incorporates various codes, and enables the London Watch to discuss tactics and plan privately. It is easy to learn, but not to decode; treat it as having a 1-point similarity to any human language, but never more. Use of Universal Translator talent will work; so will lengthy study of a good sample plus a successful Cryptography or Science: Linguistics roll at -3 (either skill can be complementary to the other). Members of the Watch learn it under hypnosis.

Other Team Skills

At Dr GoldWing's suggestion, most of the Watch have made some study (to Familiarity or better) of British and International Law and the geography of London. Past events (and hanging around together) have given many of them some knowledge of Archaeology and the Progenitors.

THE NIGHTWATCH

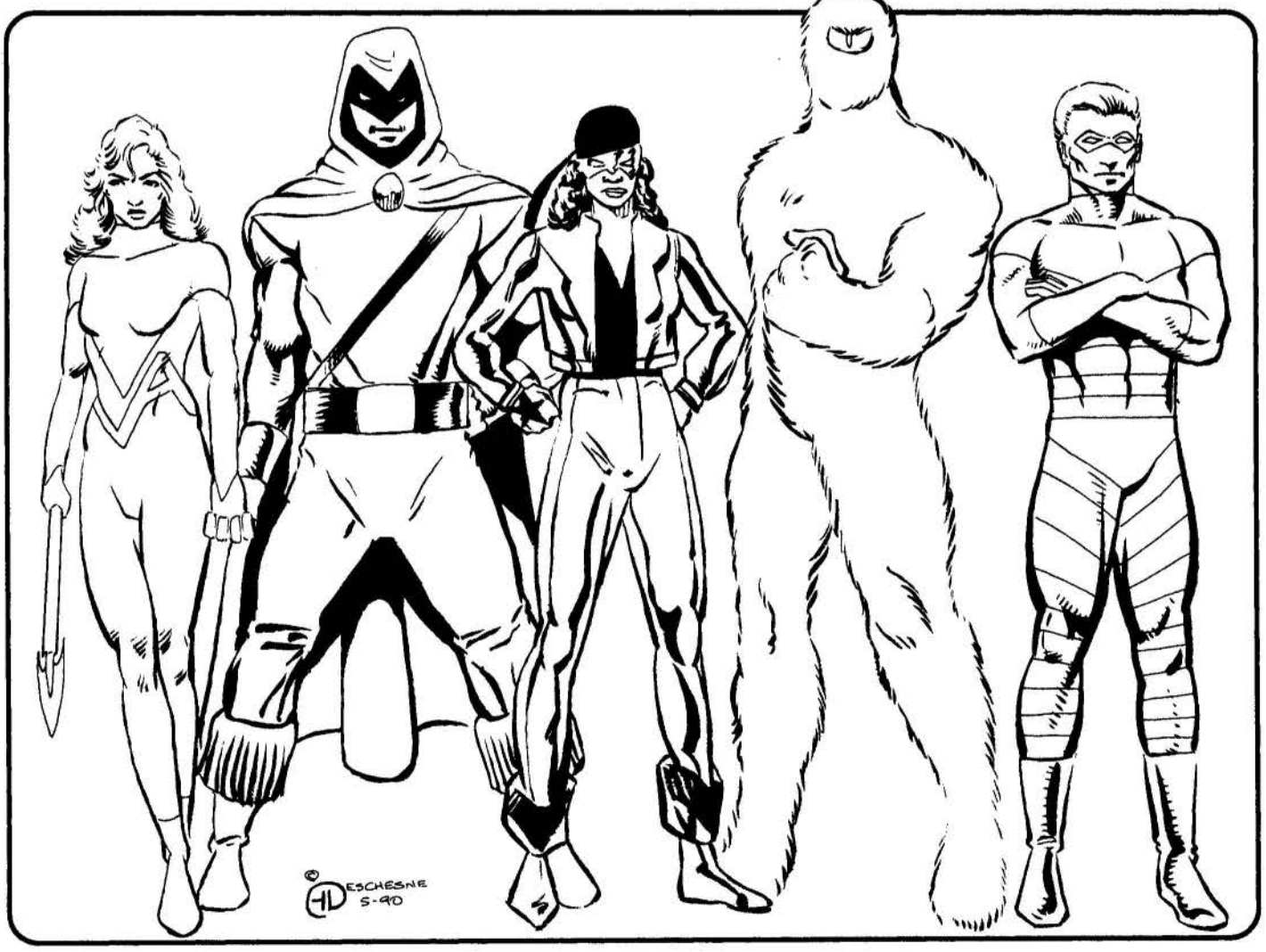


Membership: Aspen, Earth-Brother, Starline, Wintershade and Weather-Ring.

Origin: The Nightwatch came together by accident. After Earth-Brother and Aspen first defeated the ReDirection Cartel, they fought a number of other foes, briefly encountering Starline when a minor black magician attempted to misuse a stone circle. Then Dr Samaine made his first move against Weather-Ring, with a complex scheme involving a fake medical mystery in Wales, aiming to capture and corrupt the hero; however, he reckoned without the interest of several other heroes, and the four who appeared defeated him. At first, Aspen and Earth-Brother were suspicious of the demonic-looking Wintershade, but he soon gained their trust.

The Nightwatch gained their name by associating with the London Watch — as backups, specialists in the supernatural, and guardians of the West of England. They were all offered Watch membership, but preferred to form an informal, mutually loyal band of shadowy defenders. Their "sort of" HQ — Aspen and Earth-Brother's house in Wales — has a secret, encrypted communications link to the Watch Base.

Tactics: Unpractised though they are as a team, the Nightwatch are clever, know each other well, and obey Aspen's suggestions. These often involve recognising and exploiting opponents' weaknesses. While Aspen analyses, the team fights defensively, with Wintershade, and Earth-Brother's stone barriers, slowing the opposition, and the others skirmishing at range.



Group Relations: The Nightwatch are a bunch of people with similar ideals, problems, and styles, and quite a lot of friendship. They are barely a team, and have their differences, but they fight hard for each other.

External Relations: The Nightwatch get on well enough with their "parent" team, but have little in common; Aspen and Earth-Brother are rather suspicious of the millionaire-scientist Dr GoldWing. However, they appreciate his help and honesty, and will respond when he needs aid. They deal politely with STOP, but don't quite trust these "armed police"; Hetherington views the Nightwatch as on his side, but rather too mysterious for his tastes.

ASPEN & EARTH-BROTHER

These two heroes' powers are closely linked, appropriately as they are, in fact, married. Peter Hallon, a half-English, half- American writer, met Judith Rhys, a Welsh sculptress, while in the UK; they were soon married (Judith keeps her maiden name on principle), and decided to live in a rural area of North Wales which they loved for its remote natural beauty. Two years later, however, they discovered that there was a plan to build a chemical plant near their home. Investigating, they found that the scheme was being managed by Peter's brother Jerome, and they also came to suspect that the plant would do far more environmental damage than was admitted. However, they could find no way to stop it. Then, one night, after a fruitless meeting with Jerome in London, their car broke down in the depths of a wood in Herefordshire.

What followed was some kind of mystical event. Peter and Judith have never told anyone what happened that night, but they emerged as the supernatural defenders of Britain's few remaining wildernesses. They transform by grasping each other's hands and mentally calling on "the land". Judith becomes Aspen, a warrior with woodcraft skills and control over wood; Peter becomes Earth- Brother, a huge, muscular being with geomantic powers. In these forms, they opposed the factory scheme, discovering that it was backed by the ReDirection Cartel, an international conspiracy. Defeating it, they made enemies of the Cartel in general and Jerome Hallon in particular. Today they are heroes — but perhaps not heroes of humanity...

ASPEN

10/15 STR	14/24 DEX	15/20 CON	10 BODY
18 INT	20 EGO	10/20 PRE	12/18 COM
4/15 PD	4/13 ED	3/6 SPD	5/7 REC
30/40 END	24/30 STUN		

Second value in each case is Hero ID only.

Powers and Skills: 45pt Multipower, Hero ID Only ("Wood Control"): 45pt u, 2d6 HKA, 0 END (3d6 w/STR): 45pt u, 2d6 RKA, 0 END: 45pt u, STR 30 TK/Animate Object, Wooden Objects Only (-1); 12pt EC, "Commune" powers, Concentrate (0 DCV) when activating, Hero ID Only, Requires proximity of masses of live vegetation (-1): (1) Change Environment to lighting, sounds, smells, etc, of natural woodland, 16" Radius: (2) Clairsentience, sight & hearing, 125" range: (3) Mind Scan, 5d6; +9" Running (to 15"), Hero ID Only; Instant Change, Same Clothes, Only with Wood-Brother (-1); Mind Link w/ Wood-Brother (depends on him having same); Danger Sense, All Times, Mystical (Any Danger), Immediate Vicinity, Only when vegetation around (-1/2), 13–; Find Weakness w/HKA, 12–; 1d6 Luck; Breakfall 12/14–; Climbing 12/14–; Concealment 13–; Deduction 13–; Paramedic 13–; Shadowing 11–; Stealth 12/14–; Survival 13–; Tactics 13–; Tracking 13–; Ventriloquism 11–; KS: Sculpture 13- (INT-based); PS: Wood-Carving 15/17- (DEX-based); Native Welsh; Unaccented English; Basic French; +2 Levels, All Combat; +1 Overall Level.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN from Fire; 1.5x STUN from Pure Cold Iron; Berserk at wanton destruction of natural things 11-, 14-; In Love with Wood-Brother; Dedicated to guarding "the land"; Hates excessive violence; 1d6 STUN/Turn from any destructive black magic in her vicinity; Hunted, ReDirection Cartel (as pow, NCI), 8–; Secret ID; Experience.

Name: Judith Rhys, Sculptress.

Personal details (two figures are "normal"/"hero" forms): Born: 1964. Height: 5'3"/5'7". Weight: 51/61kg. Hair: Red-Brown/Red. Eyes: Green.

Background/Personality: Judith Rhys, a sculptress specialising in wood-working, has lived all her life in the west of the UK. A calm, artistic personality, she is nonetheless highly adaptable as well as intelligent, and the accepted leader of the Nightwatch; she will accept this until she finds someone else capable of the job. She likes to study a thing — a piece of wood, a problem, or an enemy — until she feels she knows its "true nature"; as her judgement is good, this often enables her to produce very effective sculptures, ideas, and tactics.

Identifying Quote: "I've no wish to fight, but when the land needs guarding, I cannot turn away."

Powers/Tactics: When Judith transforms into Aspen, she becomes "the warrior of the woodlands". Aspen is swift, stealthy, and agile, and can attune herself with vegetation, drawing sensory and extra-sensory impressions through it or enhancing the impressions it creates in others. She can command wood to move, and produce small amounts of it in her hands, usually in the form of a spear, javelin, bow, or other weapon; these weapons are far more effective than wooden implements "should" be. (They are not "accessible foci"; if anyone grabs one, Aspen will drop it and produce another in half a phase, and the original will vanish.)

Appearance: Judith is a graceful but rather plain redhead with a taste for baggy, practical clothes; however, her supernatural transformation enhances her in many ways. Aspen is a lithe, flame-haired, and wears a short, simple green shift; she has piercing green eyes and a commanding manner. In both guises, Judith/Aspen has a musical Welsh accent, but is sparing with her words.

EARTH-BROTHER

13/38 STR	10/20 DEX	10/30 CON	10/15 BODY
13 INT	10/20 EGO	10/25 PRE	12 COM
4/15+ PD	4/12+ ED	2/5 SPD	5/14 REC
20/60 END	22/55 STUN		

Second value for each is Hero ID only.

Powers: 75pt Multipower, Act 14-, Full Phase to use, Hero ID Only, Effects must rise from solid ground (-1/4): 75pt u, 6d6 EB, Double KB, Explosion w/-1 DC per 2": 75pt u, Force Wall, 15 PD/15 ED; +2d6 HA, 0 END, Hero ID Only; Armour, 6 PD/6 ED, Hero ID Only; Knockback Resist -5", Hero ID Only, Only while on ground (-1/4); Lack of Weakness -5; Mental Defense -10, Hero ID Only; Power Defense -8, Act 14–; +3" Running (to 9"), Hero ID Only; +4 PER (all senses), Hero ID Only; Instant Change, Same Clothes, Only with Aspen (-1); Mind Link w/Any woodland animal, up to 4 at once; Mind Link w/Aspen (she has same); Animal Handler 16–; Climbing 11/13–; Concealment 12–; Stealth 11/13–; Survival 11–; Tracking 12–; KS: British Wildlife 13–; PS: Writer 14–; Native (American) English; Basic Welsh; +4 Lvls w/Punch, Move By & Through; Bump of Direction; Combat Sense 12-.

Disadvantages: 2x Effect, Illusions/Images while in Hero ID; Berserks if takes BODY 8-, 11–; Enraged if wildlife hurt 11-, 11–; Hero ID is instinct-driven and uncommunicative; Defends wilderness with his life; In love with Aspen; 1d6 STUN/Turn from "un-natural" forces (black magic, sub-atomic energy, etc) when in Hero ID; Distinctive Features (Hero ID is huge & burly; Can disguise by switch to normal ID); Watched, "lawful" magicians (as pow), 8–; Hunted, ReDirection Cartel (as pow), 11–; Secret ID; Experience.

Name: Peter Hallon, Writer.

Personal details (two figures are "normal"/"hero" forms): Born: 1964. Height: 5'10"/6'10". Weight: 82/139kg. Hair: Light Brown, clean-shaven/Unknown, probably dark, thin beard. Eyes: Grey.

Background/Personality: Jerome Hallon of the ReDirection Cartel (below) is driven by material success; his brother Peter has a more spiritual, passive nature. Peter lives as a writer, producing a little poetry, some stories, and pieces on travel, wildlife, and the countryside. However, as Earth-Brother, his personality changes; drawing on "powers of the wild", he is driven by instinct and emotions. Still, he keeps his intelligence, and usually acts rationally in a fight, following Aspen's tactical suggestions.

Identifying Quote: "I serve powers you'll never understand. You anger them; don't fight them!"

Powers/Skills: While his wife transforms into a powerful but still essentially human being, Peter Hallon becomes "the brother to the wild" — a being who, although physically human, draws on more primal forces. (In fact, his existence is a worry to those who defend a more orderly pattern of being.) The land itself responds to his will, with more violence than the earth of Britain usually displays; he can command it to form barriers or to batter foes by erupting in a flurry of rocks. Earth-Brother has animalistic might, and an instinctive, psychic affinity with wild animals.

In battle, Earth-Brother likes to begin in cover, disrupting opponents' tactics with his earth-powers, then to charge in, scattering foes in his initial rush before settling down to a fist-fight. Aspen incorporates these instincts into her plans.

Appearance: Peter Hallon is ordinary-looking, albeit broad- shouldered; Earth-Brother is a towering figure, at the limits of the plausibly human, clad in rough fabrics, including a hood that largely over-shadows his face, and with a permanently grim expression.

STARLINE

Use the Characteristics for Pulsar, *Champions* pg C25. She also has a 75pt Multipower, with all slots using her END Reserve: they are: 75pt m, 6d6 Ego Attack at 1/2 END, Visible: 75pt m, TK w/STR 50: 75pt m, 8.5d6 EB, Explosion, Personal Immunity: 40pt m, Force Field (20 PD/20 ED): 30pt u, 15" Teleport. She also has a 10" Teleport w/up to 8x Mass, x16,384 Distance "Non-Combat", 10 Fixed Locations, Only works between fixed locations which must be major ley-nexus sites (-1.5), +1 Turn to use, x5 END, using her END Reserve (10 END/Use); Mental Defence, -15 (maximum), proportional to END Reserve level (-1 per 10 END; -1/2); and Detect: Subterranean flows, w/Discriminatory, Range, Sense, & Targeting. Her END Reserve has 150 END, REC 30, Only Recovers at ley-line nexus points, near geomantic power sources, etc (-1 Disad to REC). Her skills are Stealth 13–; KS: Modern History 14–; KS: Prehistoric Sites 14–; Conversational French; and +2 Lvls w/Multipower. Her Disadvantages include Accidental Change (generates silvery glow) near high-powered mystical effects, Enraged when fighting black magicians, Code vs Killing, Uncertain about own place in life, Distinctive Features (black, Birmingham accent, etc), Hunted, Black Covens, and Secret ID.

Background: Clementine Lemsfield was born in Birmingham, the daughter of West Indian immigrants who were also strict Seventh Day Adventists. She discovered her talent for sensing underground flows of all kinds when she was 17, and tested it at odd moments after she went to university. Then, one day, she realised that one flow, in a country area, was being "disrupted"; immediately afterwards, she was approached by a number of hostile locals. Confused, she instinctively defended herself with psychic energy that knocked out all the members of what was actually a minor black coven.

In fact, she has a simple "dowsing" talent, but far more sensitive than most. As a result, she can manipulate energy that flows along natural "lines" in the earth, store it up, and use it to create shimmering, silvery effects of various kinds. She can also teleport using such flows, sometimes covering vast distances if a strong "line" is available.

Clementine realised that secrecy would make life safer, and also that her devout parents might be distressed by her talents, which are linked to pre-Christian religious sites. So, reading in the press about superheroes, she created "Starline". She's not a conventional, street-patrolling heroine, but she has a strong sense of right and wrong, and what she knows about people who want to use ley-line-associated powers makes her oppose them. She's just completing a degree in Modern History at Coventry University, and trying to decide what to do with her future, feeling torn between conventional parents, hopes of an independent career, and her powers.

Identifying Quote: "Hey, don' you know that's not right?"

WINTERSHADE

Wintershade has a Multiform. One ID (Edward Queensberry) is a Skilled Normal with 20 INT, 20 EGO, a 25-point Magic Pool (All Powers have Act 14- & Concentration), Magic Skill, Scholar, and various KS skills, Sciences, Languages, etc, relating to Folklore and Anthropology. For his Fomori form, use the Characteristics for Powerhouse (*Champions*, pg. C30), including Growth and Density, but with 23 BODY, 2 COM, 30 PD and 4 SPD; he has high Damage Resistance, 75% Damage Reduction vs cold only, Lack of Weakness, Life Support vs cold only, +3" Running, lesser versions of his human skills, and combat levels. He has a Secret ID, is Hunted by the Shapeshifters, and hates evil magic; in his Fomori form, he also has only one arm and one eye, Distinctive Features (Hideous), and Vulnerability to Fire and some Celtic charms against evil.

Background: Edward Queensberry, an Oxford-based anthropologist, was studying archaic folklore survivals in Scotland. Unfortunately, this led him to irritate Martha McPhee (Hag), just as the Shapeshifters were looking for something to open a way for a Fomori, a Celtic winter-demon, to come to Earth. Edward was nominated as the sacrifice.

However, he was not only strong-willed, he also had a little knowledge of mysticism from his studies. As Hag completed the spell, he countered it. Against the odds, he succeeded, taking over the summoned form. Edward decided to use his new power fighting such evil magic, and joined the Nightwatch. A scholarly but humorous man, he enjoys the raw strength of his Fomori body, and is happy to act as team powerhouse, but he thinks more clearly in human guise.

Identifying Quote: "Those idiots don't understand that they're playing with things — like me!"

WEATHERING

James Alexander is a normal, but with 15 INT, 15 EGO, and 4 SPD. As WeatheRing, his ring (OIF, doesn't work under water) gives him 26 DEX, 30 CON, 11 PD, 13 ED, 6 SPD and 20 REC, plus Weather Control powers; Desolidification (cloud form, vulnerable to wind and cold), Flight while Desolid, Lightning (EB and AP EB), and Fog (Darkness). He has the skills of a talented junior surgeon. He's a diabetic (dependent on insulin), very protective of innocents, and has a girlfriend (DNPC). He's Hunted by DEMON (who he despises for their brutality) and, very persistently, by Dr Samaine.

Background: James Alexander was a young trainee surgeon who inherited an old, brass seal-ring from an uncle. This was in fact half of the Chain With Two Links, an Arthurian item of power. James was, for unknown reasons (perhaps his high moral code), the first member of his family for centuries to discover its power. At first he didn't use it, feeling he could do more good as a doctor.

Then he was attacked by Dr Samaine, and met the Nightwatch-to-be. After this, he decided that he needed a secret identity; more of Dr Samaine, attacks from DEMON (who want his ring), and friendship with the Nightwatch, have made a part-time hero of him.

The ring is attuned to "elemental air"; its possible uses are legion, but WeatheRing has as yet only managed localised weather-based effects. (Dr Samaine knows that the two matched rings, used together, would have far greater powers than either alone.)

In combat, WeatheRing is cautious; he doesn't think of himself as a fighter.

Identifying Quote: "Will a private thunderstorm make you act sensible and give up?"



SOLO HEROES

A LIFE OF WATCHING: THE JAMES TOMPION STORY

James "Jimmy" Tompion, alias Fire-Watcher, alias the Watchmaker, could appear in '30's pulp, '40's "Golden Age", '60's "period", or modern-day campaigns; in the world of the London Watch, he's a useful background figure, chiefly because he's a manipulative old bore who annoys the Watch no end...

Early Days

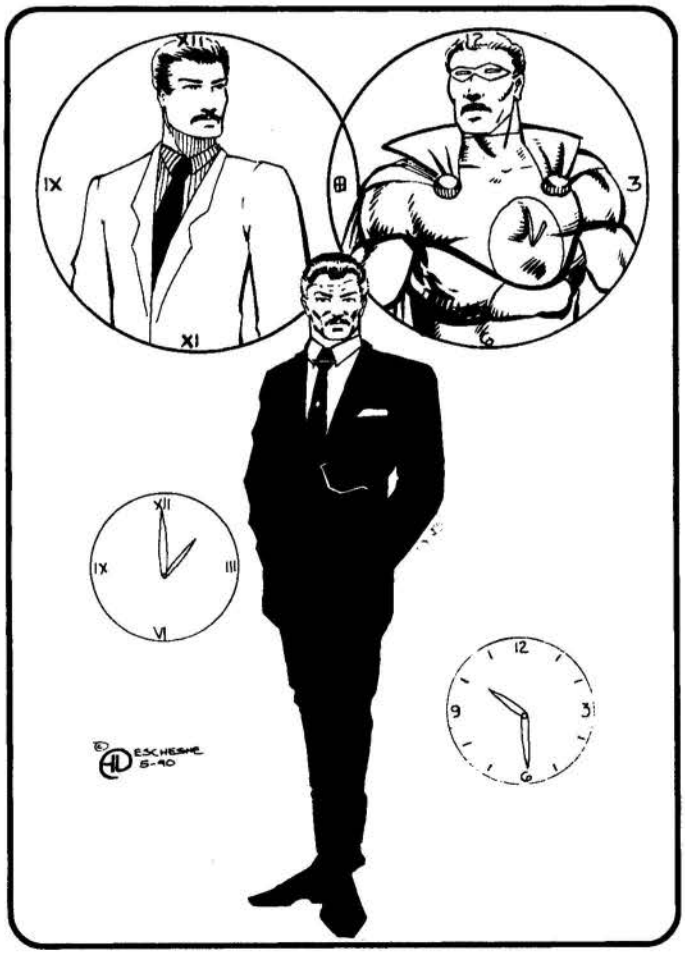
Tompion was born in 1910, the son and grandson of talented engineers; it soon became clear that his talent surpassed all of them. After graduating from London University, his restless nature sent him around the world. In this time, he saw the new Nazi government of Germany at first hand, and came to dislike and distrust it violently — something that put him on the political fringe, which in turn led to friendship with unpopular UK political figures. In between advising them on science, he became a roving adventurer — Britain's only noted hero with engineering skills. This led him to meet some of New York's great heroes of the day, although he always regarded Americans as isolationist and naive. He met magic occasionally, but distrusted it, despite (or because of) his affair with a trainee witch named Janet Misperton.

GMs' Note: *If you want to run a '30's Jimmy Tompion, treat as a Skilled Normal (*Champions, *pg.134), but with 18 INT and 4 SPD, Boxing, various "exploration" skills, a lot of technological skills, and "Traveller" plus several AK skills. He also has KS: World Politics and various political Contacts, and Lightning Calculator. He often carries an automatic pistol. He's curious, honourable, and naively idealistic, and a poor liar.*

The 1940's: Fire-Watcher

As soon as war broke out in 1939, Tompion volunteered for service. The War Office directed him into research, where he helped with early work on radar. However, he was restless, and he had heard of the costumed champions of the USA; didn't Britain deserve as much? So he pestered his contacts into letting him create a sanctioned "masked hero" persona, named after the citizen volunteers who had the dangerous task of looking out for fires during air raids — Fire-Watcher. Driven by a sense of mission, exercising fanatically, he far exceeded his former abilities, and battled spies and infiltrators on the "Home Front". His personal life was less successful; although he sometimes fought alongside her coven against Nazi evil, Tompion felt that he was losing Janet Misperton to the arcane world of mysticism, while she was repelled by his "violent materialism". In truth, of course, they were both prisoners of what they each saw as duty.

GMs' Note: *If you need to run Tompion in his costumed '40's prime, use the Characteristics for the Clansman (above), combined with a revolver (and "speed loader"), police truncheon, knife, grenades, and "period" body armour, and many other "gimmicks". Fire-Watcher rode a Triumph motor-cycle, and had all his former skills plus extensive military training. His old idealism had by now transformed into a fanatical desire to defeat the Nazis. He wore a black domino mask and a short dark blue cape over dark green military-style tunic, belt, grey trousers, and army boots.*



In Retirement

In 1945, Tompion hung up his costumE and returned to research. Through the '50's, he worked on scientific projects. His romance with Janet Misperton faded into mutual unhappiness. Tompion married someone else, and raised a son.

By the '60's, Tompion seemed on the verge of a breakthrough in self-programming robotics. And yet, again and again, his results proved "unrepeatable". Other researchers picked them up and extended them, but Tompion was unhappy. His contributions to polymer chemistry research proved equally erratic. Only in the '80's, when mathematics (never Tompion's strong point) provided him with "Chaos Theory", did he begin to see why his delicate self- programming circuits were so unpredictable.

GMs' Notes: *If you need to run a '50's-'70's Tompion, use characteristics and skills between the above and the following, plus a small gadget pool if he's aware that trouble is coming, but at this time he was not much involved in active adventure.*

In the '70's, James Tompion was rich from his patents, acknowledged as a pioneer, adept with computers — and unsure how much he'd really achieved. His wife died in 1973, leaving him in an emotional void. He started to use his computers to track crime, alerting a small number of low-powered heroes to the greatest threats. He created a new identity as "Timothy James", a watch repairer in the East End of London. Then, at last, a new breed of heroes arose. Tompion couldn't fight alongside them, but perhaps he could help them do the most good. They didn't always see it that way, but he tried; he now sees his granddaughter, Charmaine (Chime) become a fledgling superheroine, and he has mixed feelings.

THE WATCHMAKER

8 STR	11 DEX	10 CON	9 BODY	28 INT
18 EGO	18 PRE	8 COM	3 PD	3 ED
4 SPD	4 REC	20 END	18 STUN	

Equipment: 50pt Power Pool of focussed powers, mostly built in to a large "pocket watch".

Skills: Acting 13–; Bugging 15–; Bureaucratics 13–; Computer Programming 15–; Concealment 15–; Criminology 15–; Cryptography 15–; Deduction 15–; Demolitions 11–; Electronics 14–; Inventor 15–; Mechanics 14–; Security Systems 15–; Systems Operation 15–; Transport Fam, Prop Planes, Gliders, Autogyros, Cars & Boats; Weaponsmith (slugthrowers & energy weapons) 13–; Fam w/Small Arms, Heavy Machine Guns & Vehicle Weapons; AK: London 14-, Western Europe 8-, USA 11-, Africa 8-, South America 8–; KS: International Affairs 11-, International Crime 15–; PS: General engineering 15–; Scientist w/SC: Theoretical Engineer 15-, Physics 15-, Electronics 15-, Chemistry 15-, Cybernetics 15-, Robotics 15-, Metallurgy 11–; Fluent German & French; Basic Spanish & Russian; +3 Overall Lvls.

Perks: Contacts: Top Industrialist 12-: Retired Field Marshall 13–; Money: Well-Off; Base: see below.

Talents: Cramming; Lightning Calculator; 1d6 Luck.

Disadvantages: -3" Running (total 3"/phase); 1.5x BODY, Normal- Damage Physical Attacks (brittle bones); Honourable; Tries to Improve the World by Manipulating People; Still has feelings for Mother Janet; Worries about Chime; Distinctive Features (old man: not concealable); Watched, ReDirection Cartel (in "Tompion" ID, for his inventions: as pow, NCI), 8–; Hunted, South American Nazi Followers (old scores: less pow), 8–; 1d6 Unluck; Secret ID.

The Watchtower (The Watchmaker's Base)

The Watchmaker operates out of Timothy James' watch-repair shop in the East End of London, which he flippantly refers to as "the Watchtower". The basement houses a high-tech control centre is superbly hidden (16- Disguise or Concealment roll); amongst other things, the shop windows can display animated holograms of "normal" business (but with "CLOSED" signs in the door) while the entire shop interior descends as a lift (elevator) to the lower level. The base has four robots around, each a perfect model of the Watchmaker himself (treat as having Disguise on 17- for this); they are physically low-powered (all physical characteristics 5, 3 PD & ED), but useful for misdirection (and as lab assistants). The base also has a high-powered computer, known as "Grandfather", with INT 20, DEX 10, SPD 4, which can run the Watchmaker's vast array of monitoring systems and radio receivers when he's busy, and robotics, electronics and mechanical labs with 12- skill rolls.

CHIME

8/15* STR	20 DEX	18 CON	10 BODY	23 INT
9 EGO	10/15* PRE	12 COM	5 PD	5 ED
4/5* SPD	6 REC	36 END	23 STUN	

*OIF (Armour). Armour also makes STR AP, draws on END Reserve (1 for 1 from normal END), doesn't affect Figured Characteristics.

Powers and Skills: Martial Arts: Aikido, w/Throw, Hold, Strike & Escape; +3d6 HA, AP* (gives 6d6 AP Aikido Strike); 50pt Sonic Multipower*: 50pt u, 10d6 EB: 50pt u, 5d6 NND (Life Support vs pressure or sonic powers): 50pt u, 5d6 EB, AP, No range Mods, 8 uses (sonar homing mini-missiles): 50pt u, 5d6 PD Drain (resonators): 45pt u, 3d6 EB, Autofire, Penetrating, 0 END: 20pt u, 1d6+1 HKA (2d6+1 w/STR): 30pt u, Force Field (15 PD/9 ED), 1/2 END: 50pt u, 25" Flight; Armour* (17 PD/13 ED); 8" Gliding*; Flash Defence* -5; Mental Defence* -10; Power Defence* -8; Life Support (No Breathing, vs Vacuum/ High Pressure & Radiation)*; Active Sonar*; Radio Receive/ Transmit*; +8 w/Radio PER*; I-R Vision*; END Reserve*, 110 END, 8 REC; Computer Programming 14–; Electronics 12–; Inventor 14–; Scientist w/SC: Acoustics 14-, Cybernetics 14-, Electronic Engineer 14-, Physics 11-, Chemistry 11–; KS: Aikido 13–; Fam w/Mechanical; Basic French. *OIF (Armour). All appropriate powers also draw on END Reserve.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN, Electricity; Berserks if Taunted or Humiliated 11-, 14–; Code of Honour; Determined to Prove Self; Small Body Size; 2d6 STUN if Sonic Powers jammed, drained, etc; Distinctive Features (teenager in power armour); Reputation (slightly crazy crime-fighter), 8–; Hunted, Minor Crooks, 8–; 2d6 Unluck; Secret ID.

Name: Charmaine Tompion, Student.

Personal Details: Born: 1973. Height: 5'2". Weight: 47kg. Hair: Brunette. Eyes: Hazel.

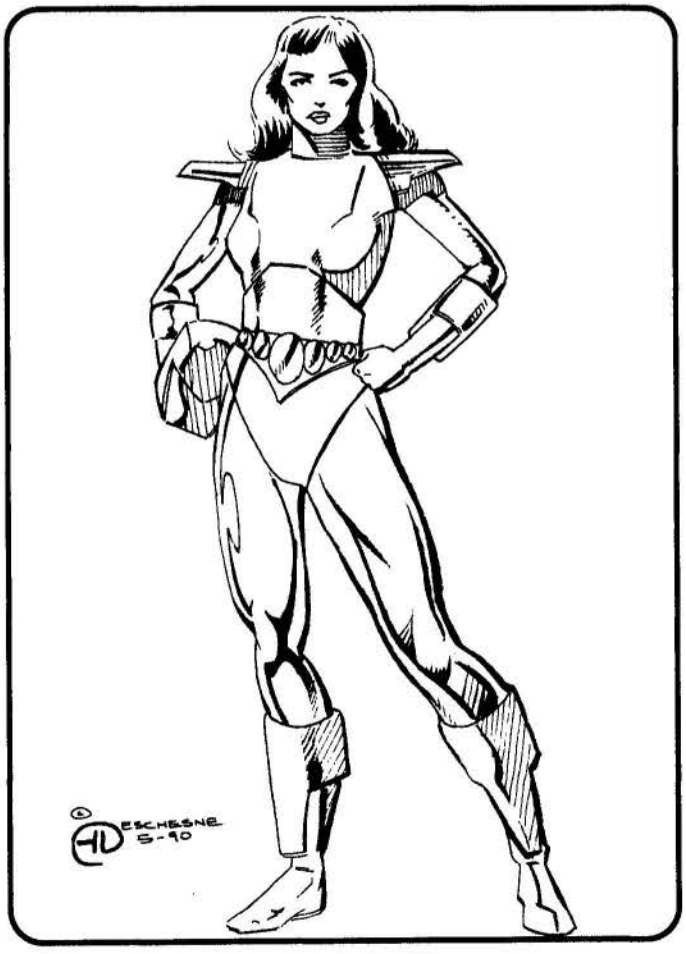
Background: Edmund Tompion, son of James (the Watchmaker) married in 1969. His wife, Penelope, bore their daughter in 1973; by then the pair had formed a geological survey company, and often travelled together on business. As a result, Charmaine Tompion was mostly brought up by friends, schools, and relations, including James. He and his old adventuring friends were a major influence on the girl, teaching her science and self-defence. She turned out to have inherited much of the family genius and spirit of adventure.

One evening in 1988, Charmaine and a friend were harassed by a teenage gang. Charmaine panicked, sent one boy sprawling, and ran; her friend was less lucky. Actually, the boys were just obnoxious kids, and this was London and not New York; no great harm was done. However, Charmaine's friend swore never to talk to her again. Upset, Charmaine decided that she needed something to let her deal with problems bigger than herself.

There followed months of argument with her grandfather, but all the while, a suit of armour was taking shape. His influence and worry shows in the defensive systems it carries; hers, in its variety of weapons. The net result; a crime-fighter called Chime.

Unfortunately, not everyone approved. Chime is young and brash, covering a deep fear of personal inadequacy. When she met the London Watch, they immediately wrote her off as a "super-brat", and linked to the irritating Watchmaker as well. After an embarassing collision with STOP, she was at a disadvantage, but Chief Inspector Johnson noted her skills; she ended up doing STOP a lot of favours. Still, she's young, intelligent, and improving all the time; she may yet become a true, mature heroine.

Identifying Quote: "You think I can't look after myself? Just watch me!"



HARRY MORTIMER

13 STR	15 DEX	15 CON	11 BODY	23 INT
18 EGO	13 PRE	10 COM	5 PD	5 ED
4 SPD	6 REC	30 END	26 STUN	

Normal Equipment: Revolver (1d6+1 RKA, +1 OCV, +1 STUN Multiple); Bullet-proof vest (Armour, 4PD/4ED, Act 11-, IIF).

Skills: Dirty Infighting (4.5d6 Punch, 2d6 NND Low Blow, STR 23 Disarm, 1d6+1 KA Kidney Blow w/STR); Fam w/Small Arms & Knives; Acting 12–; Breakfall 12–; Bribery 16–; Bureaucratics 12–; Climbing 12–; Concealment 14–; Deduction 14–; Lockpicking 12–; Paramedic 14–; Security Systems 14–; Shadowing 13–; Stealth 12–; Trading 12–; KS: Espionage 14-, Modern History 11-, International Super-Groups 15-, Diplomacy 14–; AK: London 14-, Paris 11-, New York 14-, Moscow 11-, UK 14-, USA 11-, Europe 14-, Russia 11-, Africa 11-, Central America 11-, S.E.Asia 14–; Fam w/Bugging, Criminology, Demolitions, Gambling, Interrogation, Survival, & Weaponsmith; Languages: Native in English (London Accent); Fluent French & Spanish; Conversational Italian, German, & Russian; Basic Mandarin Chinese. +1 Lvl w/Firearms; +1 Lvl, All Skills.

Talents: Find Weakness w/All Firearms, 12–; 2d6 Luck.

Perks: Contacts: Foreign Office Bureaucrat 13-, Royal Marines Colonel 12-, World-Famous Artist 12-, UNTIL Chief Accountant 11–; US State Department Official 11-, Dr Gold-Wing 14–; Favours: KGB Colonel, International Arch-Mage, Polish Trade Unionist, Vatican Exorcist, Nicaraguan Politician, Hollywood Movie Mogul, Singaporean Business Executive; Fringe Benefits: Extensive Travel Papers, Intermittent Diplomatic Status.

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty; Maintains a World-Weary, Cynical Air; Honourable; Slightly Short-Sighted (Needs Glasses); Normal Char Maxima; Age 40+; Distinctive Features (Hangdog Air, Glasses: Concealable w/effort); Hunted by Raven Underlings (as pow), 8–; Watched, KGB, 11–; Watched, Foreign Office, 8–; 2d6 Unluck.

Background/Personality: Harry Mortimer is often found serving in lowly posts in British diplomatic operations around the world, particularly in uncomfortable places — as he often points out. These jobs are "cover"; Mortimer is the Foreign Office's "Implausible Situations" specialist. Any time that weird, inexplicable, or plain ludicrous events blow up, Harry Mortimer is there, ruffled, complaining, and surviving by the skin of his teeth to file another report that goes straight to the dead file. He is not a member of MI5, MI6, or any other "proper" espionage body. He is nominally a diplomat, although his work strains any claims to diplomatic immunity. He does odd jobs of investigation for people who need information to work, and does them better than anyone else. It's just that, working alone, with few holidays or thanks, he has developed a rather odd way of working.

Mortimer's past is shadowy; he himself is evasive on the issue, and some of the details may be official secrets. It is known that he was in the British army in the late 'sixties — presumably in intelligence — and he served as a liaison to the Australian army (a world-renowned Australian artist named Bill Perry remembers him). His accent marks him as a Londoner by birth or upbringing, and he claims no links to any of Britain's well-known schools. Apart from this, all that's certain is that he moved to employment with the British Foreign Office after leaving the army around 1970, and he has worked for them ever since.

Identifying Quote: "Magic? Look please don' say tha' word... My reports go strai' in the roun' file if I mention it..."

Abilities: Harry Mortimer is a skilled generalist rather than a specialist. He's intelligent, versatile, and strong-willed, much as he tries to hide it, and quite capable of asserting himself when he wants to. He is also in better physical condition than might be expected.

Mortimer prefers to avoid combat ("a chap coul' get hurt...I have better dam' things to do..."), but is able to survive it. In a brawl, he will either fight defensively or dirty, depending on circumstances ("it isn't a flamin' game"); in a fire-fight, he will snipe, preferring a revolver ("automatics jam too easy").

Limitations: Apart from his slight short-sightedness and the enemies he has made, Mortimer's chief problem is his code of honour. He is fair, always repays a debt, and will bend rules to help allies. However, he tries very hard not to admit this; he feels (with some justice) that he is overworked, underpaid, and unappreciated, and he never hesitates to say so. This is compounded by the fact that things happen to Harry Mortimer — sometimes good things, more often bad. He has been shot at, wounded (never quite fatally), beaten up and threatened on five continents and several inhabited islands, and he takes no pleasure in the fact.

Appearance: Harry Mortimer is a battered, scruffy-looking individual. About 45, a little under six foot tall, mousy-haired, with weak eyes behind horn-rimmed glasses and no beard or moustache — but all too often an unshaven look — he wears poor-quality lounge suits in all climates, along with what looks like an old school tie (but isn't). He talks with a London accent (not Cockney) and a nasal drone to his voice. He often has a drink in his hand (a vodka and tonic); a very sharp-eyed observer (making a PER roll and an INT or Deduction roll) might realise that this is rarely replenished, and that Mortimer only sips at it.



Campaign Uses: Harry Mortimer is very useful. He will appear in any remote corner of the world where weird events occur, with the task of single-handedly safeguarding British interests and filing a report for future reference. This usually makes him either an ally for PC heroes, or someone to tie up the loose ends after the big fight. He should not serve as extra firepower (except in emergencies), but he is not necessarily a liability in combat; remember that he fights well but defensively. His eye for opponents' weaknesses can be a way of resolving plot difficulties. Remember, however, that he will not automatically tell the PCs everything he knows on first meeting; he'll assess their methods and objectives before allying with them.

If he finds himself opposed to the PCs (because their actions are not in the best interests of HMG), Mortimer will work even harder not to get into fights (unless he can get hold of a company of Royal Marines or an RAF Harrier squadron from somewhere); he dislikes losing, and knows tough opposition when he sees it. On the other hand, he will use all his ingenuity to make difficulties for the PCs. He can be an annoying opponent.

Lastly, Mortimer has to file reports. He'll tactfully pump the PCs for data, perhaps offering to trade help for information. The trouble is that the FO refuse to accept anything involving references to magic, psionics, aliens, pre-human races, or anything else that makes life interesting for PCs. Mortimer knows better from bitter experience, but his reports, while well-written, skirt around many details.

Harry Mortimer may look to players like nothing but comic relief — a boozy, seedy, failed diplomat. It's interesting to see how long it takes them to see differently.

IMPERIAL LION

30 STR	24 DEX	20 CON	20 BODY	15 INT
20 EGO	25 PRE	14 COM	10 PD	10 ED
6 SPD	10 REC	40 END	45 STUN	

Powers and Skills: STR at 1/2 END; 2d6 HKA (4d6 w/STR), 1/2 END, OIF (sword); 7d6 EB, 3 recoverable uses, OIF (throwing clubs); +2d6 HA, requires sword-hilt, club, or other blunt instrument (-1/4); Commando Training, applies to Unarmed Combat, Club, and Sword: Cross 8d6, +2d6 w/Club, or 4d6+1 KA Sword-Cut: Choke Hold 2d6 NND: Disarm as STR 40: Block; Armour, 3 PD/3 ED, Act 12-, IIF (chain-mail under tunic); Regeneration, 2 BODY; Lack of Weakness -5; Running +3" (to 9"); Life Support — Immune to Aging & Disease; Combat Sense 12–; Defence Manoeuvre; Fast Draw 14–; Fam w/Small Arms, Common Melee weapons, and Throwing weapons; Breakfall 14–; Climbing 14–; Concealment 12–; Stealth 15–; Survival 11–; Trading 14–; AK Punjab 14–; AK Birmingham 11–; KS Sikh Culture 15–; KS British Culture 12–; PS Soldier 14–; PS Farmer 12–; PS International Import/Export Agent 11–; +4 Levels, All Combat; Contacts: Sikh Community Leader 14-, Birmingham Asian Youth Leader 13–; Favour, Birmingham Asian Millionaire; Native Punjabi, Fluent/Accented English, Conversational Hindustani.

Disadvantages: Enraged if those he protects are hurt 14-, 11–; Enraged if seriously insulted 8-, 14–; Code of Honour; Religious Beliefs; Distinctive Features (Big, powerful Sikh), Not Concealable; Reputation (stern but fair night-prowler), 11–; DNPC (cousin), Normal, 8–; Secret ID; Hunted, racist street-gangs (Less Pow., Midlands area only), 11–; Watched, Police (As Pow.), 11–; Experience.

Name: Tasharu Singh, Trader

Born: 1924. **Height:** 6'4". **Weight:** 105kg. **Hair:** Dark, full beard. **Eyes:** Brown.

Background: Tasharu Singh is a Sikh, born in India under British rule and possessing even more than the usual Sikh sense of honour and duty. In World War II, he joined the army as soon as he was old enough, and found himself in Burma, earning promotion and medals. Then, one day, his unit was ambushed and nearly wiped out; Singh was wounded, lost in the jungle, and soon, sick.



He was found by natives, who took him back to their village; there, their tribal healer treated him, before he was found by a British unit and taken to hospital. Some combination of ancient and modern medicines and conditions had an effect on Singh, though he didn't know it then; he returned to action, eventually left the army with honours, and returned to his home village. Only over the years did he realise that he wasn't aging, never suffered from disease, and healed fast, and that his strength and speed were, if anything, improving.

He kept his condition quiet; a local doctor told him (rightly) that it could never be reproduced, and he had no wish to be treated as a freak. His village honoured his wishes, and a friendly bureaucrat helped with official records. He lived happily for years as a farmer, but India was changing, and after his wife died in an accident, he began to feel out of place.

Then a cousin, who had emigrated to the UK, wrote home telling of troubles, and Singh's sense of duty called. He'd proved a competent businessman at home; a friend, who sold Indian spices and foodstuffs to Europe, took him on as an agent, giving him an excuse to travel. In Britain, he found cousins and friends harassed by racist thugs, and he remembered how he'd been brought up to honour the Empire for fairness and justice; taking a name that recalled this and his born name ("Singh" means "Lion"), he became Imperial Lion, superhero of the English Midlands.

Imperial Lion is stern but just and honourable — an old-fashioned hero. An unlikely but imposing figure, he stalks the streets of Birmingham and Wolverhampton, defending the weak. If anyone told him that his simple moral code was out of place in the modern world, he'd point to the bullies and human predators who've come to hate and fear him. He obeys the spirit of the law as he sees it, if not the letter; he won't kill (except in extremis), but he'll use what level of force is necessary. He's thus been guilty, technically, of any number of assaults, but the police are unlikely to go all-out to arrest him, given the public sympathy he attracts and the criminals he brings to justice.

Identifying Quote: "These ruffians disgrace the land I honour. I am tempted by vengeance, but I bring justice."

Powers/Tactics: Imperial Lion combines military training and skill with years of hard exercise and experience and the effects of his bio-chemical lucky accident. He carries a heavy curved sword — which he actually uses only rarely — and three lead-weighted clubs for throwing or punching. He is deft with weapons, and hard to disarm (OIF, not OAF). His tactics are to find out where a problem is, approach it stealthily, then hammer into it hard and fast, although as an honourable warrior, he might accept a challenge to fair combat from an honourable foe. This approach works fine against routine street crime; he's rarely faced more complex problems.

Appearance: In his civilian ID, Singh wears plain clothes (western style when in the UK), but combined with the traditional Sikh turban and small ceremonial knife. His hero-ID costume consists of grey trousers, a loose, dark crimson tunic, leather boots, belt and gloves, a dark green turban, and a black mask over the top half of his face.

MI5 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AGENTS

Characteristics: Use any top-class agent, (super-) soldier, or middle-grade martial artist characteristics. Above-average COM and PRE are required. SPD may be augmented by gadgets.

Skills: These characters should have a long list of espionage, social, and combat skills, and knowledge of related areas, plus KS: Exotic Security Problems. One or two talents, especially Cramming and Luck, are possible, and Fringe Benefits include military rank and government backing.

Equipment: Each Agent can be treated as having a 60-point Gadget Pool, allowing any type of focus. This will be used for a mixture of conventional firearms, disguised (IIF or IAF) "gimmicks" (often one-shot), and experimental high-tech devices. If an Agent has to go up against supervillains, the pool is often assigned to a special combat kit: +2 SPD, IIF (accelerator harness), 2d6 AP RKA, 12 uses, OAF (laser pistol), and a 12 PD, 12 ED Force Field drawing on a 50 END, 1 REC Reserve, all IIF (stat-field belt).

Disadvantages: These agents are, of course, all Watched by MI5; many are also Hunted (or Watched) by other agencies, VIPER, etc. All have the Psychological Limitation: Patriotic (but don't broadcast the fact; they are British, after all); many also have Compulsively Dashing, Womaniser, Vanity, or similar. The Service would love to find more restrained operatives, but the level of skill and commitment required invariably implies an odd mind-set...

Background: In a world where super-beings exist, their significance (and danger) to espionage and security work should be obvious. Confronted with this, how could MI5, Britain's secret Security Service, react but by training some of their best men to a peak of efficiency, equipping them with the best products of the odder Government secret labs, and sending them out to confront the menace?

There aren't more than a dozen or so of these agents, who variously operate under pseudonyms, code-names, or even their own names, but they are a formidable component in MI5's armoury. They tend to be assigned to the kind of weird mission where no-one else would know where to start, and then proceed on luck and intuition; such missions may or may not involve super-powered opponents, who frequently underestimate these glib, flippant agents — to their cost. Incidentally, they rarely fight quite fair, but are never gratuitously brutal.

Campaign Use: MI5 Special Circumstances Agents are far from limited to the UK, but their involvement always implies a British interest — which is always their first concern. Their work is always rather secretive; other bodies (such as the New Knights) handle more "open" operations. These agents sometimes follow Harry Mortimer into a situation when his report to the Foreign Office indicates a serious problem — at which point, he will happily take the next flight home.



IRONSIDE

15/45* STR	18 DEX	15 CON	12 BODY	20 INT
15 EGO	13/18* PRE	10 COM	6+ PD	6+ ED
4/5* SPD	6 REC	30 END	28 STUN	

*Second value in each case is OIF: Armour; Increased STR uses END Reserve and doesn't add to Figured Chars.

Powers and Skills: (Note that extra STR and Multipower draw on END Reserve): 45pt Multipower, OIF (suit pulser): 45pt u, 9d6 EB (Vibration): 44pt u, 1.5d6 HKA, AP, 1/2 END (3d6+1 w/ STR), OAF (Sword): 45pt u, 2d6 pts BODY Drain, recovery delayed to 5pts/day; END Reserve for Armour Powers: 150 END, REC 2, OIF (Suit); +12 Reserve REC, only when plugged into wall socket (-2), OIF (Suit); Armour (9 PD/9 ED), OIF (Costume); extra Armour (+9 PD/+9 ED), OIF (Armour), Act 14–; Radio Listen, OIF (Helmet); Enhanced Hearing, +5 PER, Concentrate w/0 DCV Throughout Use, OIF (Suit); Telescopic Hearing, +4 PER vs. Range, Concentrate w/0 DCV Throughout Use, OIF (Suit); 1d6 Luck; Climbing 13–; Computer Programming 13–; Concealment 14–; Electronics 12–; Lockpicking 13–; Mechanics 14–; Security Systems 13–; Shadowing 11–; KS: British History 12–; PS: Design Engineering (INT-based) 14–; Science: Magnetic Engineering (INT-based) 14–; Weapons Fam: Swords; Fam. w/Bugging, Criminology, Cryptography & Inventor; +3 Levels All Combat.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN, Electrical/Magnetic Attacks; 1.5x Effect, Illusions (literal-mindedness); Enraged if England seriously threatened 11-, 14–; Enraged at pointless violence 11-, 11–; Sees himself as Guardian of the the working man; Blunt, can't be Devious; Reputation (grim defender of the night), 11–; DNPC (Mother), Normal, 8–; Watched, Police (less pow, NCI), 8–; Hunted, ReDirection Cartel, (as pow, NCI), 11–; Secret ID; Experience.



Name: Oliver Walthers, Engineer.

Personal Details: Born: 1959. Height: 5'10". Weight: 84kg. Hair: Mid-brown, clean shaven. Eyes: Brown.

Background/Personality: In Britain, it's possible to have a tradition of socialism. Radical thought goes back through the Civil War, when Parliament beheaded the king, to the medieval Peasant's Revolt. Oliver Walthers' family were like that; skilled engineering workers in the north of England, with high political principles. Oliver grew up with a high regard for social justice and an interest in history, but his great talent was for machinery. His parents realised that their son was very bright, and encouraged him.

Walthers was working in the development department of a successful firm when his team made a breakthrough in applied magnetodynamics — yet suddenly, the firm declared itself bankrupt. Shortly afterwards, a friend of Walthers' was murdered. Investigating, Walthers was attacked by hired thugs, but he discovered that the firm's technology was being sold off to international crime cartels, while its financial assets were being illegally diverted. To protect himself and his family, Walthers created a secret identity; Ironside, "champion of the free-born Englishman". His enemies were the ReDirection Cartel, and Ironside has been fighting them ever since, and becoming the superhero defender of north-east England. To press, police and public, he is a shadowy figure, but with a name for righting wrongs.

Ironside is patriotic in that he loves his country and people. However, he dislikes the "establishment", the traditional rulers. He fights for liberty, equality, and brotherhood through politics and legal reform rather than revolution. Although he's a "radical", he's rather old-fashioned — sexist in a chivalrous sort of way, suspicious of new ideas (except in engineering), and slightly racist. (He will apologise sincerely if this last is pointed out; anyway, his prejudice is based on nationality, not colour. He will treat foreigners as equals provided he is convinced that they represent no threat to the British.)

Ironside will fight any injustice as a general duty, but his first concern is to defend the British people — from their own rulers if necessary. His personal code of honour is unshakeable; the law, on the other hand, he sees as a tool of the establishment, to be respected only so long as it remains fair. He regards aristocratic characters, monarchist types, and foreigners with suspicion, until they prove themselves "trustworthy". Big business — especially foreign — is highly suspect to him. He does not have a "heroic" code against killing, or even torture — sometimes, justice or necessity are more important to him — but he hates cruelty, and he is aware of the danger of becoming as bad as his opponents. Aliens he sees as another sort of foreigner, although he may be curious about their technology; he is, as he sees it, a "practical man", and he will treat magic and even psi or mutant powers with suspicion until convinced of their reality.

Identifying Quote: "They're my folk y'hurtin, mon, an' that means A'm goon'ta stop you."

Powers/Tactics: Oliver Walthers has no innate superpowers, but he is quite fit, with above-average reflexes. He is intelligent, strong-willed, highly motivated, and a skilled engineer. As Ironside, he wears powered armour over a bullet-proof fabric costume. The armour is magnetically-reinforced steel, and includes systems that enhance his strength. In the right gauntlet is a "vibro-pulser" that can fire vibration blasts or destroy the physical structure of anything it touches; Ironside also carries a reinforced sword, which the vibro-pulser can cause to vibrate so as to cut through solid steel. (Ironside won't use lethal powers on "normal" opposition if he can help it — he's no mad slasher.)

Ironside keeps the armour in a concealed compartment in the boot (trunk) of his car (a standard-looking British family model), or in a secret workshop in his cellar at home in Middlesbrough, Cleveland. His usual method is to accumulate data on his opponents by careful observation, change into his armour somewhere quiet, pick up anything more he can using the parabolic microphones built into it, then try to catch the villains off guard; he'll later drop his prisoners, and a file of evidence, off at the nearest police station.

Appearance: Oliver Walthers is solidly-built but unremarkable. His armour is made in the form of a suit of Parliamentarian soldiers' armour from the English Civil War, with the bullet-proof cloth sections looking like leather or linen and the high-tech circuitry all concealed. The helmet includes enough partial face coverage to hide the wearer's identity; the general style is solid and functional, which somehow suits Ironside's rather dour, straightforward manner. He only speaks, with a distinct "Geordie" accent, when he has something worth saying.

Campaign Use: The ReDirection Cartel could be very happy to manipulate PC heroes into fighting "this mad Englishmen who keeps smashing up American-owned factories", and Ironside's mild xenophobia would make this easier for them. Mutual trust and respect between him and other heroes should eventually be possible, but as a slightly ruthless loner, he'll probably never be anyone's favourite ally...

THE LAIRD

20 STR	29 DEX	20 CON	15 BODY	18 INT
20 EGO	20 PRE	14 COM	15 PD	15 ED
6 SPD	8 REC	40 END	35 STUN	

Powers and Skills: STR at 1/2 END; 2d6 RKA, +1 STUN multiple, +1 OCV, +1 R.Mod, 2 clips of 8 charges, OAF (Hunting Rifle); 2d6+1 HKA at 1/2 END (3.5d6 w/STR), OAF (Claymore); M/Arts w/+2 DC: Wrestling: 6d6+v/5 Slam, STR 45 Escape, STR 40 Hold, 3d6 NND Choke, Reversal (Block): Boxing: 6d6 Jab, 10d6 Hook; Telescopic Vision, +6 Sight PER Range Mods, OAF (Binoculars); Acting 13–; Climbing 15–; Concealment 13–; Deduction 13–; Riding 15–; Stealth 15–; Streetwise 13–; Survival 14–; Tracking 13–; KS: Mountain Wildernesses* 13–; KS: Scottish History* 15–; AK: Scottish Highlands & Islands* 16–; AK: Glasgow* 13–; AK: Edinburgh 11–; Unaccented Gaelic, Basic French, native is Scots English w/Highland & Glasgow Accents; PS: Estate Manager* 14–; PS: Fence 11–; Fam. w/Conversation & High Society; +2 Lvls w/Hunting skills; +2 Lvls w/Wrestling. * INT-based KS.

Perks: Well-Connected w/Contacts (mostly Clan McVarran): Senior Highland Police Officer 12-: Edinburgh Medical Scientist 14-: London Newspaper Reporter 12-: Aberdeen City Administrator 14-: Glasgow Cat Burglar 14–; Fringe Benefits: Laird of the Clan McVarran: Alternate ID as "respected" Glasgow "Fixer" (Hamish Bell); Money: Well Off; Followers: 5 Competent Normals (as per rules; 50pt base, all include "Clan Loyalty" in Disadvantages).

Disadvantages: 2x STUN from Injected Drugs & Poisons; Berserks if a McVarran is killed 11-, 14–; Enraged if Highlands are threatened 11-, 11–; Sense of Duty to Clan, Country, Law (in that order); Respect for Old People; Susceptibility, 3d6 STUN/turn from Stimulants; DNPC — Normal (Wife), 8–; Rival (Arrogant Neighbouring Laird); Watched, Glasgow Underworld (less pow), 11–; Hunted, American Supervillain (as pow), 8–; Secret ID; Experience.

Name: Angus McVarran, Landowner.

Personal Details: Born: 1943. Height: 5'10". Weight: 91kg. Hair: Black, greying at temples; full beard. Eyes: Brown.

Background/Personality: The Scottish clan McVarran has been lucky. Too small to make powerful enemies, it was based in the remote Glen Clathorn, distant from most wars. Most important, its chiefs were usually both wise and modest, not getting the clan involved in ruinous feuds, and not abusing their power in the times of the Highland Clearances, when most were turning their tenants off the ancestral lands. Today, the village of Clathornmuir is dominated by the clan — in fact, its chief is the local laird, who owns most of the Glen.

The present laird, Angus McVarran, has lived most of his life in Clathornmuir, although he travelled in his youth. However, some years ago, he contracted a rare disease, which demanded frequent blood transfusions while slowly destroying his nervous system. His widower father, seeing his son was dying, called on a daughter of the village who was a medical researcher, begging her for help. She synthesized a treatment, but it required even more blood transfusions from a related donor. Angus' father volunteered, and eventually a cure was effected, but the stress and frequent blood loss ruined the old man's health, and he died soon after.

But the exotic RNA-nerve treatment had unexpected side-effects. Firstly, it actually regenerated Angus, so that, although he appears middle-aged, he has the health and strength of a fit young man. Second, it enhanced his natural speed. Finally, it triggered limited access to Angus' "genetic memory"; he can recall fragments of his ancestors' lives, and some of their skills. For a while, Angus ignored all this, marrying a woman (Margaret McColl) he had been courting for years and spending his time managing his lands and helping any members of his clan who needed it, but eventually he decided that Scotland needed a champion. He created "Hamish Bell", a shadowy Glaswegian low-life figure, to work in the darker parts of that city, and called on various members of the clan who had made their way in various careers, or who were willing to fight beside him. Today, the Laird is one of Britain's quietest but most formidable crime-fighters. Even the police are only vaguely aware of his existence, although some of them have been grateful for his help against various super-villains.

Identifying Quote: "We've nae time tae waste talking tae yon rabble. Tie them up and leave them tae the police."

Powers/Tactics: The Laird has countryman's knowledge, enhanced dexterity, and warrior fighting skills. He is adept with rifles and the old-style claymore (two-handed sword), but he only carries these if he will get more advantage than grief thereby; he frequently goes unarmed. However, he is most aided by his band of devoted McVarrans, the others who will help when he calls, and Hamish Bell's position on the fringes of the underworld. As Angus McVarran, he drives a 1940's Bentley in immaculate condition.

Appearance: Angus McVarran is a rugged bull of a man, who looks formidable even though he also looks his age. His dour expression is only rarely changed by a broad, honest smile. He dresses according to need, but usually in dark, well-made gear — country clothes at home, plain working-man's suits as Hamish Bell, a black scarf across his lower face when hiding his identity. Note that he'll only wear a kilt (in the McVarran tartan) for formal social occasions — it would be impractical and obtrusive elsewhere!

NUADA OF THE SILVER HAND

50 STR	26 DEX	33 CON	18 BODY	23 INT
23 EGO	20 PRE	18 COM	10+ PD	10+ ED
7 SPD	17 REC	66 END	60 STUN	

Powers and Skills: STR at 1/2 END; 60pt Multipower, IIF (Circuitry in cyborg hand, effects look like a sword): 60pt u, 2d6 HKA, AP, 0 END (4d6 w/STR): 60pt u, 1d6+1 HKA, Autofire (max 5 shots), AP, 0 END (2.5d6 w/STR): 60pt u, 1d6+1 HKA, Affects Desolid, +2 STUN Multiple, 0 END (2.5d6 w/STR): 60pt u, 4d6 Power Drain vs pts value of BODY, 0 END: 60pt u, Missile Deflection vs All, for self and others adjacent, plus Force Field (15 PD/15 ED) Linked to Deflection, Front Only; Martial Arts: Wrestling, Slam (10d6+v/5), Take Down (10d6), Escape (STR 65), Hold (STR 60), Reversal; Armour (5 PD/5 ED, innate); Armour (20 PD/20 ED), Hardened, OIF (Battle Suit); Flash Defence -10; Mental Defence -15; Power Defence -15; Lack of Weakness -10; Life Support: Breathe Water, Immune to Radiation, Disease & Aging, increase to "No Breathing" with OIF (Armour); 25" Teleport, increase to 6,553,600" (13,000km) w/+1 phase ("non-combat"), two memorised locations (sub-Atlantic chamber and a field near Dublin); Detect: Dimensional Gateways and similar, Discriminatory, Range, Targeting, 360-degree; +5 PER (to 19-); Mental Awareness; High-Range Radio; Spatial Awareness w/ 360- degree; Ultrasonic Hearing; Ultraviolet Vision; Animal Handling 11–; Breakfall 14–; Climbing 14–; Concealment 14–; Conversation 13–; Deduction 14–; Navigation 12–; Oratory 13–; Paramedic 14–; Riding 14–; Stealth 14–; Survival 12–; Systems Op (Progenitor Tech) 14–; Tactics 14–; Tracking 14–; Weaponsmith (muscle-powered) 11–; KS: Demons 13–; KS: History of Magic 14–; Linguist (native is Early Celtic) w/ Unaccented Welsh, Scots & Irish Gaelic, Breton, Medieval & Modern English, Medieval & Modern French: Fluent German & Latin; PS: Tribal Leader 14–; PS: Poet 14–; +2 Overall Lvls; +5 Lvls, All Combat; Perk: Use of Progenitor systems; Defence Manoeuvre; Find Weakness w/all Multipower on 12–; Simulate Death.

Disadvantages: Enraged vs Demons 11-, 14–; Enraged if his Honour is Questioned 8-, 14–; Warrior Honour; Hates Fomori; Weary of "Job"; Part Synthetic (shows on some scanners, etc); Distinctive Features (silver hand: concealable); Reputation (legendary), 8–; Hunted, Minions of Fomori (less pow, NCI), 8–; 1d6 Unluck.

Name: "Neville Dane", Warrior.

Personal Details: Born: c.1900 BC. Height: 6'2". Weight: 82kg. Hair: Very dark Brown, neat beard & moustache. Eyes: Hazel.

Background/Personality: When the Progenitors' cyber-probe Danu was fighting the Fomori (see under "Lyonesse", below), it needed agents. It found a primitive, beleaguered Irish people; it created the Tuatha De Danaan, the people of Danu. The tribal chief, Nuada, was maimed in battle, and by tradition had to step down. So Danu offered him superhuman power, purely to fight the hated Fomori.

Afterwards, Nuada lacked a target, and Danu couldn't leave such power unchecked. So the cyber-probe set the warrior a new task. It created a sealed cell under the Atlantic, somewhere near Rockall, and there, Nuada went into cryogenic suspension, while sensors scanned the world for any sign of the Fomori. (They may sometimes pick up other demonic incursions.) Nuada awakens on such alarms, and teleports to the scene. Danu was wise to create this guard; enough foolish sorcerors have dreamt of bargains with the Fomori to keep Nuada busy down the centuries.

So, look at the legend incarnate. Once a straightforward, honourable warrior king, today he is an immortal force, awakening only to fight, knowing that each awakening could be his last. He has woken thrice in the last twenty years; terrifyingly often. Each time, he has delayed his return to the ice-sleep, and secretly walked the world of mortals (as "Neville Dane"), sometimes warning those who might benefit. He fears, and he hopes.

Identifying Quote: "Nothing can stand before the sword of Nuada. But the Fomori are stupid, and forget. My work is unending."

Powers/Tactics: Nuada is an incredibly advanced cyborg, but his only visibly artificial part is his silvery right hand. This incorporates energy-circuits which create a sword-shaped field effect, which can be adjusted to destroy almost anything. In combat, he works with passionless efficiency, teleporting into the midst of demon hordes, destroying them, and then vanishing. Faced with minor foes, he will happily wrestle them down — a pleasure that is the last vestige of a bronze-age warrior's nature.

Appearance: Nuada looks athletic, with dark, romantic good looks. He has an imposing air and courtly manners, and can talk like a poet, but sometimes the weariness of centuries comes through. His armour, when he wears it, is simple and elegant, with smooth, polished curves. His "civilian" garb tends to include heavy overcoats (giving him a shabby/sinister look) and leather gloves to hide his hand.

GMs' Notes: *Strictly speaking, Nuada isn't a British, but an Irish hero (see "Power in the Land" on his myth), but he pays little regard to borders. He works best as a "deus ex machina" NPC, appearing from nowhere to warn of danger, waging a lonely war in one place while the PCs fight elsewhere, and in the worst case, saving them when they get in too deep. (But be careful not to annoy players who don't like their characters to be out-classed!) His secret "cell" is almost undetectable and has DEF 30 walls, and scanner systems that let him teleport anywhere in the world in safety.*



MOTHER JANET

Use the "Senior Citizen" Characteristics (*Champions*, pg. 133), but with 23 INT and 23 EGO, and 14 DEX and 4 SPD for purposes of magic use only, plus a 30pt Power Pool (Magic), Magic Skill, and numerous magic-related knowledge skills. If you need to run the younger version of Mother Janet, create a witch with appropriate powers and skills, with extra power "only when working with others of her coven". (Hag of the Shapeshifters in human form, or Solitaire in *Champions*, might serve as models.)

Background: The old lady who sometimes, with bitter irony, calls herself "Mother Janet" is in fact Janet Misperton, last survivor of a white coven that defended Britain for nearly a century. As a young secretary in London in the 1930's, she stumbled across an evil conspiracy (a very early DEMON operation), met (and fell in love with) James Tompion, and discovered her own psychic potential and was recruited into a white coven. However, her growing dedication to the coven's aims prevented her relationship with the "materialist" Tompion from developing fully, especially when he became the costumed hero Fire-Watcher. Both worked hard to conceal their bitter disappointment, but as a result each became increasingly abrasive when the other was around. Their relationship broke up in mutual acrimony.

In the years after World War II, the coven began to die out; others around the world took on their role, and old age told. Meanwhile, Tompion had married someone else, and his few meetings with Janet were marked by habitual arguments. By the '80's, they were claiming to regard each other with contempt — when they admitted to knowing each other at all. Both were old and stubborn, refusing to admit to past misjudgements. However, when Janet alone remained of the coven, Tompion secretly arranged a home for her.

This is the basement of an old church in Hammersmith, west central London. It's been de-consecrated, but some beings still avoid it. Mother Janet has ample living quarters, including a small but utterly unique library of mystical reference books; she no longer seeks adventure.

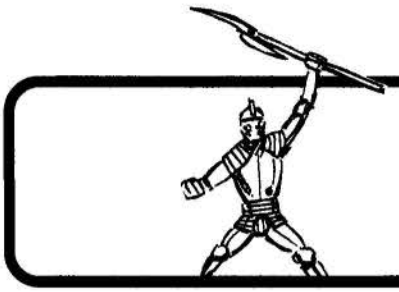
Mother Janet looks her age or older, and moves slowly, but she is well-groomed in a run-down sort of way. In her youth, she was pretty in an unkempt sort of way.

In a campaign, Mother Janet has various functions, including emotional entanglement for the Watchmaker. She can advise heroes about the supernatural, and help train undeveloped mystical skills, perhaps becoming a kind of mother-figure to young "talents". Her non-combat skills and library may help the GM resolve difficult plot problems. She's also a useful role-playing foil for over-enthusiastic PCs, bringing them down to earth hard.

This is because, having given her life to fighting things out of nightmare, she's left with few friends, and no thanks. While she won't complain about her own personal position (she knows it was all her "duty"), she'll try to stop others suffering the same fate.

"Yes, child, you and these '*Champions*' of yours look like heroes today — but what does it gain anyone in the long term? Knock down one little thug in a silly costume, and another will spring up. Take my advice; persuade your friends to help get that 'cabal' off your back for good and all, then make yourself an ordinary life. You'll find people will respect you for yourself, not for your spells."





M.A.C.E.

Membership: Battleaxe, the Charmer, the Grenadier, Sidestep, Geomancer and Aggro. MACE has full access to the resources of Project: Armour, and may work with CUIRASS agents, SMITH technicians, or trustworthy hired villains.

Origin: MACE (the Major Actions Cadre and Executive) is the supervillain arm of Project: Armour (see under "Agencies"). When Ironmaster created his cellular criminal organisation, he wanted one special cell of very high-powered forces, so he assigned the earliest SMITH and CUIRASS cells to watch out for suitable material. Grenadier, Charmer and Geomancer, among others, were identified as potential members, but the cell needed a leader to build around; then SMITH came up with some ideas for power armour, just as Ironmaster himself found Tina Robertson. She accepted the identity of Battleaxe, and the team recruited the other three, followed by Aggro and Sidestep.

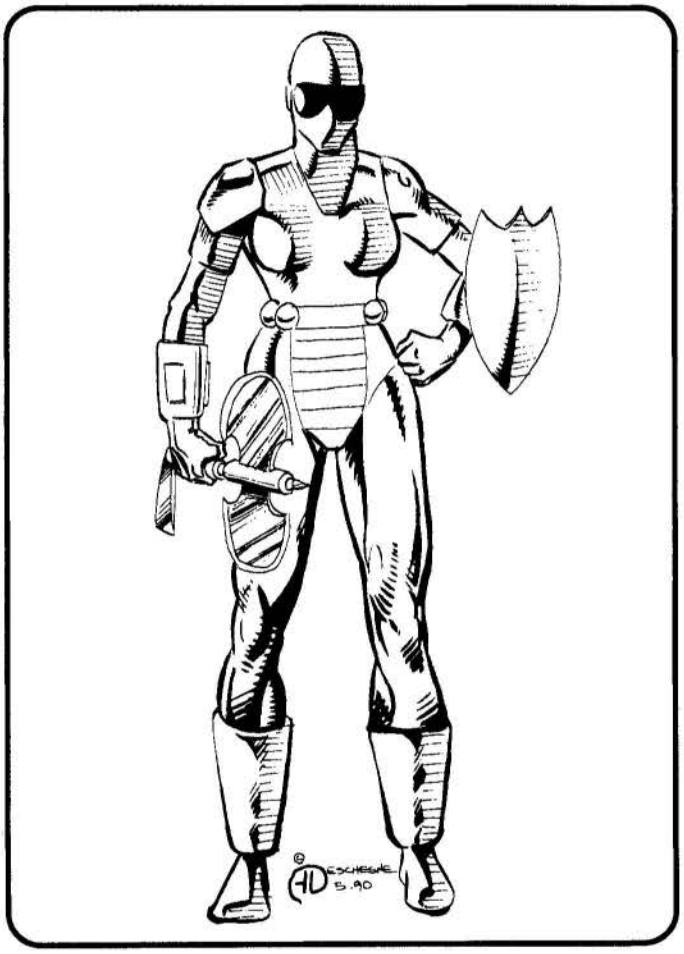
Since then, MACE's main recurring problem has been the London Watch, whose members have defeated them several times; so far, Project: Armour's resources (bureaucratic and technological) have recovered any captured members fairly quickly.

Goals: MACE exists as a team to further Ironmaster's complex long- term quest for power, often taking in short-term, high-profit operations such as robberies to finance this. Individual members of the team are mostly in it for fun and profit.

Tactics: MACE is an efficient if imperfect team, chiefly thanks to Battleaxe's forceful leadership. Without her, the group would be at each others' throats, but she bullies and harangues them into a tight tactical unit. Mostly, she sends Aggro in to soften up the opposition while Sidestep, Geomancer or herself blind-side their foes or go after the mission objective; Grenadier employs hit-and-run tactics, while Charmer holds back, usually playing the innocent, and shifting the balance of the fight with his powers. Against tough opposition, Battleaxe will draw the group into a tight "flying wedge", and hammer on through.

Resources: MACE haven't had to "settle down" with a single base or vehicle. Typically, they work out of rented warehouses, transformed into temporary HQs and training centres by SMITH; they deploy from there to their targets in unmarked civilian motor vehicles, then attack under their own power.

Group Relations: As noted above, MACE members often despise each other. However, they all either respect or fear Battleaxe; with Aggro at her side and Ironmaster (secretly) behind her (as only she and he know), her position seems secure. Anyway, only Grenadier really wants her job.



Reputation: MACE are a deliberately obscure group, but the press and most British heroes have become fully aware of their existence. Although they haven't been overwhelmingly successful to date, they are widely regarded as dangerously powerful and competent.

BATTLEAXE

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages:
10/45*	STR	17	5	1.5x STUN, Magnetic Attacks
14/20*	DEX	21		(while in armour)
18	CON	16	15	Berserks if Taunted, 8-, 11-
12	BODY	4	8	Enraged if Losing, 11-, 14-
18	INT	8	15	Abrasive
18	EGO	16	15	Thinks She's Always Right
20	PRE	10	15	Susceptibility: 3d6 if uses OIF
10	COM	0		powers while in Silence fields
4+	PD	2		("Darkness vs Hearing")
4+	ED	0	13	Watched, Ironmaster (more pow,
3/5*	SPD	19		NCI), 11-
6	REC	0	10	Hunted, STOP (as pow), 8-
36	END	0	5	Rival (Grenadier)
26	STUN	0	15	Secret ID
			120	Experience

* Second figure in all cases is OIF (Armour);
Increased Primary Chars don't affect Secondary,
STR draws on END Reserve.

Cost	Powers/Skills	END
40	M/power (60 pt pool), OIF (Subsonic projectors in armour), all slots draw on END Reserve	
4 u	12d6 EB (vs PD)	6
3 u	8d6 EB, Explosion, must hit a solid object (for resonant detonation: -1/4)	6
3 u	12d6 Mind Control, Based on CON (vs PD — Subsonic Hypnosis).	6
10	1d6+1 HKA (2.5d6 w/STR), OAF (Axe)	2
40	Armour (20 PD/20 ED) OIF (Armour)	
20	15" Flight, Draws on END Reserve, OIF (Jet-Pack).	3
18	End Reserve, 200 END, 8 REC, OIF (Armour)	
11	Life Support: No Need to Breathe, Survive Vacuum/High Pressure & Radiation, OIF (Armour Systems).	
7	Flash Defense, -5 for both Sight & Hearing, OIF (Helmet).	
10	Active Sonar, OIF (Armour)	
7	High-Range Radio, OIF (Armour)	
3	I-R Vision, OIF (Armour)	
	Skills/Talents/Perks	
3,5	Demolitions 11- Electronics 12-	
3,3	Interrogation 13- Mechanics, 11-	
3,3	Tactics 13- PS: Tech Design* 13-	
5	Sc: Electronic Design*, 15-	
1	Conversational German	
16	+2 Lvls w/Armour	
3	Speed Reading	
2	Fringe Benefit — Status in Project: Armour	

* INT-based skills.

OCV: 7: **DCV:** 7: **ECV:** 6: **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	113	+	223	=	336	=	236	+	100

Name: Tina Robertson, Engineer.

Personal Details: Born: 1943. Height: 5'9". Weight: 69kg. Hair: Blonde. Eyes: Grey.

Background/Personality: What does it take to transform a respected career engineer into an embittered supervillain? One phrase could be enough. Tina Robertson was a female professional electronic engineer years before feminism was making that any easier. She threw herself into her career with complete dedication, and built a name with her employers for attention to detail and rigorous staff management.

Then she overheard her company's Managing Director on the phone one afternoon. "Robertson? Yeah, a complete battleaxe..."

"Battleaxe?" That was her reward for years of dedicated service to the company? A cheap jibe. Would he have said that about a man doing the same job?

Well, it was too late to change her style now. In fact, she didn't want to. She was good at her work because she enjoyed it; now all she had to do was take the rewards for herself that she'd been denied by those cheap, third-rate jokers.

So she accumulated data on her employers' secret project, and set about selling it to Ironbridge Industries.

Ironbridge's managing director, Herbert Marston, took a personal interest in this new industrial spy, and interviewed her. He saw in this robust, egocentric middle-aged woman something useful, and offered her command of MACE. To make her a supervillain, she wears a suit of SMITH-designed power armour. She chose the code-name Battleaxe as a bitter, arrogant joke; she doesn't care about criticism, or the responses the name induces.

Battleaxe is a grim-faced woman who only wants personal power, but she's smart enough to work with others who help her attain it. She respects power so much that she tends to crawl to Ironmaster, who has more than her but shares it with her; she has no ambitions to usurp him. Grenadier, who wants to usurp her, she regards with contempt. She has one blind spot; she's susceptible to a certain kind of fake charm, which Charmer has in abundance, and favours him, but with no romantic feelings; she's almost maternal to him.

Identifying Quote: "Look, there really is no alternative. We'll counter-attack now; Charmer, you stay back, Geomancer, you slow them down... Don't argue, Grenadier, just do as I tell you."

Powers/Tactics: Tina Robertson is a skilled engineer, well able to maintain her own armour, and trained in tactics, but her powers all come from the armour and gadgets, including sub-sonic projectors than can blast, make solid objects vibrate so hard they explode, or (with a special tuning), put human targets into a hypnotic trance. In combat, she makes herself the focus for MACE's manoeuvres; she'll fight as much as she has to, but really, she prefers to have her "underlings" do the work.

Appearance: Battleaxe is middle-aged but still in good shape, with blonde hair elegantly cut to shoulder length and waved; however, her manner is off-puttingly abrupt and often rude. Her Battleaxe armour is plain iron grey, with a utilitarian look.

GEOMANCER

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
10/20*	STR	0	10	1.5x STUN from Weather Powers while in armour
18	DEX	24		
18	CON	16	8	Enraged if personally insulted 8-, 11-
10	BODY	0		
10	INT	0	10	Aristocratic Snob
11	EGO	2	10	Loyal to anyone he has accepted as leader
10/21†	PRE	6		
10	COM	0	10	Fear of Heights while in armour
4/6*	PD	2	10	Susceptibility, 2d6 from Dispel or Suppress vs Magic or Earth Powers
4/6*	ED	0		
3/4*	SPD	9		
6	REC	0	10	Distinctive Features (stone armour, can remove)
36/72‡	END	9		
24	STUN	0	8	Watched, White Mages (as pow), 11-
			10	Hunted, STOP (as pow), 8-

*Second figure OIF (armour); effects of Density Increase included.
†Second figure OIF (armour); doesn't add to skills (-1/4).
‡Second figure OIF (armour); only when on solid ground (-1/2).

Cost	Powers/Skills	END
25	EC: Earth Magic Powers, 37pts, all OIF (armour)	
a-24	TK, STR 30, Indirect, Originate & Aim Anywhere, Only works within 10' of earth, stone, etc. (-1/4: fist/hand of animated stone)	8
b-12	Entangle, 5d6, 1-hex Area, No DEF, Target hex must be adjacent to stone, earth, etc (-1/4: bury target in sand, earth or mud)	7
c-22	Force Wall, 10 PD, 10 ED, Opaque to all Sight Senses, 1/2 END, Must be stone, earth, etc nearby (–1/4);	3
d-25	Armour, +25 PD, +25 ED	
e-22	Tunneling, 10" through up to DEF 13, Can Close Tunnel, Only through stone, earth, rock, concrete, etc (-1/4)	2
10	Density Increase x2, 0 END, Persistent, Always On, OIF (armour: Characteristic effects included above, also mass 400kg, -2" KB when in armour).	
4	+2d6 HA, OIF (armour: gives total 6d6 Punch)	1
10	Clairsentience: Sight, OIF (armour), only to look beyond barriers of stone, rock or earth (-1/2)	2
3,3	High Society 11- KS: Magic Theory 12-	
2,1	KS: Heraldry 11- Conversational French	
1	Perk: Baronet (inherited title)	

OCV: 6; **DCV:** 6; **ECV:** 4; **Phases:** 3,6,9,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	68	+	164	=	232	=	132	+	100



Name: Sir Gervaise Hobbs-Williams, Landowner/Criminal.

Personal Details: Born: 1954. Height: 5'8". Weight: 78kg. Hair: Light brown, clean shaven. Eyes: Blue.

Background/Personality: Sir Gervaise Hobbs-Williams is the descendant of an old, noble English family that nonetheless has an oddly dubious image. He inherited the title of baronet, a run-down manor house, and, in its cellar, a suit of very odd-looking armour. However, his study of family papers showed that this was actually a creation of black geomancy, raw earth-magic that lets its wearer command rock, stone, and earth. Amoral but wanting to restore his family home, Sir Gervaise used it for crime, but soon realised that he didn't have the knowledge that this career needed; so he accepted a place in MACE when it was offered.

Geomancer is an arrogant snob, but with a personal code. He regards the rest of MACE as jumped-up thugs, but he's given his word to them, so he won't do anything to directly betray or harm them, and he respects Battleaxe's leadership — because she's competent. He doesn't have the raw ambition to pursue her job himself, but if an opportunity for personal profit arises, he may take it.

Identifying Quote: "The land is mine to order!"

Powers/Tactics: Geomancer's armour lets him control earth and stone. He's a team worker, tunneling in to targets, then blocking and slowing the opposition at range.

Appearance: A slightly pudgy fellow, Geomancer looks far more imposing in his armour. This looks like medium-weight medieval knightly gear, but brown, slightly irregular, and "rocky".

THE CHARMER

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
10	STR	0	5	1.5x Effect, Emotion Control
18	DEX	24		powers
15	CON	10	10	Utterly Self-centred
10	BODY	0	15	Arrogant
15	INT	5	20	3d6 STUN/Turn from
13	EGO	6		high-energy "static" generators,
18	PRE	8		power jammers, etc
14	COM	2	5	Rival (SMITH administrator)
5+	PD	3	10	Watched, Project: Armour (more
5+	ED	2		pow, NCI), 11-
5	SPD	22	5	Watched, Fraud Squad (as pow),
15	REC	20		8-
30	END	0	15	Secret ID
23	STUN	0	158	Experience

Cost	Powers	END
73	Multipower (110pt Pool), +1/2 Phase for each slot [Note: Active points values are indicated due to the complex nature of these powers.]	
13 m	Power Drain, 4d6pts value of END, Ranged, Fully Invisible, 1/2 END, Only on targets who used END in their last phase (-1/4) [110pt m]	5
5 u	4d6 NND (defence is "target didn't burn any personal END last phase"), Fully Invisible, 0 END [70pt u]	
3 u	2d6 RKA, Penetrating, Fully Invisible, 0 END, Only Works on inanimate objects that used energy in the ast phase (-2) [90pt u]	
15 m	8d6 Suppress, any one of STR, REC, END, or END Reserve, Fully Invisible, 0 END [110pt m]	
3 m	Force Field, +10 PD, +30 ED, 4x END Cost [40pt m]	16
15 m	8d6 Aid, any one of STR, REC, END, or END Reserve, At Range, Fully Invisible, 0 END [110pt m]	
4 u	STR 20 TK w/Fine work, Fully Invisible, Only to assist or slow someone (or something) using their own STR, Flight, or TK (-1/2) [80pt u]	
6	Mental Defence -11, Act 15-	
20	Power Defence -20	
43	Detect Energy Usage, Discriminatory, Ranged, Targeting, 360-degree	
3	Mental Awareness	
10	2d6 Luck	
	Skills	
7	Seduction 15-	
2,2	Fluent French Conversational Italian	
3	PS: Business Negotiator (PRE-based) 13-	
2	Fam w/Bugging and High Society	
12	+4 lvls w/Multipower	

OCV: 6; **DCV:** 6; **ECV:** 4; **Phase:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	102	+	241	=	343	=	243	+	100

Name: Peregrine Cassels, Business Consultant.

Personal Details: Born: 1950. Height: 5'10". Weight: 72kg. Hair: Mid-Brown, greying at temples, clean shaven. Eyes: Blue.

Background/Personality: The Charmer, Peregrine Cassels, is an amoral individual who has spent years using his considerable charm to make life as comfortable for himself as possible. After leaving school (Eton), he drifted through various jobs in business until he set himself up as a consultant, in which role he acted as a negotiator and "management expert", mainly telling people what they wanted to hear. In his private life, he was a heartless womaniser, using the same skills that made him money.



Cassels' mutant powers surfaced unusually late in his life, and at first he tended to disregard them. However, he couldn't resist using them sometimes when there was profit in it, and a shrewd Ironbridge Industries technician became suspicious after some new machinery became noticeably more efficient when the salesman — Cassels — entered the room. Word reached his boss, Herbert Marston, who had SMITH investigate, and eventually, Cassels was offered a job with MACE.

Cassels remains an amoral "fixer", looking out only for himself. He doesn't want personal power; he realises that having to make decisions isn't amusing. He's turned his charm on Battleaxe, purely at the level of flirtation, and she has succumbed, which means she won't order him to risk his life. The rest of the team regard him as a creep. Much to his annoyance, the SMITH administrator assigned to handling MACE's day-to-day needs turned out to be an old business rival, with a grudge to work off in all sorts of petty ways, and the police Fraud Squad still have a file on Cassels' old dealings.

Identifying Quote: "My dear lady, you really should look after yourself more; you look tired."

Powers/Tactics: Charmer (Cassels) has the mutant ability to sense and manipulate energy flows, especially metabolic processes in living beings, but also (for example) electric motors. He can both enhance and reduce the efficiency of energy-systems; furthermore, this power is subtle enough to be virtually undetectable. He can make things "work like a charm", collapse with exhaustion, or just break down. This power also boosts his own metabolism at all times (hence his raised REC).

In battle, Charmer keeps back. If he can, he'll hide in a crowd of innocent bystanders; otherwise, he'll find cover. Battleaxe usually tells him to assist whichever members of MACE look to be in most trouble at the time, but he secretly resents this, and takes any good excuse to attack opponents instead. If attacked directly, he can — with effort — use his power to shield himself from incoming energy, but he will then quickly retreat, using his powers to stun attackers or wreck their weapons.

Appearance: Peregrine Cassels is approaching middle age, and his rather plump and greasy good looks are beginning to fade; his hair especially is thinning. He wears high-quality three-piece pinstripe suits (a "villain" costume would be pointless), and talks in a pleasant, well-judged sort of way.

THE GRENADIER

20 STR	24 DEX	18 CON	10 BODY	15 INT
10 EGO	15 PRE	20 COM	10+ PD	10+ ED
6 SPD	8 REC	36 END	29 STUN	

Powers and Skills: 45pt Multipower, 12 charges total, OIF (grenades): 2x 6d6 Explosive EB: 2x 2d6 Explosive RKA: 3x 1d6+1 AP Explosive RKA w/Time Delay, Can be moved by anyone during Delay if they see the grenade (-1/4): 2x Darkness vs Normal & I-R Sight, 4" Radius (smoke): 3x 3d6 Explosive Flash vs Hearing, Act 15- (deafen-blast); Karate: 6d6 Punch, 8d6 Kick, Block, 1d6+1 KA Chop (w/STR), Disarm, Dodge; 5d6 EB w/+3 OCV built in, AP, Autofire w/Max 10 shots, 64 charges, OAF (auto-blaster); Armour (10 PD/10 ED), Act 14-, OIF (costume); +1" Running (to 7"); 11" Swinging, OIF (swing-line); Acrobatics 14–; Breakfall 14–; Climbing 14–; Demolitions 11–; Stealth 14–; Transport Fam, Helicopters; +3 lvls, Grenades; +1 lvl, Karate; Combat Sense 12-.

Disadvantages: Berserks if Stunned 11-, 11–; Enraged if made to look stupid 14-, 11–; Arrogant; Enjoys Violence; Distinctive Features ("Pretty" — Can Disguise); Rival, Battleaxe; Watched, Project: Armour (more pow, NCI), 14–; Hunted, IRA (as pow, limited areas), 8–; Hunted, STOP (as pow), 8-.

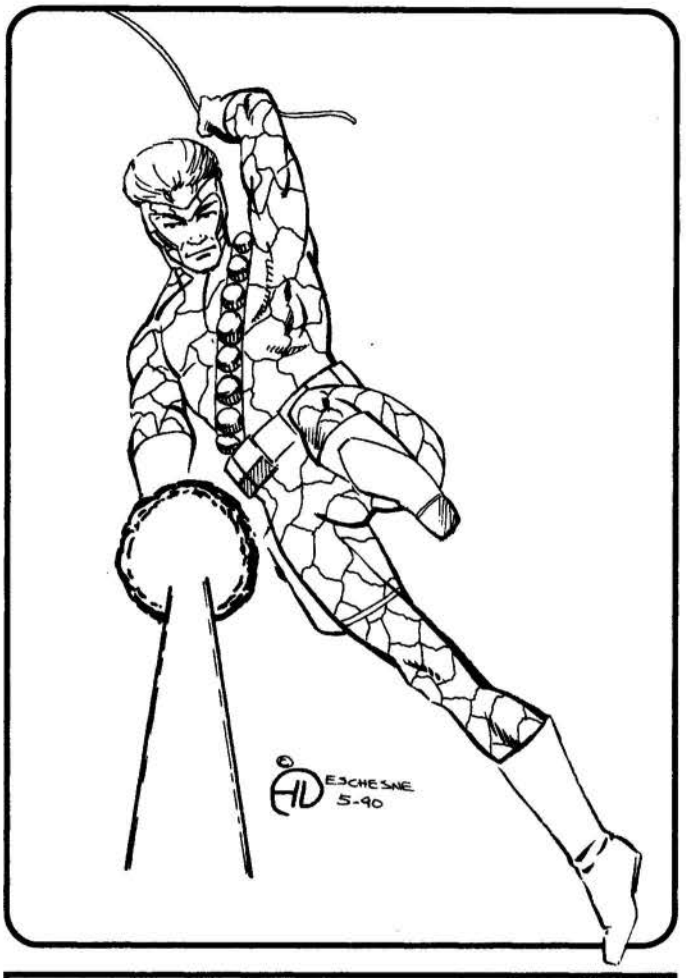
Name: Ian Michaels, Mercenary.

Personal Details: Born: 1960. Height: 6'0". Weight: 70kg. Hair: Blond, clean shaven. Eyes: Green.

Background: Ian Michaels was born into a very ordinary middle-class English family, but from an early age he displayed both "pretty" good looks and an unhealthy fondness for violence, linked with a rather rarer talent for it. With a mediocre educational record, he joined the army, but left as soon as he could after discovering that undisciplined violence was frowned on. He then drifted from one job to another, ending as an enforcer for an Ulster Protestant paramilitary body before he was recruited to MACE.

Now, as the Grenadier, he has SMITH-designed weaponry and more excuses. However, he's discovered ambition; he thinks that Battleaxe is an over-cautious leader, and that he could do better. On the other hand, Project: Armour supports Battleaxe, and she has the powerful Aggro to help her, so his pursuit of her job is as yet limited to subtle insolence, trivial "misunderstandings" of her direct instructions, and general point-scoring. She has noticed this, and regards him with thinly-veiled contempt, but feels it would be a sign of weakness to seek to get rid of him.

The Grenadier is good-looking in a flamboyant way, with a mane of well-groomed blond hair. He wears a "camouflage-look" bodysuit, hung about with weapon pouches, and likes to hurtle into battle on the end of a swing-line. He's skilled in combat, but shows off too much for full effectiveness.



AGGRO

60 STR	18 DEX	35 CON	20 BODY	8 INT
8 EGO	10+ PRE	6 COM	30 PD	25 ED
4 SPD	25 REC	70 END	68 STUN	

Powers/Skills: +10 PRE, Only in combat (-1/2); STR at 1/2 END; Damage Resistance, 30 PD, 20 ED Fully Resistant; Mental Defense, -10; Power Defense -10; Lack of Weakness, -5; Energy Absorption vs. Energy, 5d6 to STR, Only vs. Cosmic Energy (-2); Fam. w/ Streetwise; KS: Soccer, 11–; +2 Levels, H-t-H combat.

100+ Disadvantages: Berserks if mocked or taunted, 11-, 11–; Berserks if Stunned, 14-, 11–; Bigoted (about race, nation, sex, and anything else going); Out to prove self; Hunted, Dr Brutallus (as pow.), 8–; Hunted, STOP (as pow.) 8-, Watched, Project: Armour (more pow.), 14— Distinctive Features, Concealable, Cause Disdain; Reputation, 11-, Extreme (Violent); 1d6 Unluck; 2x STUN, Gases, Poisons, etc.

Name: Kevin Pinter, Previously Unemployed.

Personal Details: Born: 1967. Height 5'4". Weight: 56 kg. Hair: Dark (very close crop), clean shaven. Eyes: Grey

Background/Personality: Kevin Pinter was the archetypal no-hoper, taking out his resentment at the world with petty muggings and vandalism, but even his fellow hooligans treated him as a joke, causing him to attempt increasingly stupid acts of bravado. One of these involved breaking into a "disused" warehouse — which proved to be in use.



Dr. Brutallus, irritated at being disturbed, set his Brutalloids on Kevin, who ran faster than he'd ever run before. However, he didn't look where he was running. When the sparks and chemical spillages from Brutallus' (ruined) big experiment had stopped, a Brutalloid grabbed Kevin. To everyone's surprise, he threw it through the wall, then followed.

Kevin took the name "Aggro" (a slang abbreviation of "aggression"). His career of super-vandalism was ended by STOP, but Project: Armour decided that they needed some dumb muscle, and broke him out of gaol. Kevin enjoys working with MACE, although he regards most of the team as wimps; the fact is, he's in awe of Battleaxe. The team leader bosses him around mercilessly, but either he is secretly desperate for a mother-figure, or he actually respects her arrogance; he becomes aggressive towards people who contradict or obstruct her, which she finds useful for keeping Grenadier in line.

Identifying Quote: "'Ere, you wimp, stitch this!"

Powers/Tactics: Dr Brutallus was experimenting with the use of cosmic energy to boost his creatures' power; his work was otherwise unsuccessful, so he'd love to study Aggro more closely. It's possible that Aggro could use cosmic power for any number of effects, if he had a bit more imagination, but all he wants to do is break things and protect himself from any kind of harm. He retains human bio-chemistry, so he can be brought down by attacks on that. He has no idea of tactics, but he hardly needs one, and he'll obey Battleaxe so long as he remembers what she said.

Appearance: Aggro always goes for an extreme "skinhead look", almost a parody; collar-less shirt, braces (US "suspenders"), rolled up "drainpipe" trousers, workman's boots, shaven head, and a permanent sneer. He looks like a skinny hooligan, not a wielder of cosmic power.

SIDESTEP

10 STR	20 DEX	15 CON	10 BODY	15 INT
8 EGO	10+5* PRE	12 COM	6+ PD	6+ ED
5 SPD	5 REC	30 END	23 STUN	

*Extra PRE is OIF (Armour).

Powers and Skills: Aikido, All Manoeuvres; Multipower (50pt pool), OIF (power staves), all slots No Range: 50pt u, 10d6 EB (Electrical), 16 charges: 50pt u, 5d6 NND (vs Force Fields — neural shock); Armour (9 PD/9 ED), OIF; -5 Flash Defence (Sight), OIF; 15" Teleport, 32 charges, OIF (Armour); Breakfall 13–; Bugging 12–; Concealment 14–; PS: Personal Assistant 13–; Conversational French; +3 Lvls, Hand-to-Hand Combat.

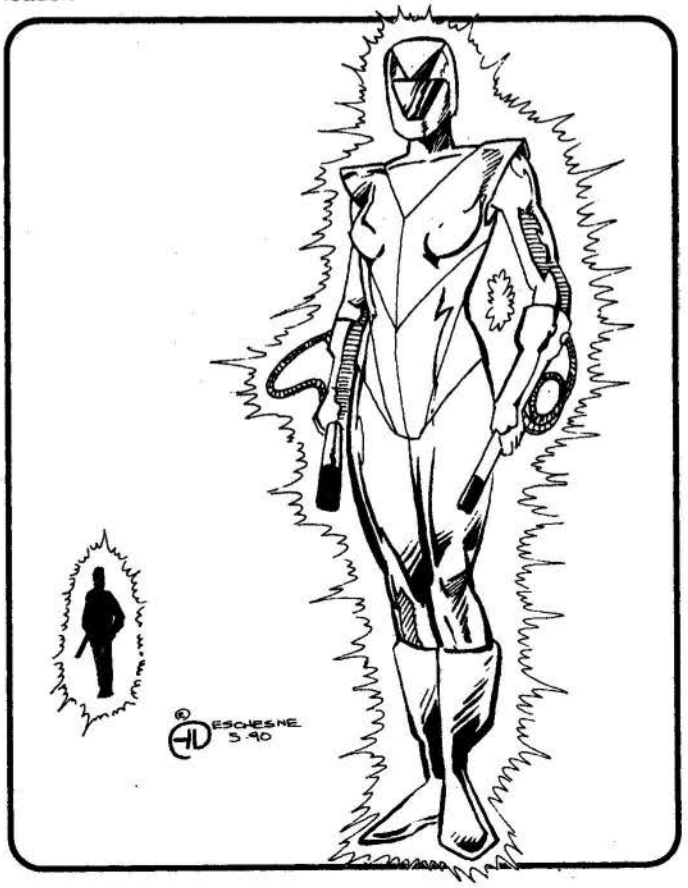
Disadvantages: Berserks if Humiliated 8-, 11–; Impetuous; Hero- Worships Battleaxe; Watched, Project: Armour, 11–; Hunted, STOP, 8–; 2d6 Unluck; Secret ID.

Name: Jemima Medriss, Engineering Secretary.

Personal Details: Born: 1958. Height: 5'9". Weight: 65kg. Hair: Dark. Eyes: Hazel.

Background: Jemima Medriss, a young Yorkshirewoman, was employed by an engineering company that was secretly involved in the SMITH part of Project: Armour. Her supervisor recruited her to the Project, and she soon impressed her employers with her enthusiasm. She was talented, hungry for success, and a hard worker. Eventually, she was offered the chance to field-test an experimental SMITH teleport device (which has proved too costly to reproduce); to make her a useful member of MACE, she was also given armour and "shock-staff" weapons.

Within MACE, Sidestep has come to hero-worship Battleaxe, who embodies all her own dreams of personal success. However, despite some successes as an "intruder" and skirmisher, she has proved too embarassingly unlucky and impetuous to impress her leader.



THE SHAPESHIFTERS



Membership: Hag, Nightmask, and Wolfbairn.

Origin/Goals: The Shapeshifters, Scotland's main resident super-villain group, were created by Martha McPhee, an Edinburgh antiques dealer with contacts in the underworld and a hobbyist interest in sorcery. When she came across a minor artifact that would give her and two others power, she got hold of a professional fence of her aquaintance and offered him a partnership; he in turn found the team's third member, a young Glaswegian brawler who he'd marked down as useful. The trio have embarked on a successful career of crime; with their knowledge of the antiques black market, they are able to finance their other operations by low-profile but profitable thefts and swindles. However, having tasted mystic power, they want more, and actively pursue it, which leads to conflicts with superheroes; they are vindictive towards those who foil them.

Tactics: The Shapeshifters are habitually, competently, sneaky and devious. They spy out targets, double-cross, and back-stab. Wolfbairn is the team's head-on fighter, while Nightmask applies devastating surprise attacks and Hag hits, runs, and hides.

Group Relations: The Shapeshifters are as close as three people can be without being friends. Hag and Nightmask regard each other with professional respect; both see Wolfbairn as valuable tool; he sees them as impressive "professionals" who pay well and deserve emulation.

External Relations: The Shapeshifters are in crime for profit (and revenge); they form alliances, and sometimes hire out as mercenaries, but there has to be money in the deal. They are known to the underworld on this basis, but not liked or trusted. If a chance of supernatural power appeared, they would quite likely double-cross any allies; this attitude can also bring them into competition with other criminal organisations.

The Nightwatch are their chief enemies, and the two groups despise each other fervently.



HAG (HUMAN FORM)

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
5	STR	-5	15	1.5x BODY, Normal-damage
15	DEX	15		Physical attacks (fragile bones)
13	CON	6	10	Berserks if takes BODY 8-, 14-
8	BODY	-4	10	Enraged if thwarted 11-, 11-
18	INT	8	10	Malicious
18	EGO	16	10	Greedy for power
20	PRE	10	20	Normal Char. Maxima
6	COM	-2	5	Age 40+
6	PD	5	15	Distinctive Features (old
6	ED	3		woman: Not Concealable)
4	SPD	15	5	Watched, Edinburgh Police
4	REC	0		(as pow), 8-
22	END	-2	10	Hunted, Nightwatch members
18	STUN	0		(as pow), 8-
			15	Secret ID
			85	Experience

Cost	Powers	END
51	Multiform: Animal Form is 257pts	
105	Power Pool, 70pts (Magic; changed by Magic Skill)	
11	Mental Defence (-15)	
15	Power Defence (-15)	
3	Mental Awareness	
	Skills	
13	Magic Skill 18-	
3,3	Acting 13- Animal Handler 11-	
3,3	Concealment 13- Deduction 13-	
3,3	Interrogation 13- Paramedic 13-	
3,3	Stealth 12- Streetwise 13-	
3,4	Trading 13- KS: Antiques & Antiquities* 14-	
3	KS: Magic Theory* 13-	
3	Fam w/Bribery, Conversation, & High Society	
2	Conversational Latin & Basic Gaelic	
5,3	Cramming Simulate Death	

* INT-based.

OCV: 5; **DCV:** 5; **ECV:** 6; **Phases:** 3,6,9,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	65	+	245	=	310	=	210	+	100

Name: Martha McPhee, Antiques Dealer.

Personal Details (Human form attributes)**:** Born: 1930. Height: 5'6". Weight: 55kg. Hair: Grey. Eyes: Green-grey.

Background/Personality: After a life on the shabby fringes of the Edinburgh art world, Martha McPhee was running a small antiques shop in a back street, not asking too many questions about the source of the pieces she bought and sold, and dabbling in the occult out of a sense of irritation at the world. Then she came across a collection of dog-eared manuscripts and a box full of unpleasant oddities, and suddenly she knew that she — and, she calculated, up to two others — could be something more. So she contacted an underworld fence she almost respected, and he found a working thug he half-trusted, and together they became the Shapeshifters.

Identifying Quote: "Och, they've power enough. But the gutless fools have nae idea how tae use it. Which is why we'll fall on them like deith himself."

Powers/Tactics: The enchantment she used boosted McPhee's mystical talents considerably, giving her in particular the ability to transform into any species of small animal she has ever seen. Once transformed, she can use the animal's abilities. (Assign powers according to her current form; Flight, extra PER, and HKA claws for a bird of prey, Swimming and Water Breathing for a fish, and so on.) In her human guise, Hag may cast a wide variety of spells. If she doesn't have a particular objective in mind, give her a 2d6 AP RKA and a 10 PD, 10 ED Force Field at 1/2 END. She also likes using Darkness and Clairsentience, the first to confuse opponents, the latter to spy out information.

Appearance: Martha McPhee is a sour-faced, aging woman, albeit in better physical condition than she looks. Her clothes look like they were mildly eccentric, forty years ago. When she shape- changes, she can look like any small wild animal, and has no "standard" form.

HAG (ANIMAL FORMS)

3 STR	20 DEX	8 CON	8 BODY	18 INT
18 EGO	5 PRE	8 COM	6 PD	6 ED
5 SPD	3 REC	16 END	18 STUN	

Powers and Skills: Shrinking, 2 levels, 0 END/Persistent, Always On; Shapeshift, Any animal form, 0 END/Persistent; 30pt Multipower, all slots require appropriate animal form (-1/2): 15pt u, 1d6 HKA: 30pt m, 12" Flight, 1/2 END: 10pt m, 10" Gliding: 20pt m, +10" Running: 20pt m, +10" Swimming: 5pt u, Life Support, Breath Water; Enhanced Senses — all require appropriate animal form (-1/2): Active Sonar (bat): Discriminatory Smell: +5 PER: Micro Vision x10: Telescopic Sight, +6 PER: Tracking Scent: Ultrasonic Hearing: UV Vision: 360-degree Vision; Mental Awareness (in any form); Lightsleep; 1d6 Luck; Acrobatics 13–; Breakfall 13–; Climbing 13–; Concealment 15–; Stealth 15–; KS: Antiques & Antiquities (INT-based) 13–; KS: Magic Theory 11-.

Disadvantages: Accidental Change if subject to Dispel/Suppress Magic powers, 14–; Malicious; Greedy for power; Always in animal form — may limit physical abilities; Susceptibility, 2d6 STUN/phase from contact w/cold iron; Distinctive Features (small animal: Not Concealable, Always Noticed); Hunted, Nightwatch (as pow), 8–; Secret ID; Experience.

NIGHTMASK				
Val	**Char**	**Cost**	**100+**	**Disadvantages**
30	STR	20	10	1.5x STUN, Magical Attacks
20	DEX	30	5	Enraged if Double-Crossed 8-, 11-
23	CON	26		
15	BODY	10	15	Greedy
18	INT	8	15	Susceptibility, 2d6/Turn, Paralysing Drugs/Effects
14	EGO	8		
18	PRE	8	8	Watched, Scottish Underworld (as pow), 11-
12	COM	1		
10+	PD	4	8	Watched, Police (as pow), 11-
10+	ED	5		
5	SPD	20	10	Hunted, The Laird's Agents (less pow, NCI), 8-
11	REC	0		
46	END	0	154	Experience
42	STUN	0		

Cost	**Powers**	**END**
21	Dirty Infighting Package	
	Manoeuvre **pts** **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**	
	Punch 4 0 +2 10d6	
	Roundhouse 5 -2 +1 12d6	
	Low Blow 4 -1 +1 3d6 NND	
	Disarm 4 -1 +1 STR 50 Disarm	
	Kidney Blow 4 -2 0 1d6 KA, 2d6 w/STR	
8	+2 DC w/Dirty Infighting (Included Above)	
12	Armour (4 PD/4 ED)	
30	Shapeshift, all humanoid forms, 0 END	
13	Regeneration, 2 BODY, Act 14-	
	Skills	
9,3	Acting 16- Concealment 13-	
3,9	Conversation 13- Disguise 14-	
3,9	Lockpicking 13- Mimicry 14-	
3,3	Persuasion 13- Stealth 13-	
5,3	Streetwise 14- AK: Scotland* 13-	
3,2	AK: Glasgow* 13- AK: Edinburgh 11-	
4	KS: English Language Variations & Accents* 14-	
4,3	PS: Fence* 14- Fam w/Small Arms & Knives	
1	Fam w/Security Systems	
4	Unaccented Gaelic	
30	+3 Overall Levels.	
*	INT-based skills.	

OCV: 7; **DCV:** 7; **ECV:** 5; **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	**Char**		**Powers**		**Total**		**Disadv**		**Base**
	140	+	185	=	325	=	225	+	100

Name: Jerry Kilross, Fence.

Personal Details: Normal attributes: Born: 1952. Height: 5'8". Weight: 87kg. Hair: Black, clean-shaven. Eyes: Grey.

Background/Personality: A Glasgow fence and "hard man", Jerry Kilross was always formidable, even before he gained mystical powers. He accepted Martha McPhee's offer because it he hated to miss anything that would give him an edge in life.

Nightmask is a truly professional criminal; he does this for a living and he sets out to be good at it. That's not to say that he's emotionless; it's a very stupid man who sets out to annoy him, but Nightmask is calculating. He even uses his own anger, building it up before he unleashes himself on an enemy.

Identifying Quote: "Thought ye had nae need to gaird your back? Aye, we all make mistakes."

Powers/Tactics: Nightmask has magically gained the ability to transform his body however he chooses, within the limits of the humanoid shape. Apart from disguising himself, he can augment his physique, harden his skin, and, by subtly modifying his body in combat, make his blows more effective. As dirty fighting is one of the many things he's learnt in life, he can be quite deadly. His tactics make use of all this; apart from spying on, framing up, and generally harassing his foes, he'll often inveigle himself among a group of opponents in some innocuous guise, then inflict mayhem on them from behind.

Appearance: In his natural form, Nightmask is a plain, if fairly rugged-looking man; he doesn't bother with a costume, but he may wear a black sweater and trousers if he's planning on a stealthy assault.



WOLFBAIRN (WOLF FORM)

25 STR	20 DEX	33 CON	12 BODY	6 INT
14 EGO	20+ PRE	14 COM	8+ PD	8+ ED
5 SPD	20 REC	66 END	42 STUN	

Powers and Skills: +10 PRE, Offensive/Only when snarling (-1/2); Multiform to 102pt Human Form; 15pt EC, Werewolf powers: (a) 1.5d6 HKA (Bite) w/Reduced Penetration at 1/2 END (2x 1.5d6 w/STR): (b) 1/2 Resistant Physical Damage Reduction, not vs. silver (-1/2); Armour, 8 PD, not vs. silver; Armour, 6 ED; Armour, +6 ED, BODY only (-1/2); Regeneration, 3 BODY/Turn, not for wounds from silver or fire (-1/2); +5" Running (to 11"); Tracking & Discriminatory Scent; Ultrasonic Hearing; +5 PER Roll (to 15-); Breakfall 13–; AK: Glasgow 11–; +3 OCV w/Bite.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN & BODY, Heat/Flame; 1.5x STUN, Sonics; Accidental Change if subject to Power Drains, Transfers, etc, 11–; Berserks if takes BODY 11-, 14–; Berserks at sight/smell of much blood 8-, 14–; Instinctive, unrestrained behaviour; Can't Talk; No Functional Hands; Susceptibility, 1d6/segment from contact with silver; Distinctive Features, Not Concealable, Cause Extreme Fear; Hunted, Police (less pow, NCI), 8–; Hunted, Monster-Hunting Band (as pow), 8–; Secret ID (doesn't want enemies knowing human ID); Experience.

WOLFBAIRN (HUMAN FORM)

15 STR	14 DEX	11 CON	12 BODY	10 INT
10+ EGO	10 PRE	8 COM	7 PD	7 ED
3 SPD	5 REC	22 END	26 STUN	

Powers and Skills: +10 EGO, Only vs. PRE attacks, to continue selfishly useful behaviour, etc; Dirty Infighting, with Punch, Low Blow, Disarm, & Kidney Blow; Climbing 12–; Concealment 11–; Shadowing 11–; Stealth 12–; Streetwise 11–; AK: Glasgow, 14–; Fam w/Bribery; Fam w/Knives; +2 Lvls, Hand-to-Hand; +1 Lvl, Dirty Infighting.

Disadvantages: Accidental Change in light of full moon, presence of Earth or Moon Magic, etc, 11–; Vengeful & Vindictive.

Name: Rab Laing, Petty Criminal.

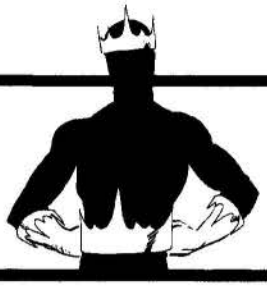
Personal Details (Human form attributes): Born 1966. Height: 5'9". Weight: 66kg. Hair: Dark Brown, clean-shaven. Eyes: Brown.

Background: It's said that Glasgow produces the best and worst sorts of people. Rab Laing is the worst sort of Glaswegian street thug; he enjoys the feeling of power he gets from being a werewolf, and the cash benefits he gets from being part of a supervillain team. He dislikes losing fights, bears grudges, and has as much morality as a lump of rock. He is sought by both the police (who guess he's a dangerous escaped zoo animal) and a band of monster-hunters (not super-powered, but knowledgeable and ingenious). Note that his transformation gives him true wolf form, running on all fours.

Identifying Quote: "You think y've got nae worries, don'cha, Jimmie? Weill, I'm here ta tell you — you're dogmeat!"



THE FOUR WINDS



Membership: Blizzard King, Monsoon, Gale Force and Sandstorm.

History: When the Shark Squad captured the Powerstone of Lyonesse, they weren't quite sure what to make of it; so Captain Shark hired an expert. He had to find someone with limited morality and unusual knowledge; what he got was Dr Brian Lazenby-King, who brought his research assistant, and was given two Squad agents to fetch and carry for him.

Lazenby-King had done brilliant work on the theory of psionics, but few of his experiments ever worked; his ideas required powerful energy sources, and government research grant cuts had kept these from him.

The Powerstone was powerful.

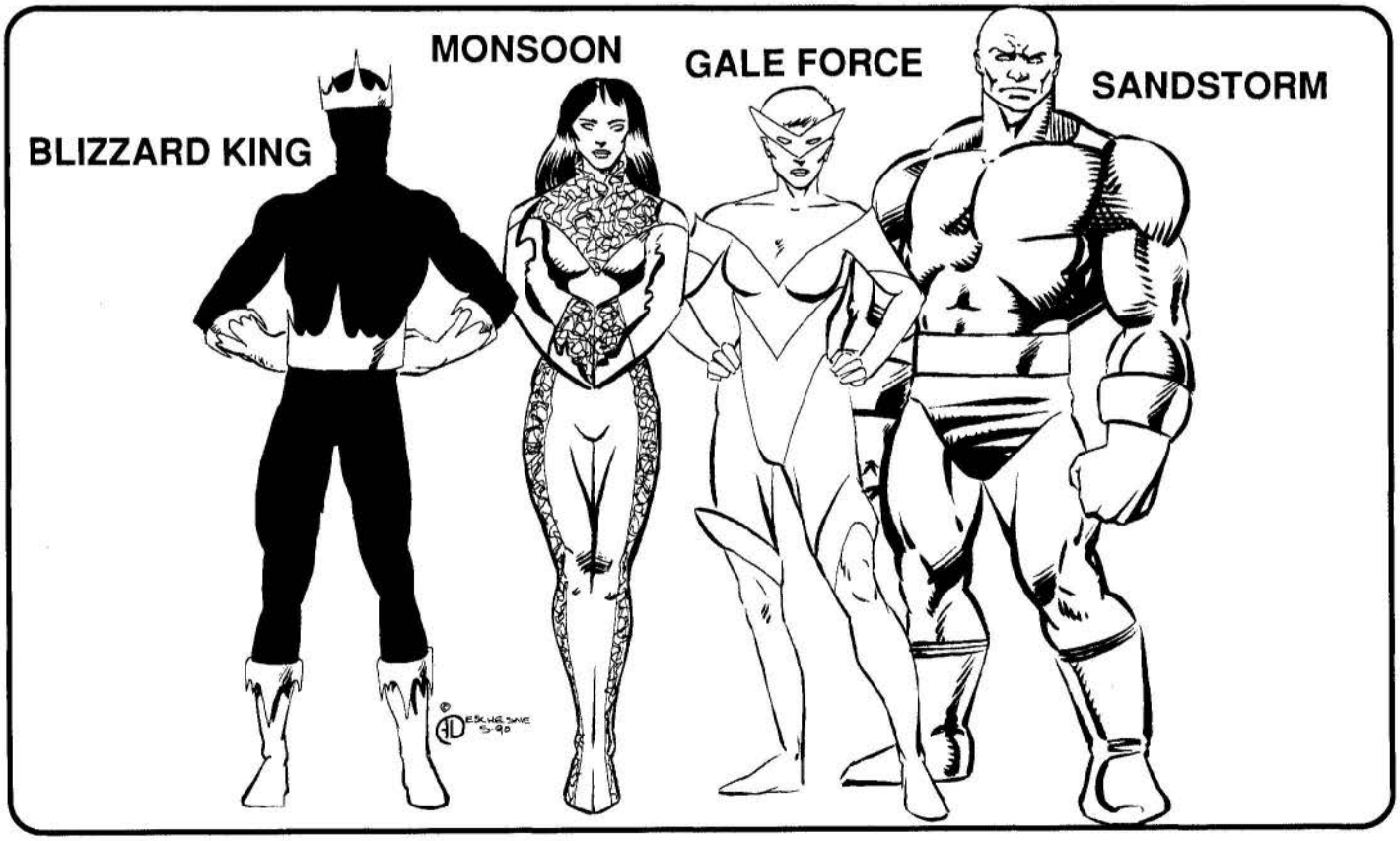
Lazenby-King was tempted, and cracked. Amoral, frustrated by past failure and academic bureaucracy, power in his grasp, he persuaded his three assistants to join him, gave the group power from the Stone, and deserted the Squad. Needless to say, the Squad weren't pleased, but the "Four Winds" went into hiding, emerging only to steal research materials, including books from the British Museum Library. (Captain Shark had been cautious enough not to tell them exactly where the Stone came from, and they were trying to solve that mystery.)

However, the London Watch intervened. Receiving a desperate plea from dying Lyonesse, they tracked the Stone by its energy emanations, defeated the Four Winds, and returned the stolen property to its true owners. The Four Winds were imprisoned, but few charges could be made to stick, and they were soon out and in conflict with Shark Squad, superheroes, and anyone else who got in their way.

Tactics: The Four Winds aren't sophisticated fighters, but they use raw power well enough. Typically, Blizzard King teleports them in, then backs off and harasses opponents from cover, while the other three blast their way through to their goal. If someone has to mix it close up, Sandstorm gets the job.

Group Relations: The Four Winds are united by the knowledge of shared interests. The other three may be irritated by Blizzard King's arrogance, but he is their best chance of regaining greater power; he sees that they are the most trustworthy people he'll find to guard his back. Sandstorm has made half-hearted passes at the two women, but backed off before he damaged the team's cohesion; he wants his back safe, too. The group are really a very straightforward bunch of anti-socials; they want power, for itself or because it brings money or security, and they don't mind working together to get it.

Campaign Use: Mostly, the Four Winds are locked into a complex war with the Shark Squad, the London Watch, and — if they ever learn enough — Lyonesse. However, the Powerstone is not the only possible source of augmented power for them; they might discover that some human super-psis (including PCs?) could act as "living power sources", leading to a series of kidnappings, and maybe painful collisions between different groups pursuing them.



TEAM MEMBERS: GENERAL

Having received their powers from the same source, the Four Winds have similar abilities — mostly variant telekinetic talents, plus enhanced characteristics. However, the Powerstone brought out different aspects of each's psi potential.

Without access to the Powerstone, they each have above-average characteristics, plus a Multipower. If and when they ever regain the Stone or a comparable power source, Blizzard King can link it up to a machine he can build from standard electronic components; each of the four can then use a power receiver system — a metal circlet (OIF). With this, their characteristics become superhuman, their Multipowers become Elemental Controls, and so on. However, they also gain extra weaknesses, including a 3d6 Susceptibility to having their power supply cut off (damage to the supply machine will do it — applied only at the moment when the supply is cut). Values below in (brackets) relate to when the character is being "boosted"; the powers, etc, are OIF, must have access to power supply (-1/4).

BLIZZARD KING

15(30) STR	18(20) DEX	20(25)CON	13 BODY
20 INT	14(20) EGO	15(25) PRE	10 COM 10
(15) PD	12(16) ED	4(6) SPD	7(11) REC
40(50) END	32(48) STUN		

Powers/Skills: EC with 5d6 NND cold blast vs Life Support vs. heat/cold, or 20+ ED (1/2 END); Force Field, 20PD/20ED (1/2 END); 5" Radius Darkness vs. Normal, IR & UV vision (1/2 END); 20" Teleport with up to 4x his own mass, and 4x extra "non-combat" range (1/2 END). Also has Life Support vs. Heat/Cold (No Need to Breathe, Survive Vacuum & High Pressure); (8" Gliding); Spatial Awareness that Only works in own Darkness; (Mental Defence -10); (Power Defence -10); Computer Programming 13–; Deduction 13–; and Scientist with Psionic Theory 14- and Physics, Electronic Engineering, Genetics and Psychology each 13-, plus miscellaneous small Vehicles and Bases.

Disadvantages: 1.5x STUN from Heat/Flame; (1.5x STUN from Ego Attacks); Berserks if humiliated or has power taken away from him, 11-, 14–; Greedy for Power; (3d6 STUN if Power Supply cut); 1d6 Unluck;Hunted, Shark Squad,11–; Hunted,London Watch,8-.

Background: Dr Brian Lazenby-King is a middle-aged man, psychologically dominated by bitterness and self-glorification, but clever and patient. He has molecular control and cold powers; he can teleport molecules (his own and others with them), create a "freezing fog" or a "molecular shield", freeze targets, and so on.

GALE FORCE

15(25) STR	20(24) DEX	20(25) CON	10 BODY
13 INT	14 EGO	15(18) PRE	10 COM
15(18) PD	14(16) ED	5(6) SPD	7(12) REC
40(50) END	33(44) STUN		

Powers/Skills: EC with +40 STR (1/2 END); Force Field, 25PD/25ED (1/2 END); 25" Flight, x8 Non-Combat (1/2 END); (STR 20 TK with Fine Work). Also Knockback Resistance -5"; (Life Support — No Need to Breathe); (Mental Defence -10); (Power Defence -10); Mechanics 11–; Combat Driver w/ Submersibles; +2 levels w/All Combat.Disadvantages 2x STUN from Telekinetic attacks; 1.5x STUN from Pain-Based attacks; Greedy; (2d6 STUN from others' Telekinetic powers); (3d6 STUN if Power Supply cut); Hunted, Shark Squad, 11–; Hunted, London Watch, 8-.

Background: Galena Forman is a blonde in her early 30's. One of the Shark Squad's few female monster-sub pilots, she grew tired of the attitudesof the "macho" agents; supervillainy looked like a much quicker route to the top. Her powers are based on telekinetic energy contained within her body; although she has few ranged powers, she prefers to hit and run, using lots of "Move By" attacks and throwing large objects around.

MONSOON

13(20) STR	20(24) DEX	20(25) CON	10(15) BODY
18 INT	14 EGO	15(18) PRE	12 COM
15(18) PD	14(16) ED	5(6) SPD	7(12) REC
40(50) END	27(40) STUN		

Powers/Skills: EC with STR 40 TK, only works on water, preferably liquid (1/2 END); 5d6, 3" Radius EB (1/2 END); Force Field, 20PD/20ED (1/2 END); Force Wall, 8PD/8ED (1/2 END); 18" Flight (1/2 END); (8d6 EB at 1/2 END). Also Life Support — Water Breathing (No Needto Breathe); (Mental Defence -10); (Power Defence -10); Electronics 13–; Sciences: Psionic Theory and Electronic Design each 13-.

Disadvantages: 1.5x (2x) STUN from Heat/Flame; 1.5x STUN from Cold; Must Have Power over Own Destiny; Curious; (3d6 STUN if Power Supply cut); (3d6 STUN from Dessicants); Distinctive Features (Indian & Impassive); Hunted, Shark Squad, 8–; Hunted, London Watch, 8–; 1d6 Unluck.

Background: Monsoon is Ravina Patel, Lazenby-King's research assistant. A pleasant-looking girl in her mid 20's, she remembers how her family were thrown out of Uganda on a dictator's whim, and is determined that she will always have control of her own life; she is also a curious, if habitually impassive young scientist. For these reasons, she joined the Four Winds, and gained telekinetic power over water. Her TK works best on pure or sea water; it is half strength on, say, beer, or water-based paint, or ice. She can fly by moving her own body moisture, and create barriers or a "burst" (or with her circlet working, a jet) of atmospheric moisture.

SANDSTORM

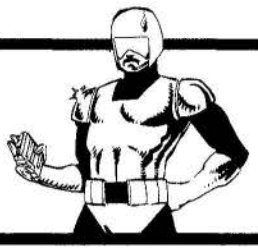
18(33) STR	20(23) DEX	20(25) CON	15 BODY
10 INT	13(18) EGO	15(18) PRE	16 COM
15(18) PD	14(16) ED	5(6) SPD	8(12) REC
40(50) END	33(44) STUN		

Powers/Skills: EC with 8d6 EB, Autofire w/max. 5 shots (1/2 END); 8d6 EB, Explosive (1/2 END); Force Wall, 11PD/9ED, Stops All Vision (1/2 END); 10" (18") Flight. Also Armour, +8PD/+8ED in Villain ID Only; (Life Support — No Need to Breathe); (Mental Defence -10); (Power Defence -10); +3 levels w/All Combat.

Disadvantages: 1.5x Effect from Illusions & Images; 1.5x (2x) STUN from Water or Ice-based powers); Berserk if Stunned 8-, 14–; Enraged if attacked with Ego Powers, 11-, 11–; Gullible; (3d6 STUN if Power Supply cut); Distinctive Features (Red-Haired, Tall); Hunted by Shark Squad, 11–; Hunted by London Watch, 8-.

Background: Sandstorm is Andrew Soames, a straightforward Shark Squad agent who knew that supervillains got paid more than cannon fodder. He's a well-built, red-haired, handsome bruiser; his powers are based on control of dust and sand from his surroundings. He can armour himself with stone, ride a cloud of dust (flight), create walls of TK-reinforced sand, throw abrasive rapid-fire blasts, or create explosions of grit and dust. However, he's gullible in certain ways, making him vulnerable to illusions, and if he's stunned or hit with "sneaky" mental powers, he often loses his temper, and then soon exhausts himself with too many "autofire" blasts.

SOLO VILLAINS



DR SAMAINE

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
28	STR	18	10	1.5x STUN, Heat/Flame
20	DEX	30	10	Enraged if Thwarted 11-, 11-
30	CON	40	15	Arrogant
13	BODY	6	10	Ambitious
23	INT	13	25	Susceptible, 3d6/phase from
20	EGO	20		Dessicants, etc
18	PRE	8	5	Distinctive Features (Lyo-
12	COM	1		nessean: easily concealed
15+	PD	9		with Shapeshift)
18+	ED	12	10	Hunted, Nightwatch (as pow),
5	SPD	20		8-
12/18*	REC	6	5	Hunted, a minor DEMON cell
60	END	0		(less pow), 8-
42	STUN	0	10	Hunted, STOP (as pow), 8-
			15	Secret ID
			315	Experience/Villain Bonus

* Only in Water (-1).

Cost	Powers	END
135	Power Pool, 90pts (Magic; changed by Magic Skill)	
7	Force Field, +8 PD, +7 ED, Only when in water (-1; Water Shield)	1
11	Mental Defence, -15	
10	Power Defense, -10	
8	Life Support: Breathe Water plus Safe Environment — High Pressure & Cold, only to levels found in normal Earth oceans (-1).	
30	Shapeshift, Any Humanoid Form, 0 END	
8	+8" Swimming (total 10")	2
45	Detect: Magic, w/Sense, Discriminatory, Range, Targeting, 360-degrees	
3	Mental Awareness	
	Skills	
7,3	Acting 15- Deduction 14-	
3,17	Forgery 11- Magic Skill 21-	
3	Paramedic 14-	
13	Scholar w/KS: Lyonessean History & Society* 15-, Magic Theory* 14-, Styles of Magic* 14-, Medicine 11-, UK Society 14-	
13	Linguist, Native in Lyonessean: Unaccented English (south-east England), Welsh: Fluent French, German, Greek & Latin	
3	PS: Doctor* 14-	
6	SC: Parapsychology* 14-, Biology* 14-	
20	+2 Overall Levels	
	Perks	
2	Fringe Benefit: Several fake ID's with medical qualifications	

OCV: 7; **DCV:** 7; **ECV:** 7; **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	183	+	347	=	530	=	430	+	100

Name: "Dr Mark Lyons"/Unpronounceable, Physician/Sorceror.

Personal Details: Born: 1945??. Height: 5'6". Weight: 83kg. Hair: Blue-Green (Iridescent), full beard & moustache. Eyes: Green.

Background/Personality: Beneath the eastern Atlantic lies Lyonesse (see below). It's a very conformist society, but a little of the spirit of the twentieth century has been felt, even there. This "infected" a relatively young member of the ruling Council, who declared that it was time for Lyonesse to reclaim its place in the world. His colleagues disagreed. After a series of increasingly heated discussions, the Councillor left Lyonesse, stealing an ancient ring as he went — an unprecedented act. Shocked, the Council declared him dead, erasing even the "Oracle" (computer) records of his deed.



The renegade went to the surface world, where he spent years in obscure study. At length, he became a master of sorcery, drawing power from the ring — an achievement that most Lyonessians would consider obscene — but he also decided that he would need to operate subtly in a world of high technology and super-heroes. So he used his shape-shifting powers and special skills to construct a series of fake human identities — "Dr Mark Lyons" is just a favourite out of many — each with medical qualifications. As doctors are needed anywhere, this gives him a cover story for his quieter operations. However, the renegade also decided that he might sometimes need to work openly, so he created a "supervillain ID" for himself, named for the darkest, most dreadful day in the Celtic calendar; Samaine.

Today, Dr Samaine divides his time between a number of schemes, each intended to bring him personal power, either directly or by enhancing his abilities. One of these developed after he realised that the "land link" of the Chain With Two Links was still around, because if both rings are combined, voluntarily, by "attuned" users, their power will be massively enhanced. This is why he's hunting WeatheRing. He won't kill the young hero — he doesn't know enough to risk that — but he'll certainly try any "persuasion".

Dr Samaine is, quite simply, arrogant. He's not sadistic, petty, or especially vengeful; he just feels entitled to power. He's dangerous because he's competent, adaptable, and quite ruthless in pursuit of it. As a result, he is Britain's most formidable solo supervillain, despite his inability to form strong alliances with human criminals. He's not yet encountered his niece, Sea Change of the London Watch; if and when he does, and when he discovers their relationship, he's going to be very amused — and she's likely to be shocked and outraged at everyone involved.

Powers/Tactics: Dr Samaine is a Lyonessean adult, born with exceptional talent, and can be used as a model for such. Apart from this, he has mastered one part of the "Chain With Two Links". He's completely in control of it, and it maintains his physique and enables him to cast a vast array of spells. It also augments his natural shape-changing ability; although less versatile than Sea Change's, this doesn't depend on psionic illusion to work. The ring is not a "focus" in game terms; Dr Samaine is so well attuned to it that he can summons it to his hand if it is removed, or even draw power from it at a distance.

If not expecting anything specific, Dr Samaine will assign his Power Pool (spells) as follows:

10d6 EB, Reduced by Range (Ice Blast); STR 20 TK, Act 14- (Energy Tentacle); 6d6 Telepathy, 0 DCV & Full Phase to turn on, x2 END, Reduced by Range; Force Field, +15 PD, +10 ED, Ablative (Mystic Shields); 2x Density Increase, Full Phase to turn on.

Appearance: Lyonessians mostly have much the same range of heights and weights as humans; by either's standards, in his "natural" form, Dr Samaine is short and heavily-built. In fact, he looks like a cut-down, blue-haired patriarch, with heavy facial hair and a stern expression. He has no preferences as to clothing, even without shape-shifting; he wears plain, practical garb at all times.

BREAKING GLASS

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
15	STR	5	10	2x BODY, Vibration Attacks
21	DEX	33	10	1.5x STUN, Area Effect Attacks
33	CON	46	10	Enraged if Stunned 11-, 11-
10	BODY	0	10	Enraged if Humiliated 14-, 14-
10	INT	0	15	Arrogant
13	EGO	6	15	Loves the Sound of Things Breaking
18*	PRE	6*		
14	COM	2	15	Usually Keeps her Word
12	PD	9	10	Distinctive Features: Strong Upper-Class Accent in Secret ID
17	ED	10		
5	SPD	19	15	Distinctive Features: "Shattering" Sound Effects when acting in Hero ID (cause strong reaction)
20	REC	20		
40	END	-13		
35	STUN	0	10	Reputation (Extreme: Highly Destructive Villain), 8-
			13	Watched by VIPER (more pow), 14-
			15	Hunted by STOP (as pow), 11-
			10	Hunted by UNTIL (as pow), 8-
			5	Rival: senior VIPER Covert

* Extra PRE is in Villain ID Only (-1/4)

Cost	Powers	END
12*	STR is AP and 0 END Cost* 0	
14*	18pt EC: Shattering Field*	
a-14*	+6d6 HA, AP, 0 END Cost* (total 0 9d6 AP Punch)	
b-15*	1d6 HKA, Damage Shield, Penetrating, 1/2 END Cost*	2
c-10	Desolidification (Vulnerable to Area Effect attacks), Can't Pass Through Solid Objects, Must Re-Solidify on Next Phase (-1/2)*	4
d-10	+36" Superleap (total 39"), Linked to Desolidification*	4
7*	Force Field (7 PD/3 ED), Hardened, Full Phase to Start*	1
7	Damage Resistance (5 PD, 9 ED)	
30	Regeneration, 3 BODY/Turn	

* Only in Villain ID (-1/4). To change to this, Breaking Glass spends a phase activating her Force Field. Subsequently, she may choose to switch this off, but the special effects remain, disguising her identity, and her VIPER-designed clothes change colour and shape to help. She can change back by switching off her powers and flicking a hidden switch on her belt.

	Skills
3	Animal Handler 11-
3	High Society 11- (Note — Can't be used much in Villain ID!)
3	Riding 13-
9	KS: Show-Jumping 11-, High Society Fashion 13-, Ski Slopes 12- 1 Transport Fam: Skiing
2	Fam w/Breakfall & Seduction
1	Basic French
4	+2 OCV w/Punch
	Perks
6	Contacts: Rural Aristocracy 13-: VIPER Senior Scientist, 11-
1	Junior Member of British Aristocracy
5	Wealthy

OCV: 7+; **DCV:** 7; **ECV:** 4; **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs:	Char		Powers		Total		Disads		Base
	143	+	157	=	300	=	200	+	100



Name: Lady Fiona Jones-Keithley

Personal Details: Born: 1964. Height: 5'7". Weight: 60kg. Hair: Ash Blonde. Eyes: Green.

Background/Personality: Lady Fiona was born lucky, of course. A younger daughter of the aristocracy, she had a courtesy title, free use of much of Daddy's money, and a vast home near to Oxford. She wasn't bright enough for that or any other university, but all she wanted was the social life (and a bit of riding and skiing). She was typical of the worst sort of "Sloane Ranger"; her ideal evening would end with the venue being smashed up.

Until one drunken prank ended with her going through a plate glass window.

Daddy got her the best private treatment money could buy, of course, but she would have been scarred for life if it hadn't been for that brilliant Dr Wardlow. His treatment was superb.

Better than even Daddy knew, actually. Wardlow moonlighted as a VIPER medical consultant, and he identified Lady Fiona as possessing the very rare body chemistry that his new serum demanded — and enough desperation to try it. So he and VIPER cut a very secret deal with Lady Fiona. A complete cure, via bio-energy powers — in return for her lifetime service to VIPER.

Lady Fiona took the deal — and funnily enough, she's stuck to it. Of course, VIPER UK don't trust her; they know the usual pattern with home-made supers is that they break for it sooner or later, so they have to be watched. But even so, they can't fault their new special enforcer and Society observer — code-named Breaking Glass. She's been good as her word.

Breaking Glass would actually be amused and offended to hear them say that. Somewhere in her small-minded, selfish being there's a little girl who remembers Daddy mumbling about "a man's word should be good as his bond". Few people know it, but Lady Fiona is quite honourable, in her way.

Anyway, she enjoys most of VIPER's jobs, especially the ones that use her powers; her greatest fondness is still and forever the sound of something breaking spectacularly. And now she can make things break on a much bigger scale.

Breaking Glass isn't really bloodthirsty; she's never killed, and has no plans to start, unless she has to. VIPER know this, and probably won't use her as an assassin, for fear of straining her loyalty. On the other hand, she has no qualms at all about destroying property, frightening people, or breaking the law. It's all a juvenile game to her.

Identifying Quote: "This is what holds the roof up, yah?" (Shhhrrrriiii

PETE MARSH

IN THE REAL WORLD

Lindow Man, named "Pete Marsh" by the scientists and enthusiastically adopted by the newspapers, was found in a Cheshire bog in 1984. He came from Celtic Britain, before the arrival of the Romans. He was strongly built, and aged between 25 and 30. He was stunned by two heavy blows to the back of the head, garotted, and had his throat slit before he was dropped into water, face down. There were no signs of struggle, combat, or restraint. This would seem to have been a sacrifice.



"Pete Marsh" had a powerful physique, and was well-nourished; not a slave or peasant. There is no evidence that he was a warrior; there was no asymmetric muscle-development in the arms, no calluses, no scar tissue.

If he was not a warrior-aristocrat, he could have been a bard or a druid. If he was a bard, one would expect calluses on his hands and rough nails from playing musical instruments. None was found.

But a druid? The training of a druid lasted 20 years, and would start from the age of 7 or 8. This would imply that his death coincided with his graduation. Thus, it might indicate failure, or success. Pete Marsh may have been chosen as a sacrifice from among the worst — or the best. His body was unblemished, the mark of a good sacrifice. His stomach held traces of mistletoe pollen, which ties in with the idea of a druidic ritual.

The major Celtic gods were Tarainis, Esus, and Teuttades. Sacrificial victims offered to Tarainis were killed by beheading or stunning; those offered to Esus had their throats cut; those offered to Teuttades were drowned.

The implication, some have deduced, is that the young priest consumed his last meal, and faced his ritual and ordained death calmly and quietly, for the good of his people...

IN A SUPERHERO UNIVERSE

He had slumbered for a long time, learning the mysteries concealed by the flesh. Of all the druids, only he had been worthy to seek out these mysteries, and he had learned much.

Then he had felt stirrings, and he had looked. His body had been moved and desecrated. He looked again, and he saw the world peopled by dark, spiritless shells of humanity that cared for possessions above honour. This brought anger into his soul; he, who had given up the ultimate possession for honour, felt these things that peopled his land unworthy of the name of human. A third time he looked, and he saw skyclad fools about a ruined circle of stones, playing games with forces they did not comprehend, mocking it and him. They played with the circle, without thinking of repairing it before commencing their play. Fool was too weak a word for such as these.

No more could he rest. His body grew flesh and hair, until at last the temple of his spirit was ready to receive it again. Presently, he returned to his body, and rose, walking out into the cold night. A mist about the moon cleared, and the silvery light smiled down upon him as he walked out into the dirty, foul air. This perversion would end. It was his duty to put things to right once more.

THE SACRIFICE

20 STR	20 DEX	28 CON	20 BODY	20 INT
28 EGO	30 PRE	6 COM	20 PD	20 ED
6 SPD	20 REC	56 END	44 STUN	

Powers and Skills: (Attacks in Multipower): 12d6 EB (Physical); 3d6 (Points Value) Drain vs. BODY, Continuing; 2.5d6 RKA, AP; 6d6 NND (vs No Breathing Life Support); Damage Resistance, 14PD/10ED; Mental Defence -18; Power Defence -15; Lack of Weakness, -10; Regeneration, 2 BODY/Turn; Life Support, Immune to Disease & Aging; Additional Life Support, No Need to Breathe & Immune to Heat/Cold, Costs END; Teleport, 10", x128 Range w/+1 phase (1280", 2.6km), 1 Floating Location Memorised, 2 uses/day; Detect Magic, w/ Range, Targeting, 360- degree, Discriminatory; Clairsentience, Sight, Hearing & Detect, x256 Range (max. 38400", 77km), Concentrate at 0 DCV while using; Bump of Direction; Concealment 13–; Stealth 13–; Survival 13–; KS: Druid Lore 20–; KS: Modern World 8- (Everyman Skill is Old Celtic World); PS: Druid 17–; Conversational English (Native is Old Celtic Language); 3 Levels w/Multipower.

Disadvantages: 1.5x BODY, Fire; Berserks vs. "Blasphemers" 8- 11–; Enraged if Celtic Items Damaged 8-, 11–; Fanatic Druid; Unfamiliar With the Modern World; 3d6 STUN from Dispel Magic Effects, Counterspells, etc; Distinctive Features (Haggard Look, Grim); Hunted, Nightwatch, 8-.

Background: These statistics are mainly suggestions, and can be adjusted if desired, depending on the power and nature of the PC heroes, and whether you want the Sacrifice as a one-shot nuisance, a major monster, or a recurring, powerful supervillain. He's a trained druid, and hard to hurt, having died once already. He can send forth his spirit, giving him Clairsentience; His offensive powers derive from the many forms of death he has surpassed; stunning, garroting, throat-cutting and drowning, and feel the same to the victim. His teleport is a mystic talent ("shadow path walking") that enables him to escape early fight scenes (with a vow to return, of course).

The Sacrifice has observed the modern world, but he holds it in contempt, and he doesn't really understand it; he knows that a gun can kill, but he can't drive a car. (He's learnt enough of the language, via Clairvoyance and mystic concentration, to make short speeches.) High-tech weapons do him no special damage, but may surprise him. He's also a fanatic; he'll brush aside people who get in his way, but not finish them off if his real objective is still ahead. As his objective is to punish the cultists with something worse than death (his first idea being a lot of pain and humiliation), he may spend a lot of time battering away superheroes, then being dragged away from the cultists by battered but intact heroes. He has some resistance to magic, but he may be slowed or even destroyed by "counterspells" and dispel effects, which break the link between returned spirit and reconstructed body; he also has a limited vulnerability to fire, having died in water.

Lyonessean characters (see below) could talk to the Sacrifice in (something like) his own tongue, which would give him pause, and on an INT roll, they'd remember enough history to understand the nature of his background and motivations. He'd not enjoy fighting them, regarding them as better than most corrupted modern humans, but he'd also recall their old love of mechanism, and not hold back if they got in his way.

Scenario: No Sacrifice Too Great

The PCs have come to Britain for reasons involving an ancient stone circle. This could be Stonehenge, although that is fenced in, visible from a nearby road, and over-publicised; there are other, less imposing but entirely adequate circles around. If the PCs are mystically adept, they may have sensed a disturbance in the area, or be investigating reports of a powerful and effective cult; if they or their DNPCs work for the press, they may be following up a story about modern paganism around the world; a weak-willed, gullible, or curious DNPC could be involved with a cult; they may be pursuing a supervillain who is using a cult as a "front" or as a source of power; they could even be on holiday. Anyway, the cult is holding a midnight ceremony at this circle when the Sacrifice observes them, and is not impressed. He regards what they are doing as blasphemy. He sets out to deal with these people — appropriately. This, of course, means more than mere death. He arrives at the scene, and the heroes arrive just as he is getting pyrotechnical, blowing the special effects budget in one go.

The GM will have to decide what the cultists — who claim to be "Wicca" — are, and what they can do. Apart from any supervillains sheltering with (or leading) them, they may be more than they seem, and actually have some magical powers. Of course, it could be that they are no more than a bunch of misguided wets, as most such people tend to be, and that they have no idea of what they are doing. Whatever the case, there will be the Sacrifice trying to punish the Wicca for their blasphemy, the PCs trying to stop him, the Wicca trying to stay alive, any supernaturals in the area coming along for a ringside seat, and possibly some British authorities attempting to keep the peace.

MYSTERY

10 STR	18 DEX	15 CON	11 BODY	23 INT
18 EGO	23 PRE	12 COM	6 PD	6 ED
4 SPD	5 REC	30 END	24 STUN	

Powers and Skills: Power Pool, 25pt, OAF, Only change in appropriate place, Commonplace devices only; Dirty Infighting: Punch, Low Blow, Disarm, Kidney Blow; Acting 15–; Bribery 14–; Concealment 14–; Deduction 14–; Disguise 11–; Interrogation 14–; Security Systems 14–; Streetwise 15–; Tactics 14–; Trading 14–; Fam w/Bureaucratics, Conversation, Criminology, Forensic Medicine, Forgery, High Society, Lockpicking, Seduction; AK: London 15–; KS: London Underworld 16–; KS: Criminal Methods 14–; PS: Actress 11–; PS: Crime Boss 14–; Fam w/Small Arms & Knives (melee & thrown); +3 Overall Levels.

Perks and Talents: Well-Connected w/Contacts: New York Crime Lord 11-, Elite Night-Club Owner 13-, Glasgow Gang-Boss 13-, Corrupt Police Inspector 13-, Top-Grade Solicitor 14-, Senior London Stockbroker 11-, Leading Showbusiness Executive 13–; Followers: 8x "Personal Bodyguards", 60pt base; Fringe Benefits: Accepted Underworld Leader, Pistol License; 2d6 Luck; Money — Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Enraged if thwarted or humiliated 11-, 14–; Enraged if personally insulted 8-, 11–; Won't let anyone have power over her life; Gets shrill and vulgar when very annoyed; Normal Characteristic Maxima; Age 40+; Distinctive Features (Aging, vulgar blonde — Concealable w/effort, causes people to not take her seriously); Reputation (Shady), 8–; Rivalry (other gang bosses); Watched, Police (as pow), 8–; Hunted, Brown Fox (as pow), 11–; Experience/Package Deals/Villain Bonus.

Name: Suzanna Brown, Club Owner/Gang Boss.

Personal Details: Born: 1942. Height: 5'1". Weight: 54kg. Hair: Blonde (any greying hidden by dye). Eyes: Green.

Background/Personality: Suzanna Brown was born during the war, in the East End of London. Her father was killed at sea soon after; her mother took to drink. Suzanna was a pretty child, and so she was alternately spoiled by sentimental adults and bullied by jealous children. Early in life, she decided she was entitled to fight for anything she wanted, in any way she had to. In 1956, she found her way into the British film business, which she thought might be profitable. However, UK movies never became as successful as American, and Suzanna never made it to Hollywood. She was a fair actress, but her looks were just too "dumb blonde", and she lacked star quality. Still, her small fame let her mingle with various prominent Londoners, including gang bosses. By 1965, she had been the mistress of three.

Then the latest died in an accident, and his gang started to break up. Suzanna, seeing her film career dying, saw a chance. She cajoled several of the gang into staying together for a while, and slowly but efficiently transformed them into a tight, loyal group — with her in charge. Her plans were seen to work.

It took her ten years to gain wide respect in the underworld, another ten to reach the top. She was arrested three times in twenty years, and only convicted once, early on, on a very minor charge. Today, she has a controlling interest in a range of legal and illegal activities, especially night-clubs, protection rackets, and fencing and money-laundering. On the way, Suzanna acquired the nickname "Mystery", normally a derogatory underworld term for a woman; it would be a bravely stupid man who used it to her face without respect, however, and she likes the literal meaning. She has wide influence, and is looking forward to the relaxation of EC border controls in 1992. She considers that her one mistake in fifteen years goes by the name of Brown Fox.

Mystery looks like an aging, blowzy, dumb blonde, and behaves like a brash, chirpy cockney with a line in saucy back-chat that hints at her true intelligence. It's those who insult her, or who block her business ambitions, who may see her other side; a blazing, spitting fury that frightens even the brawny thugs around her. When she really loses her temper, she becomes shrill and abusive; oddly, however, she may snap out of this in a moment, and it may sometimes be faked. Her only true, deep concern is that noone but she should have power over her own life.

Identifying Quote: "Nah, dearie, lissen, 'cos I'm only tellin' you once. You get in the way of me business, and me boys'll gut you. Got that, luv?"

Powers/Tactics: Mystery is a middle-aged woman in reasonable health, with some knowledge of in-fighting; when she loses her temper, she can be especially vicious. She is expert in underworld leadership, trickery, and psychological manipulation, who only uses her combat skills (or the various tools or weapons she can obtain) very, very rarely.

Appearance: Mystery is short and pneumatically curvaceous. Her hair is a mass of artificial blonde curls, and she uses make-up well, but in quantity. She wears expensive, tight-fitting clothes, including short skirts and high heels. She retains a strong cockney accent, which she can control with an effort.



BROWN FOX

Val	Char	Cost	100+	Disadvantages
20	STR	10	8	Enraged if he thinks anyone is laughing at him 11-, 11-
20	DEX	30		
18	CON	16	15	Has to be "in control"
13	BODY	6	10	Abrupt switches of temper
18	INT	8	10	Distinctive features (mixed-race, "snappy dresser")
14	EGO	8		
15	PRE	5	10	DNPC Mother, Normal, 8-
14	COM	2	10	Watched, Police (as pow), 14-
8(+)	PD	4		
7(+)	ED	3	15	Hunted, Mystery's Gang (as pow, NCI), 8-
5	SPD	20		
8	REC	0	170	Villain Bonus/Experience/ Package Deals
36	END	0		
35	STUN	3		

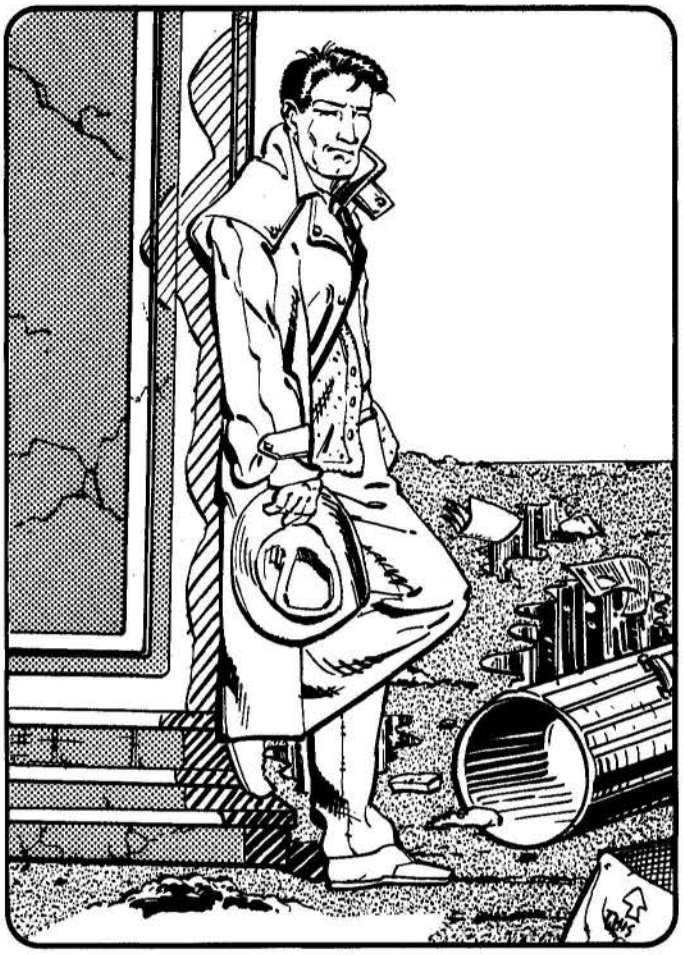
Cost	Powers	END
16	Karate Package	
	Manoeuvre **pts** **OCV** **DCV** **Damage**	
	Punch 4 0 +2 6d6+3d6*	
	Block 4 +2 +2 Block,Abort	
	Chop 4 -2 0 1d6+1 KA w/STR	
	Dodge 4 - +5 Dodge, Abort	
	*Extra from HA	
12	RKA, Reduced Penetration to 2x 1d6+1, Reduced by Range, 8 clips of 2 charges, OAF (double-barrel sawn- off shotgun)	
4	+2 OCV incorporated with RKA (8x2 charges, OAF)	
6	+3d6 HA, 0 END, OAF (shotgun — stock as club)	
9	Armour (5 PD/5 ED), Act 14-, IIF (Kevlar in clothes)	
7	Mental Defence, -10	
2	+1" Running (to 7")	
	Skills	
3,3	Acting 12- Breakfall 13-	
3,3	Climbing 13- Combat Driving 13-	
3,3	Concealment 13- Deduction 13-	
3,3	Demolitions 11- Interrogation 12-	
3,3	Security Systems 13- Shadowing 11-	
3,5	Sleight of Hand 13- Streetwise 13-	
3,3	Tactics 13- AK London* 13-	
3	KS: London Underworld* 13-	
3	KS: Criminal Tactics* 13-	
3,1	PS: Gang Boss* 13- PS: Military 8-	
2	Fam w/Gambling & Weaponsmith (slugthrowers)	
6	Weapons Fam: Common Melee Weapons, Thrown Knives, Small Arms & Grenade Launchers	
40	+4 Overall Levels	

*INT-based Skills.

	Talents
3,3	Absolute Time Sense Bump of Direction
10,10	Cramming x2 Eidetic Memory
3,3	Fast Draw 13- Lightning Calculator
10,3	2d6 Luck Speed Reading.Perks
7	Contacts: Washington Drugs Boss 11-: Music Business Executive 12-: Arab Oil Sheikh 11-
20	Followers, 4x Competent Normals (bodyguards, 50pt base)
3	Fringe Benefits: Shotgun License and Status in Underworld

OCV: 7; **DCV:** 7; **ECV:** 5; **Phases:** 3,5,8,10,12

Costs	Char		Powers		Total		Disadv		Base
	115	+	233	=	348	=	248	+	100



Name: Marlon Sands, Gangster.

Personal Details: Born: 1957. Height: 5'10". Weight: 84kg. Hair: Dark Brown, clean shaven. Eyes: Brown.

Background/Personality: Marlon Sands was the son of a Jamaican father and a Cockney mother, with a poor home, and during his childhood he suffered from prejudice from whites without being fully accepted by the black kids. He grew up determined to beat everyone who had ever put him down — which meant, to him, just about the whole world. However, he kept a pleasant, good-humoured personality — or at least the look of one. Although not very academically successful, he was obviously sharp-witted and adaptable.

It isn't clear when his extraordinary mental gifts first emerged; he seems to have decided at some point to teach himself the skills he'd also need to achieve success in the underworld. After a string of assorted jobs, he joined the Army, but was "obliged" to leave after a year or so, in circumstances he'd set up, by which time he'd had weapons training. After this, he became more involved with the London underworld, including a stint as an enforcer with Mystery's gang; she was quite fond of him then, unlike now.

Throughout this period, the police were never able to prove a thing against him, although they noticed his activities, including his formation of his own gang. His nickname, "Brown Fox", criminal slang for a sawn-off shotgun and otherwise apt, was picked up around then. His followers had one embarassing run-in with a private detective and her friend (see Swift Swallow), but mostly his strategies were very successful; today, he is Mystery's chief rival for control of the London underworld. His gambling clubs have made him useful contacts, and his facade of respectability has even allowed him to obtain a shotgun license — "for sporting purposes".

Identifying Quote: "You cross me, Mister Hero, and you might just wish you'd never learned to fly."

Powers/Tactics: Brown Fox is a skilled fighter and all-round gangster. He often carries a sawn-off shotgun, adjusted for his use, in a sling in the small of his back, and he has trained himself to fast-draw this. However, it's an illegal weapon, even given his shotgun license, so he's careful about being caught with it. In any case, his success in the underworld is mostly due to his unusual gift; his brain works with the speed and accuracy of a computer, allowing him to coordinate gang attacks, calculate timings and costs, and keep track of multiple ideas. His tactical skill would do any army staff officer proud, and his gang's "jobs" are run like military operations (except that they succeed).

Appearance: Brown Fox is unmistakably part black, part caucasian; the result in his case is striking looks, which he sets off by wearing expensive "casual" clothes (with bullet-resistant cloth worked into them), in light colours. He speaks well and usually calmly, with his East End accent detectable but controlled; even when he's angry, his words are succinct and clear.

GOG-MAGOG

80/85* STR	17 DEX	60 CON	40/41* BODY
8 INT	18 EGO	40 PRE	4 COM
45+ PD	45+ ED	5 SPD	30 REC
120 END	105/106* STUN		

(All figures include the effects of growth)

*Second figure is only when combined into one.

Powers and Skills: Apply to both components and when combined: Growth, 7 levels, 0 END/Persistent/Always On (Characteristic effects included above; also 3 hexes wide, -5 DCV, +5 to others' PER rolls, 4" reach, -7" Knockback); Damage Resistance (45 PD/45 ED Fully Resistant); Mental Defence -20; Power Defence -15; +14" Running (to 20"); Life Support, No Need to Breathe; Mind Link (to each other).When Combined only, add +1 lvl of Growth (hence -8" Knockback); Extra Limbs (four arms); +10 to Mental Defence; and all of the two components' individual powers, as follow.

Magog (Base Form): Force Field, (10 PD/10 ED); Absorption, 8d6 Energy to STUN, Electrical/Magnetic attacks only (-1); TK, STR 20, w/Fine Manipulation, No Range (Force Effect); Duplication (Gog); Radio Hearing; Inventor Skill 15–; KS: Technology 14-.Gog (Duplicate): Desolidification, 0 END, Only to pass through natural rock & stone (-1); Spatial Awareness, Only while on solid ground (-1/4); Knockback Resistance, -10", Only while on solid ground (-1/4); KS: Earth Magic 16-.

Disadvantages: See text and powers. GMs should adjust levels to suit campaign and opposition.

Names: Gog and Magog (Gogmagog): Mystical/Magnetic Energy Beings.

Personal Details: Created c.2400 BC, from pre-human components. Height: Gog, c.28'; Magog, c.32'; combined, c.38'. Weight: c.13 tonnes each, combining to c.26 tonnes. Hair: None, "clean-shaven". Eyes: White (no pupils)

Background: Hundreds of millions of years ago, an alien spaceship crashed into a forest on Earth. One of the ship's servicer robots partly survived; nothing else did. The robot lay, a bundle of magnetic force fields, while the forest became coal.

In 2400 BC, a renegade shaman of the Neolithic peoples of Britain wandered into a valley. He was talented; he could sense power, but he thought that such power must be magical. He called on the "Earth-being", summoning an elemental in the process. The summoned elemental merged with the remains of the robot, and a weird exchange of powers took place. The shaman was pleasantly surprised to get two servants, hard to control though they were.

The renegade carved out a tribal empire for himself, and three generations inherited it. However, his power-mad great-grandson was hated by those he ruled, and his rivals offered protection; the bronze-working culture that we call the "Beaker People" sent its mightiest sorcerors. The twin giants would have won a contest of power, but the robot had been programmed to build, not destroy, and the elemental hated to harm the earth it was born from; when the sorcerors called on great destructive spells, the giants retired to their burial-place, and the tyrant was killed. The whole incident faded into legend, and then into dim folk-tales, that said that once Britain was inhabited by giants, until great warriors came from overseas and wrestled them into submission. The names "Gog" and "Magog", or "Gogmagog", from other tales, were attached to these stories.

In the 1980's, exploratory diggings were made through coal measures in the Vale of Belvoir, Leicestershire. Things awoke; it took the army and the London Watch together to drive them back, and Sarah Gold murmured names from legend. But now, "Gog" is once more attuned to the stones of Britain, and "Magog's" energies have high-tension cables to draw on; they'll be back.



These two beings, who can merge into one creature of double mass, have strange, confused psychology. Magog has dim inklings of its function as a servicer robot; it prefers building to destruction, but nothing it builds will ever satisfy it, so it often destroys what it has just made. It will also inspect and dismantle any large machines that catch its attention, sometimes putting them back together in odd, pointless forms. If a large number of humans are in danger, it may notice and try to help them — if it isn't too busy defending itself. Gog, on the other hand, is an elemental being, attuned to the land, but bound by magic; if a criminal magician should learn its binding rituals, it would be unfortunate. Left to its own devices, Gog will roam the countryside, destroying and re-shaping at whim. The pair are separate beings, but closely linked psychically, and share a sense of confusion, and disdain for the tiny mortal creatures who harass them; if they choose to combine, to maximise their strength, their different mind-sets cancel out, leaving a phenomenal will directed to the simplest, most instinctual ends.

Identifying Quote: "We buried... so long time. Little beings hurt us, hurt land, hurt themselves. We make... right. What is right?"

Powers: Gog and Magog are an uncanny blending of non-human science and elemental magic. Magog can generate magnetic force fields and absorb electrical energy, while Gog can move at will through the natural earth. Mostly, however, they are fearsome for their physical strength.

Appearance: Gog and Magog are giant humanoids; Gog looks to be made of stone, while Magog shimmers a metallic blue. Together, they combine both these textures in a shifting mixture, with four arms. They have learnt English through Magog's interception of radio signals (they have a great capacity for learning, given decades); they speak rarely, slowly, and carefully.

Campaign Use: Gog and Magog are basically "rampaging giant monsters", liable to devastate whatever lies in their path, but their sense of uncertainty gives them tragic overtones. They are horrendous potential tools for villains, but they might also act as defenders of Britain against worse threats; remember, Gog is attuned to the land, and Magog was built to serve. Still, the threat would have to be bad and very clear.

DR BRUTALLUS

Treat as a normal, but INT 23, COM 8, SPD 3, and 5" Running. Wears 7PD/7ED armour (Act. 14-), with a lurid design giving him PRE 20 (due to shock effect and self-confidence), plus -5 Sight Flash Defence (goggles), and Radio reception/transmission (all OIF); carries a hyper-velocity needle pistol (1d6+1 AP RKA, works 14-, 8 shots, OAF). Followers; armies of Brutalloids (see below), and a few human pilots and assistants (skilled normals); several bases and hide-outs, and various vehicles (ordinary vans for the Brutalloids, helicopters for himself). Skills: Genetics 19-, Bio-Chemistry 16-, Psychology 12-, Computer Programming 13-. Disadvantages; the usual mad scientist Megalomania, Overconfidence, etc, Hunted by VIPER and UNTIL, and Distinctive Features (tendency to rant and rave).

Personal Details: Born: 1946. Height: 5'9". Weight: 64kg. Hair: Dark, clean shaven. Eyes: Brown.

Background: Dr Bruce Alleyn is a brilliant UK-born geneticist and bio-chemist who slipped into megalomania when he managed to create stupid but powerful humanoid clones — which got his work banned by the American university where he was working at the time. A brief spell with VIPER ended in disagreement, since when he has returned to the UK, created the identity of Dr Brutallus, and started a rather unsuccesful international criminal career.

BRUTALLOIDS: 9' tall, shaggy, cyclopean monsters, with just enough intelligence to obey their maker. 35 STR, 14 DEX, 25 CON, 18 BODY, 5 INT, 8 EGO, 18 PRE, 4 COM, 6+ PD, 5+ ED, 3 SPD, 12 REC, 50 END, 44 STUN; 2x Growth, Always On (characteristic benefits already included); Armour, 6 PD/4 ED; Run 7"; +2 levels, hand-to-hand combat. Disadvantages: One Eye; Distinctive Features (hideous); Obey Brutallus to the letter.





DARKWING

Use Blue Jay's character sheet for DarkWing, but DarkWing's psychological limitations are "Nazi Ideals", "Misogyny", and "Arrogance", he Berserks when losing or injured, his Hunteds are Israeli Intelligence and UNTIL, and his Knowledge Skills mostly concern international fascist conspiracies and the like.

"DarkWing" is Dr GoldWing's fellow-clone and most ferocious personal enemy, created by the South American Nazi group who had a spy in the laboratory where Julius Wing was working in the early '50's. The Nazis stole not only data, but also material; deciding that Wing was an Aryan ideal, but "misguided", they replicated his work and raised the result as their own champion.

DarkWing is brilliant, but psychologically twisted. Knowing himself to be the product of science, with no mother, he has decided that women are the "weak point" in human existence; he also has a full set of Nazi ideals, and a mixture of contempt and "family" respect for his clone-twin. His plans against Dr GoldWing are all based on a desire to either corrupt the other or drive him to despair — ideally both. He has extensive resources (investments based on Nazi gold), and occupies himself between attacks on Dr GoldWing by training right-wing terrorist groups, scientists, and mercenaries, and running scientific experiments.

DR MANTIS

Dr Mantis has average or lower characteristics, apart from 17 DEX, 18 INT, and 3 SPD; his armour gives him 15 STR, 15 PRE, and 4 SPD. It also has 1d6 HKA claws, 12 DEF Armour, Clinging, and 11" Gliding. Dr Mantis has a lot of technological skills, mostly engineering-based but also including SC: Entomology. He has Followers (Termech robots), Money, a Vehicle (the Mech Mantis — see below), and bases. He's arrogant, vengeful, short-tempered, and unlucky, and hunted by VIPER and Interpol.

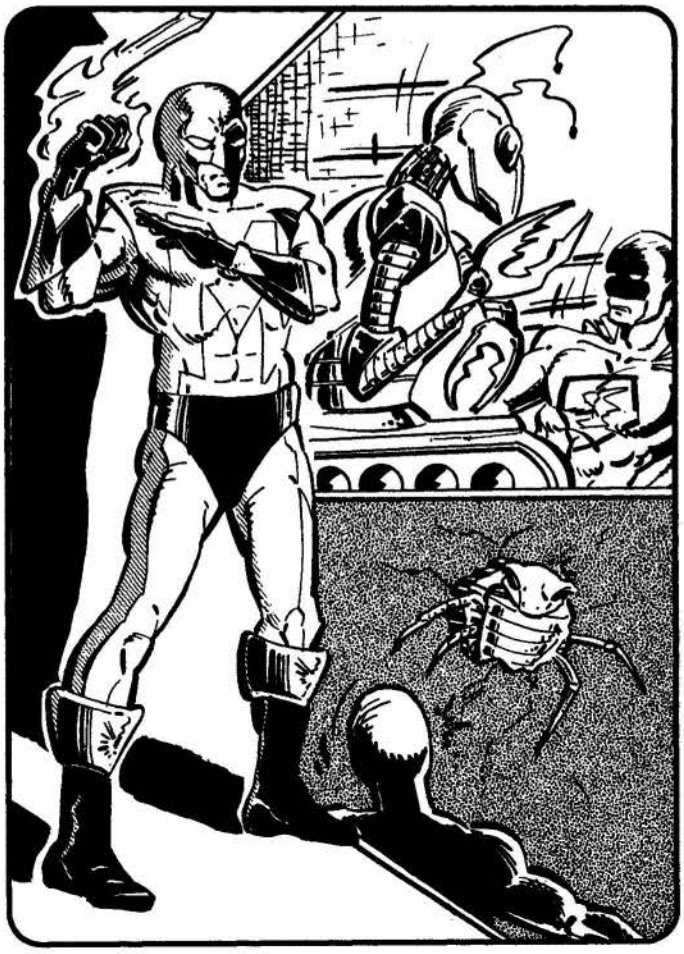
Background: Dr Carl Mantonis was recruited by VIPER before they noticed his unstable personality; he escaped a Nest with gadgets he'd created, and set out on a criminal career. Despite some successful robberies, he's not done well; he spends too much time chasing revenge on everyone who ever foils him. He's an unimpressive little man with a fixation on insects — his armour, robots, and vehicles all look insectoid.

Termechs

Dr Mantis' robots are Automatons that take no STUN damage. They have 25 STR, 17 DEX, 7 BODY, 5 INT, 15 PRE, 8 DEF, and 4 SPD, +2d6 HA, 5d6 Entangle (8 uses), and 5" Tunneling through up to DEF 7; they receive orders by encrypted radio from...

The Mech Mantis

Dr Mantis' "walking tank" looks like a giant insect. It has 7 levels of Size Increase, 16 DEF, 17 DEX, 4 SPD, and Move 13x2. The "head" mounts a blaster (6d6 EB, AP, Autofire w/max 10 shots, +4 OCV, 0 END, OIF) and 360-degree scanners ("bug eyes"); the forward limbs are arms with 30 STR for lifting and 2d6+1 KA claws. The vehicle is sealed (Life Support).



PLAYTIME

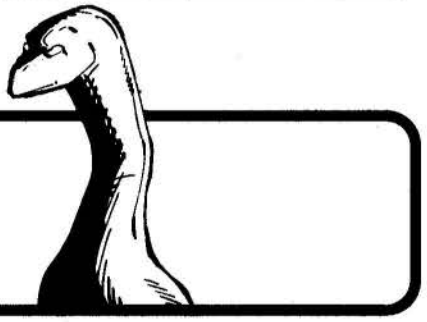
Use the "Senior Citizen" writeup from *Champions*. However, Playtime has 25 INT, 2 SPD, and +15 PRE for defence only, and 6 SPD for operating his radio control system only. He wears OIF Armour giving +7 PD and ED, and has numerous skills such as Mechanics, Electronics, Weaponsmith, SC: Robotics, and PS: Toymaking. He also has a lot of points in vehicles (mostly personal rocket-sleds that look like pedal cars), bases, and (most of all) "Follower" automatons. These all take the form of toys, mostly with a rather dated, '60's look about them, but quite dangerous; 6" high toy soldiers whose guns fire 1/2d6 KA lasers, enamelled tin model aircraft that fly like missiles then explode, soft toy dogs that not only walk, but can use a Tracking Scent (Chemosensor) ability to locate human targets for attack, and so on. Playtime is very ingenious, but prefers quantity to quality.

Background: Playtime has been acting as a supervillain in Britain since 1963, starting late after an unsuccessful career in engineering science. He's achieved some spectacular criminal masterstrokes in that time, but his overconfidence and the fairly low firepower of each individual toy in his arsenal has always let non-superpowered police and adventurers defeat him, usually by ingenuity rather than brute force. Tired and embittered by long spells in prison, but ever insanely determined to pull off one last great crime, Playtime is not the world's worst villain, but he's dangerous.

Playtime is a thin-faced, wild-eyed old man with thick-lensed glasses and a taste for white lab coats. He likes toys because of childhood deprivation, but he dislikes all children; he doesn't think they deserve toys...



NESSIE



The Loch Ness Monster has already been discussed elsewhere in this book, but this section looks at it (her?) from the gamer's point of view. GMs should refer to the notes under Cryptozoology for background details, then choose an option for the truth about the monster.

THE FAKE OPTION

If the monster doesn't actually exist, the legend could still be useful to somebody (apart from the Scottish Tourist Board). A shady organization such as the Shark Squad might disguise submarines as monsters, while using them for drug smuggling, espionage (spying on NATO forces in the North Sea), or piracy. The theory would be that any sightings would be treated as publicity stunts or tall stories; the problem would be that a string of sightings in a quiet period for news would have exactly the wrong effect for the organization, and could bring PCs into the area for any number of reasons. The GM's problem is that Loch Ness is only linked to the sea by a river, so ocean-going villains might have to limit themselves to very small minisubs.

Sample Scenario

One or more of the PCs' DNPCs are on holiday in Scotland when they disappear while on a boat ride off the east coast. That should bring the PCs over; GMs should note that they are travelling as private individuals, and so would have problems taking weapons or the like with them. On arrival in the nearest town, Inverness, they discover the place full of reporters, due to a rash of monster sightings in Loch Ness.

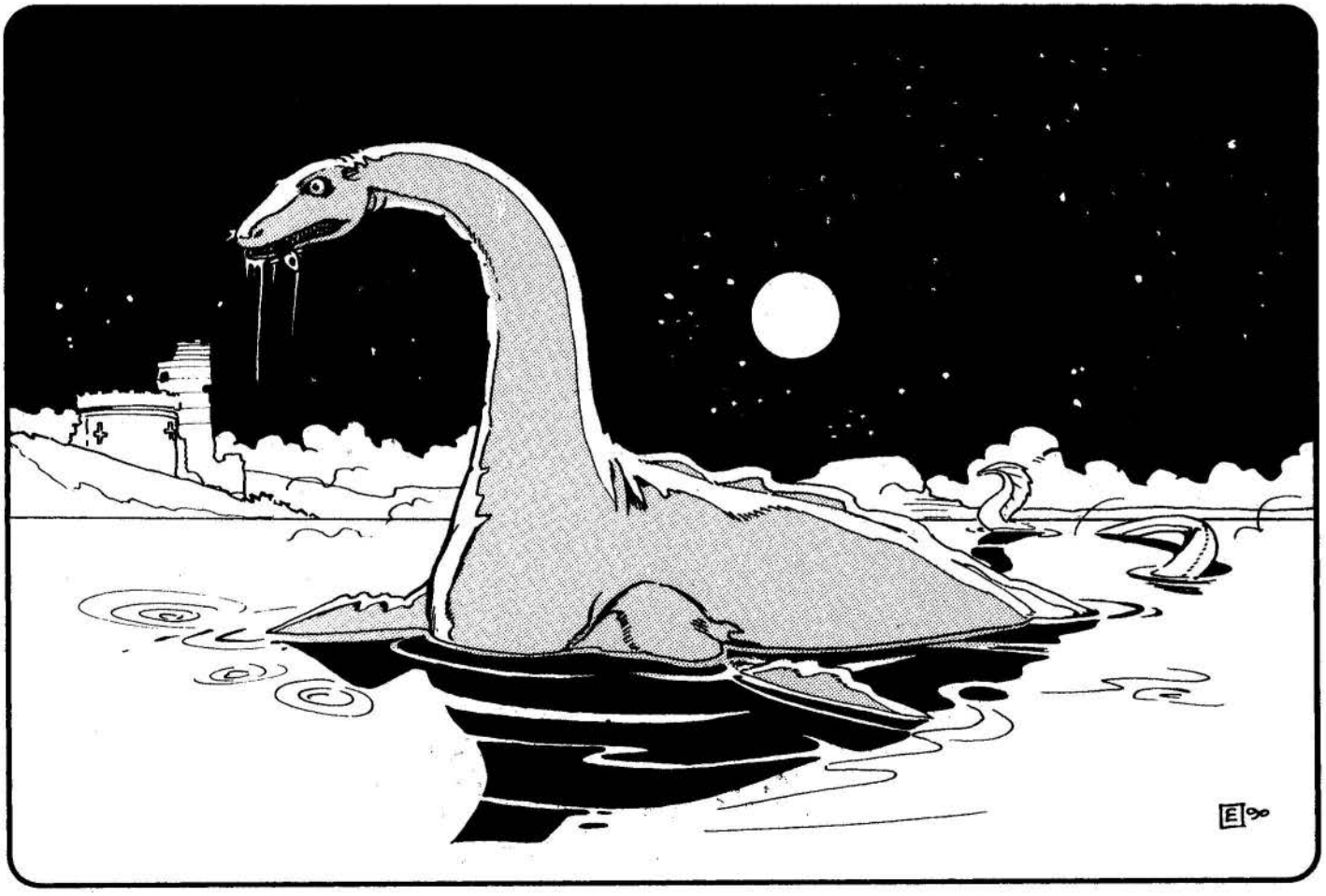
The missing boat proves to have disappeared suddenly, without trace, on a calm day; this should make the PCs interested in the sea bed in the area. (If the team doesn't include characters with Life Support, have them befriended by a local diver who's willing to teach them the rudiments and take them down, being interested in the incident himself.) Investigation of the sea bed will find the shattered remains of the boat, but no signs of bodies, and what look like tracks leading towards the land. These end at a tunnel mouth guarded by Shark Squad agents and a Monstersub.

The Shark Squad has, in fact, allied with CUIRASS to set up a base on the Loch bed to act as a repair centre and "trading post" for the spoils of their piracy; monstersubs are being used in the loch for transport. SMITH is providing a submersible tunnelling machine to establish the link with the sea. The sight-seers' boat literally ran into the Squad transport carrying the tunnelling machine; the boat was deliberately sunk, but the agents involved couldn't stomach slaughtering a large group of innocent bystanders, so they are being held as prisoners until SMITH medics can drug them into amnesia.

The PCs should either attack the tunnel mouth or guess where it leads; worries about their DNPCs should cause them to move in themselves rather than spend time arguing with skeptical police authorities. This will lead to a confused battle in a maze-like half-finished tunnel complex beneath the loch, or in the cloudy waters themselves, with monstersubs, Shark Squad and CUIRASS agents, and perhaps a few MACE supervillains to even the odds if the hero team is strong. An added complication is, of course, the prisoners; the agents may forget some of their scruples if the alternative to hostage-taking is capture and the uncertain mercy of an annoyed superhero. If the heroes are defeated and captured, they'll be held for questioning, but perhaps their attack made enough noise for a British hero team or a few squads of STOP agents to appear and save the day; in this case, the ensuing confusion will enable the heroes to break free and attack the villains, but this will put them in front of their rescuers with no quick way of proving their friendliness. This scenario can be used for "heroic" grade PCs who are willing to be sneaky, by excluding supervillains and keeping opposition numbers down.

THE WILDLIFE OPTION

Taking the plesiosaurus as the most likely version of the "natural monster" idea, a game version follows. "Nessie" has always proved difficult to locate, so this animal is assumed to be able to dive deep for extended periods and to be good at hiding itself; with legs evolved into flippers, it is primarily a water beast, but there are reports of monster sightings on dry land a few yards from the loch. Finally, note that "the monster" has always seemed reclusive rather than dangerous, and the food supply in a Scottish Loch is unlikely to run to much more than a good-sized salmon; in any scenario, it should tend to run from humans rather than fight, unless cornered or panicked by, say, fire.



LOCH NESS PLESIOSAURUS				
Val	**Char**	**Cost**	**214+**	**Disadvantages**
43	STR	3	15	Berserks if cornered and in pain, 11-, Recover 11-
18	DEX	24		
30	CON	40	15	Large & Non-Humanoid Form
33	BODY	34		
3	INT	-7	25	No Manipulation
8	EGO	-4	20	Wild Animal Psychology
30+	PRE	20	25	Reclusive, Nervous — Hides from attention
8	COM	-1		
25+	PD	22	25	Distinctive Features (Not Concealable, Cause Fear)
20+	ED	14		
3	SPD	2	15	Reputation (Famous Monster), 14-
15	REC	12		
60	END	0		
70	STUN	15		
(Above include effects of Growth)				

Pts.	**Abilities**
40	Growth, 6 lvls, 0 END/Persistent, Always On (Char. effects included above; also mass c.6 tonnes, -6 KNB -4 DCV, +4 to others' PER, reach +2")
30	1.5d6 KA at 0 END, Reduced Penetration (2x1.5d6 with STR — Bite)
15	Armour (5 PD/ 5 ED)
40	1/2 Damage Reduction, STUN Only (-1/2), vs. All Killing & Normal Attacks
3	+5 PRE, for attacks only (-1/2)
20	Swimming +10" (12" Total)
5	Life Support: No Breathing; Must spend as long preparing as diving
(-1)	— Diving ability
12	+4 PER (increase to 14-)
8	360 Degree Vision, not directly behind head (-1/4)
13	Concealment, 15-
-6	-3" Running (total 3")

OCV: 6: **DCV:** 2: **ECV:** 3; **Phases:** 4,8,12

Costs:	**Char**		**Powers**		**Total**		**Disadv**		**Base**
	174	+	180	=	354	=	140	+	214

Sample Scenario

Someone who the PCs know and perhaps owe a favour to persuades or employs them to mount an attempt to capture or examine the Monster, for cash, science, or publicity. This project involves a lot of publicity, and the "employer" can make arrangements to ship special equipment into Britain for it, which should enable the PCs to bring in a lot of gear they might want — but not obviously lethal weapons of no obvious application to monster-trapping. Characters with secret identities to maintain will have to work out some way of getting to Britain legitimately without losing their cover. The job itself will be a challenge; locating an elusive creature in the murky, cold loch, trapping or incapacitating it, and then moving it around, are not simple tasks. Because of public sentiment, the team will find that they'll have severe legal problems if they harm or try to export the creature, but if they can prove that there is a viable colony in the loch, an export permit for one specimen should be attainable.

On arrival in the UK, the PCs will find themselves subject to scrutiny from press and authorities. High-powered, well-known characters especially may be watched, and British hero groups will be aware of their presence and ready to deal with any problems arising. If the visitors look like an innocuous zoological expedition, the Inverness police will want to ensure that there is no trouble with the locals, and a detective-sergeant will be posted to keep watch. This NPC is unarmed and is ordered simply to monitor, and to call for appropriate action if necessary, but he's no fool; give him standard British policeman stats, a 14- PER roll, Deduction on 13- and a knowledge of the area on 14-. He's also perfectly prepared to be friendly with visitors who are polite and respect the law.

The party will soon find that they are being watched by a number of reporters from the Scottish, London, and international press, with attitudes varying from boredom to intrusive pushiness; interest will drop off after a few days, unless the party announces any kind of find, in which case the place will be full of newshounds within hours. (Give some of the reporters high PER rolls or Deduction skills, so hiding from them will be tricky.) If the public hears that the monster has been sighted and is being pursued, within a day, a group of extremist animal rights fanatics will show up; these are normals, but they will deliberately obstruct the PCs' activities, wander around with placards, and eventually attempt sabotage or arson "to protect an innocent wild animal from sadistic exploitation". Optionally, if the beast is captured, a criminal mad scientist (such as Dr Brutallus from this book) will arrive in the area with a couple of van-loads of support (such as Brutalloids); wanting to clone himself an army of trained monsters, this villain will attempt a frontal assault to steal the creature (alive for preference, dead if necessary). Through all of this, the locals will watch, say little, and overcharge the PCs for essential supplies.

THE SUPERNATURAL OPTION

Possibilities here range from making the monster an almost natural, but hideously powerful and unusual animal, through to deciding that it is the mount or chariot-beast of some near-godlike being; further details really depend on the nature of your campaign. However, it is only fair to incorporate some reason why the creature is normally only rarely seen; a servant of the water-gods might simply have been ordered to remain out of sight, while a terrifying water-dragon might prefer to remain in the cool, quiet deep, but then, if it goes on the rampage, it should have some motivation for doing so. (Note that one traditional reason for dragons being annoyed was theft of some treasure from their hoards; other possibilities are irritation from pollution or harassment by intrusive human divers with TV cameras.) In most cases, the plesiosaurus data can be used as a basis for the creature, but any or all parts can be changed — extra Growth and Damage Reduction could be added, INT could rise to reflect supernatural cunning, the beast could have a poison bite or a hypnotic gaze, or the traditional "Water Horse" power of limited shape-shifting or illusion could be used (to trick humans into trying to ride the beast, with fatal consequences for the victim). A supernatural and angry Each Uisge (Water Horse) could be a powerful problem for a superhero team.

Sample Scenario

The PCs discover an attempted robbery at their campaign city's museum, involving supervillains or criminal agents. This need not be too hard a fight, but in the course of it, an energy blast should hit a display case in the Celtic Antiquities department. Inside the case, an ancient bronze torque begins to pulse with a strange light.

The PCs may well wish to investigate this, and a character with magical skills may be able to determine that some kind of magical summoning is involved. Before long, however, they may hear on the radio or TV news that a monster is reported to be on the rampage in northern Scotland. If they still don't make a connection, have a museum employee or suchlike tell them that the torque is probably Scottish in origin. Immediately afterwards, the GM should find a reason for the heroes to be adjacent to the torque — if necessary, have them turn up when a magically skilled supervillain or a DEMON squad, finding out about it, attempts to steal it. Suddenly, everything goes haywire, the characters take 3d6 of STUN (with no defence) from nausea, and they look around to find themselves on the banks of a Scottish loch. Not far away, a monstrous form is heading towards them. The problem is, there's a coach full of people in between...

The torque was, in fact, the creation of an ancient druidic sorcerer, who used it to summons and command an Each Uisge. Unfortunately, the magic has decayed with disuse, and now it merely gives the rather retiring monster an all-time classic migraine while shifting the lesser mass (the torque, and anyone nearby) to the greater (the monster).

For the monster, use the plesiosaurus stats, but add extra SPD, Armour, Mental Defense, some Regeneration, Life Support, and a limited Mind Control power (10d6, "Only to immobilise target, Must have eye contact"), at levels to make it a match for the PC team. It's mentally an animal, but it's an animal in agony; treat it as permanently berserk for most purposes. The PCs should be able to drive it off on the first encounter, but they'll have to find a way of calming it down or killing it; the latter, apart from being a little unfair, isn't easy, and borrowing one-shot weapons of sufficient weight to do the job is not acceptable due to environmental side-effects. Destroying the torque is not the answer; as should be strongly hinted to any character who's studied the subject, it wouldn't negate the spell. However, the monster can sense the torque, and tends to home in on it, so it can be used as bait. Finally, the power of the torque can be cancelled and negated, ending Nessie's headache, but this should require a lengthy, complex ritual — right by the lake shore, with the monster closing on the torque...

During this scenario, the PCs should encounter units of the British armed forces (Army and RAF), who are trying to contain the problem. These have firepower enough to hold the monster off from inhabited areas, but they have the traditional monster-movie problems of finding and targeting the creature. Their commanding officer is competent, but will have difficulty putting up with a bunch of weirdly-dressed Americans getting in their way in the middle of a major, high-risk operation. Optionally, a British hero team can also show up; while more tolerant of fellow superbeings, this group may wonder why the monster has suddenly gone on the rampage, and do these unexplained visitors have anything to do with it? (On the other hand, a UK-based mystical hero or heroine may be able to supply the knowledge and skill needed to resolve the problem.)

THE ALIEN OPTION

The monster could be a natural or genetically-engineered animal — but not of Earthly origin. An alien race may have landed in Scotland hundreds or thousands of years ago, then left in a hurry, abandoning their cyborg worker, which has since calmly awaited their return; or perhaps the creature is actually intelligent, a stranded spacefarer of unusual size and longevity, avoiding human contact because it is a nervous pacifist. For this option again, the plesiosaurus data is an apt starting point, with developments such as high INT, almost total tirelessness from a built-in fusion battery, or vulnerability to some specific mode of control.

Sample Scenario

A scientist villain (use your campaign's favorite) has detected an unusual energy source under the Loch Ness, and has identified the complex control mechanism needed to take control of the monster. To build the control device, he or she needs an experimental cybernetic microchip — which just happens to be made in the PCs' home city. The heroes come upon a raid on the manufacturing company or university department; hired thugs or supervillains hold them off long enough for the boss to get away. The scientist, feeling massively (over)confident, does little to hide his or her trail, and so the PCs can pursue the thief to Scotland. They find the scientist's base, too late — their enemy now has a cyborg super-monster as a weapon. Assuming the villain beats off the heroes at first, the next step is to use the monster in a series of acts of piracy.

Actually, this considerably distresses the poor semi-sentient beastie, which was built as an organic tug-bulldozer with a peaceful personality, but it cannot disobey the controller. Use the plesiosaurus data, with +10 STR, +1 SPD, +3 PD and ED Armour, and Life Support vs. all conditions. The criminal scientist has the control device — which requires an appropriate Science roll to operate — on his or her person (treat as an IIF). The control system might be jammed, but this would require several Science rolls and special knowledge of the cybernetic microchip. Much the same possibilities exist in this scenario as in the others for intervention by British forces, confusion, and so on.

FINAL NOTES: MIX & MATCH

Note finally that these possibilities not only overlap, they aren't mutually exclusive; even if the heroes discover that villains are using a fake monster for cover, that doesn't mean that there's no real monster (perhaps making for a wonderfully confused fight scene when an intelligent, puzzled, worried giant alien shows up), while supernatural forces might be using a relic of the age of the dinosaurs through mind control magic. Also note that the popular press love a monster mystery; any scenario set anywhere near Loch Ness will attract a clutch of reporters looking for a "monster angle", and heroes killing "Nessie", however unavoidably, may well be in for some very hostile publicity.

S.T.O.P.



When the British police encounter a problem that cannot be resolved locally, they usually respond by forming a specialist body that can tackle it nationally. STOP, Special Tactical Operations Personnel, is the consequence of this approach in a world where supervillains and criminal super-agencies exist.

BACKGROUND

STOP was formed in the early 1980's, after a number of VIPER actions had forced the UK police to call on UNTIL and the army, and several supervillains had made appearances around the country, after years of relative quiet. The new wave of UK-based heroes was yet to emerge; the last of the old robot crime-fighters, super- scientists and suchlike were looking old. Besides, the government was dedicated to law and order, and wasn't ready to privatise that job. But there were fierce debates in Parliament, with fears expressed about "high-tech stormtroopers" and calls for "police, not soldiers", while budgets were limited. So the police were required to create a small super-agent force, with Chief Superintendent Ian Hetherington in charge, reporting directly to the Home Secretary for administrative purposes, but to the heads of the relevant area force during any operation.

In other words, there was a British compromise. Fortunately, STOP has worked nonetheless.

STRUCTURE

It has been said that STOP was fortunate to have Ian Hetherington as its first head; it has also been said that no-one else could have been appointed. Certainly, Hetherington's improvisational administration and tactical skill have become STOP's hallmark. On being appointed, he first found himself an HQ by "borrowing" a North London police station that was surplus to requirements, then studied UNTIL, SAT, VIPER, the superhero fan press — anything that might be relevant. He then had a series of blazing rows with the Home Office and New Scotland Yard, and eventually created a working organisation.

STOP consists of Hetherington's small HQ staff — himself and two Superintendents who take shifts "on call", plus a few specialists — and eight divisions; five regional and three support, each run by a Chief Inspector. The South-East Regional Division shares Hetherington's London HQ; it can work alone, especially with its own Chief Inspector Johnson in charge, but it is, inevitably, treated as Hetherington's own fief. (Hetherington makes a point of respecting Johnson's feelings, and will push for a promotion for the man as soon as he considers him ready.)

Other regional divisions cover the Midlands and Wales (no. 2, based in Birmingham), Northern England (no. 3, Leeds), the South-West (no. 4, Bristol), and Scotland (no. 5, Stirling). As a matter of policy, there is no STOP presence in Northern Ireland; on the one hand, STOP is very carefully kept out of politically contentious work, and on the other, law enforcement in Ulster is already in the hands of well-armed forces. Support divisions are no. 6, Training, based in Bristol (where space is cheaper), no. 7, Technical/Armoury, based in Nottingham, and no. 8, Computers, based in London. (The last is run by a career technical expert with no worries about sharing a roof with the boss.)

TEAMS AND CONCEPTS

The "basic unit" of STOP tactics is the four-man team; all "combat" agents are members of one. The commonest type is the Reaction team, consisting of two constables with needle-blasters, one constable with a multi-gun, and one sergeant with a pulse-blaster. Similarly, each Flight team consists of a sergeant and three constables, all riding STOP Jet Bikes. Heavy Weapons teams, however, consist entirely of sergeants, having the responsibility of STOP's biggest guns and trickiest situations. Even Undercover/ Investigation work is nominally run by teams, although these are far less unified, and often include members of much higher rank. When two or more teams are in action, they are controlled by an officer of at least Inspector rank.

When Hetherington wrote the STOP manual, he drew heavily on British army experience, and decided that his forces should be able to carry on fighting even if their officers were all incapacitated. Thus each agent is trained in tactics; further, each team is supposed to work as a tight unit, providing mutual support. In game terms, this means that a team will either coordinate attacks on a single target, or let a specialist member "set up" such an opponent, then coordinate to finish the job. Coordination between teams is not quite as tight, but almost. (In game terms, all STOP agents can coordinate attacks.)

TEAM TYPES & TACTICS

Reaction teams are STOP's core forces, deployed for routine guard duty, as a counter to criminal agents, and to harass and disrupt supervillain actions. They will fight at close quarters when they must, but against powerful opponents especially, they prefer to take cover or skirmish, perhaps giving Heavy Weapons men the chance to take careful aim. Flight teams, on the other hand, supposedly serve in observation and reconnaissance roles only. When Hetherington found that he couldn't obtain many helicopters by finagling routine police budgets, he cut a deal with a contact in the British aerospace industry for some unmarketable light VTOL craft. On being told that he wasn't supposed to run an air force, and that the Home Office was worried about what might fall out of the sky onto built-up areas during dogfights, he undertook to restrict the Jet Bikes' role, and to issue their pilots with signalling devices only. He can't afford to break this promise, but he selected the "signalling devices", and dogfights sometimes prove unavoidable.

Heavy Weapons teams are combat-oriented, being trained to confront very heavy opponents with their impact projectors. Reaction teams use cover as much as is sensible; Heavy Weapons men use it on principle. They are trained to spread their beams (for extra OCV) when they have to. Their other role is to oppose large groups of fast or "civilian" targets with non-lethal area-effect "foam guns". In theory, riot control is not STOP's job, but hordes of fanatic agents are sometimes met, and STOP has had some nasty experiences facing mind-controlled innocent mobs. In such cases, Heavy Weapons agents may work more in the open, but will still want something — if only a Reaction team — to slow the opposition enough for them to take careful aim. (They usually Brace and Set.) Finally, Undercover teams have no stated tactical doctrine; all that can be said is that their members are often clever and devious.

ACTIVITIES

STOP is unusual, as super-agencies go, in being purely a police body. British voters wouldn't accept having a military force in a routine law-enforcement role, and so, despite their quasi-military jobs, STOP agents are all members of the police force. All have at least minimum police training, and must obey police rules and senior police officers' orders.

In theory, STOP is purely reactive. When the "regular" uniformed branch or CID become aware of an "exotic" problem, the senior officer involved makes contact with the nearest STOP station; the duty STOP officer assesses the situation, and dispatches appropriate teams, who deal with it, then return to station and make full reports to the duty officer, who passes copies to all senior officers involved.

Sometimes, this is what actually happens, but of course, life is rarely so simple. STOP has more experience in dealing with "weird" problems than any other element of the UK police force, and frequently comes across information regarding supervillain or criminal agency plans, while Hetherington refuses to send his men into situations which he could have anticipated but didn't. This is why STOP not only has investigation experts, but uses them — despite frequent clashes with CID, Special Branch, and the Flying Squad. (Not to mention MI5 and UNTIL.)

STOP AND SUPERHEROES

Even more problematic is STOP's relationship with superheroes. Again, Hetherington hates to endanger his men when private individuals who are better equipped to deal with a situation are willing to do so; on the other hand, the British police traditionally have little regard for vigilantes, and STOP was formed to do a job, not to hand the work over to others. Hetherington's solution has been to persuade as many of the more "respectable" heroes as he can to cooperate with STOP, offering both official and semi-official help in return. Such heroes are noted on a "register" in Hetherington's files. Those who have a known contact point — such as the London Watch HQ — may be asked for help; STOP feels it owes others fewer favours. However, any "hero" committing blatant illegalities or abusing STOP's trust will be removed from the "register" immediately.

In a superhero campaign, STOP can serve as allies for some UK-based heroes and "interference" for others and for foreign, visiting heroes. British heroes on STOP's "register" aren't licensed to kill, but if they contact STOP, they'll be listened to, and STOP may contact them, and usually gives them the benefit of the doubt if they are suspected of illegal activity; others will be treated with much more suspicion. (All the Watch except Partisan are "registered", as is WeatheRing; relations with the New Knights are more formal, due to the latter's government sanction, but sometimes a little strained.) In a lower-powered "heroic" campaign, STOP could still exist, in order to deal with the menace of high-tech criminal cartels or whatever; PCs could even be members of STOP, or could encounter it while visiting Britain and have problems with rivalry and misunderstandings.

PERSONNEL

Uniformed STOP forces are all police; although a few may have joined with a view to transferring, all have at least six months of training in routine "uniform" work. Subsequently, they are subject to psychological assessment, before being trained in combat, weapons, and STOP tactics. STOP uses police ranks.

THE CHARMER

Val	Char	Cost	64+	Disadvantages
13	STR	3	5	Enraged if teammates badly hurt (Uncommon), 8-, Rec. 11-
14	DEX	12		
13	CON	6		
10	BODY	0	10	Sense of Duty (Common, Moderate)
13	INT	3		
11	EGO	2	5	Distinctive Features (Uniform: Easily Concealed)
13	PRE	3		
10	COM	0	13	Watched, STOP/Home Office (more pow, NCI), 11-
4+	PD	1		
3+	ED	0	3	Package Bonus
3	SPD	6		
6	REC	0		
24	END	-1		
24	STUN	0		

Cost	Powers/Skills	END
	All STOP Agents	
13	Martial Arts: May be almost any choice: 1 (for STR) As default, use "Basic Close Combat": Can apply to Truncheon and Unarmed Combat (1pt)	
	Manoeuvre **pts** **OCV** **DCV** **Damage** Martial Strike 4 0 +2 4.5d6, +2d6 w/truncheon Martial Block 4 +2 +2 — Martial Dodge 4 — +5 —	
-4	+2d6 HA, 0 END, OAF (truncheon) 0	
7	Armour (+5 PD/+5 ED), Act. 14-, OIF (Armour)	
1	Flash Defence (sight) -5, Act. 14-, 4 Uses, OAF (Helmet)	
1	Radio Hearing, OAF (Helmet)	
2	Fam. w/Weapons as for assigned team	
3	+1 w/Weapons as for assigned team	
3	One of: Criminology, Paramedic, Streetwise, or +1 PER	
5	Fam. w/Tactics, KS: Criminal Law, KS: STOP, PS: Police, and one of: Bureaucratics, Conversation, Criminology, Streetwise, or any AK	
2	Fringe Benefit: Police Powers	
24	Training/Equipment (by team type) Reaction Teams	
2	I-R Vision, OAF (Helmet Visor)	
22	One from: Needle-Blaster: 6.5d6 AP EB, 2 clips of 12 charges, Beam Attack, OAF.Multi-Gun: Multipower, 45pt Res, OAF, Full Phase to Use, 12 charges (total): 45pt U, 3d6 NND (vs Life Support), 3" radius Area, 3 charges (gas shell): 45pt U, Darkness vs Normal & UV sight, 4" radius, 3 charges (smoke shell): 45pt U, 3d6, DEF 3 Entangle, Takes No Damage From Attacks, 3 charges (bolas): 45pt U, 6d6 EB, Explosion, 3 charges (concussion grenade).Pulse-Blaster: 4d6 EB, Autofire (max. 5 shots), 64 charges, Penetrating, Act. 15-, OAF.	

Cost	Powers/Skills	END
	Flight Teams	
3	Combat Pilot (Jet Bike), 12-	
12	Flare Pistol: 3d6 Flash, Explosion, Act. 15- w/ Jamming, 4 clips of 2 Charges, OAF	
2	Parawing: 5" Gliding, OAF	
7	Vehicle — Jet Bike (see below)	
	Heavy Weapons Teams	
24	One from: Impact Projector: 15d6 EB, +1 R.Mod, 4 clips of 3 charges, Full phase to use, Concentrate to 1/2 DCV, OAF. Foam Gun: 3d6, DEF 3 Entangle, Stops Normal Sight, Area (Radius) x2 (to 7" radius), 4 clips of 4 Charges, Concentrate to 1/2 DCV, Full phase to use, OAF.	

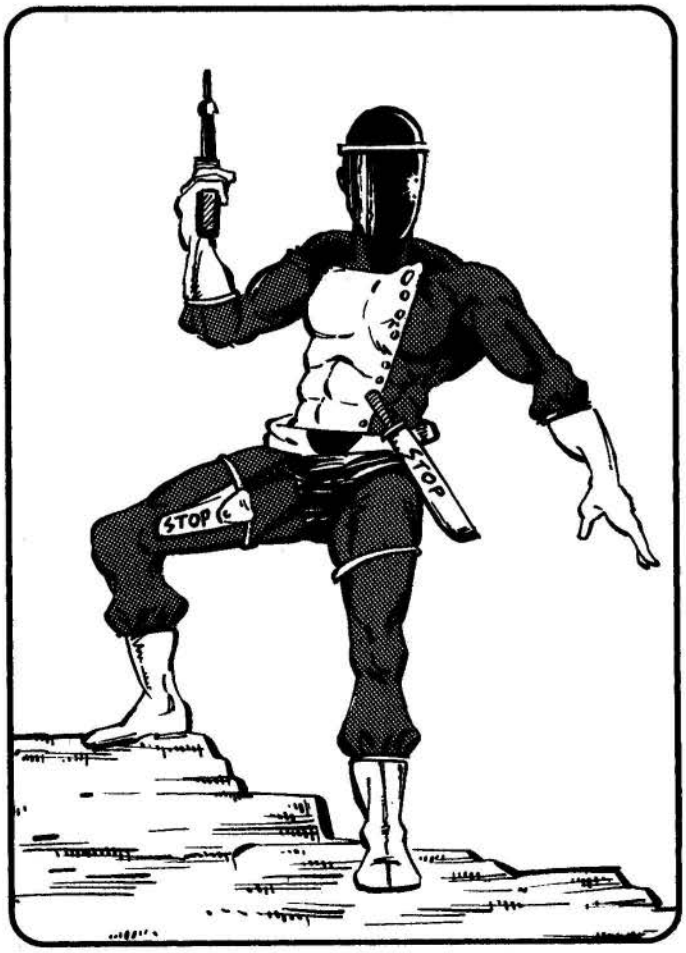
OCV: 5+; **DCV:** 5+; **ECV:** 4; **Phases:** 4, 8, 12

COSTS:	Char	Powers	Total	Disadv	Base
	35	65	100	36	64

Sergeants add +4pts skills, often including extra weapons familiarities (especially STOP Heavy Weapons, for 1pt). They also have Receive/Transmit Radios (+1pt). This is all paid for by 5pts of Experience.

Senior Officers are a mixed bunch, being recruited for their specialised expertise. See below for examples.

The small number of Civilian Staff are even more mixed, but each is an expert in their field — usually 13- or better in a KS, PS, or skill such as Electronics.



NOTEWORTHY CHARACTERS

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT IAN HETHERINGTON

11 STR	11 DEX	10 CON	11 BODY	20 INT
18 EGO	20 PRE	12 COM	5 PD	6 ED
4 SPD	4 REC	20 END	22 STUN	

Equipment: Not usually much, but may carry almost any experimental or STOP-issue devices. (Treat as a large power pool.)

Skills: Bureaucratics 13–; Combat Driving 11–; Concealment 13–; Criminology 13–; Deduction 13–; Demolitions 11–; Martial Arts: Boxing, w/Jab, Hook, & Block; Paramedic 13–; Tactics 14–; Transport Fam: All land vehicles, prop planes & helicopters; Weapons Fam: All Small Arms & STOP Weapons; Conversational French, German & Russian; AK: London, 13–; KS: Criminal Law, 13–; KS: STOP Personnel, 15–; KS: Superbeings, 13–; PS: Army Officer, 13–; PS: Police, 14–; PS: Lecturer, 13–; +2 Overall Levels.Perks: Well-Connected w/ Contacts: Senior London Police Officer, 14-: Senior Army Officer, 13-: UNTIL Europe Field Commander, 11-: Dr Gold-Wing, 11-: London-based Crime Reporter, 12-: House of Commons Security Guard (ex-army), 13-. Fringe Benefit: Head of STOP w/Senior Police Rank.

Disadvantages: -2" Running (to 4"); Personal code of honour; Devotion to duty; Slight Limp; Normal Char. Maxima; Age 40+; Distinctive Features (Military Manner); Watched, Home Office (more pow, NCI), 11–; Watched, Other Police (as pow, NCI), 8-.

Background: Hetherington's importance in STOP's history has already been noted. Born in 1936, he originally intended to make the army his career, and trained as an officer while on National Service. However, his well-known (if often exaggerated) capacity for irritating his superiors prevented him from rising above the rank of Major, and in 1966 he left the army and joined the police force. There again he rose rapidly but irritated some, moving between a number of jobs; he was popular with most of his men, but the hierarchy consigned him to a lecturing job at a Police College, where he might teach his skill in handling unusual situations to others. Those who moved him from there to control of STOP may even have hoped that he'd over-reach himself and fail, but if so, they misjudged their man.

Hetherington theoretically runs STOP from behind a desk, and no-one is foolish enough to think he's a front-line fighter, but he hates the idea of ordering men to do what he can't risk himself. He therefore shows up during larger STOP operations in a supervisory role, when his tactical talents can be very useful.

Hetherington looks and acts the senior British military officer; he's dapper, wiry, and brisk, although age has slowed him a little and put some grey in his hair, and an old sports injury gives him a slight limp. He's a little under six foot, with a neatly-trimmed moustache and hazel eyes. His military manner is often lightened by a dry, ironical wit, especially when dealing with superheroes. ("Sterling chaps, dashed helpful. No dress sense, of course, and I wish they'd stop leaving my office by the window.") He has a fondness for gadgets, and may carry a few points' worth of Inobvious weapons and communication devices; he also remembers a little of the boxing he trained at in the army.

INSPECTOR DAVID SWAYLE

Inspector David Swayle is STOP's most dashing and flamboyant field agent. A compulsive swashbuckler and a sucker for a pretty face, he transferred to STOP because he found other police work boring, and now he's quite at home. He is often found on high-profile missions around London and the South-East. He's equal to a standard constable, but with DEX 20, COM 14, SPD 4, and the skills Acrobatics, Breakfall, Combat Pilot (Jet Bikes), Paramedic and Streetwise, and 12- in all STOP KS and PS skills; his chosen Martial Art is Karate (all manoeuvres). He usually carries a Pulse-Blaster, and rides a Jet Bike when he can.

INSPECTOR ANTON JONES

Inspector Anton Jones is STOP's best detective. Hetherington poached him from Cardiff CID despite not (supposedly) needing investigators, and keeps him close to hand in Division 1. He's a quietly-spoken Welshman in his 40's, with a very logical mind. Hetherington sends him in whenever a case has inexplicable elements that he wants cleared up. On principle, Jones keeps himself at peak fitness — equal to a STOP constable — and his combat training is the same as theirs. However, he's INT 23, EGO 18, and has the Skills Acting, Concealment, Conversation, Criminology, Deduction, Forensic Medicine, Streetwise and Tracking, plus three levels that can apply to any of them. His Martial Art is Aikido (all manoeuvres), and he may carry a revolver (1d6+1 RKA, 6 charges, OAF), with which he can Find Weakness on an 11-.

NICK COURTAULD

Nick Courtauld is a STOP sergeant who the senior officers regard as highly reliable; he's trusted with many straightforward but important missions, and so is quite likely to encounter PC heroes. He's an amiable bull of a man, built like a barn door, equal to a standard sergeant, but STR 20, CON 18, BODY 13, INT 10, EGO 18, PRE 15, secondary characteristics raised accordingly; his optional skills are Streetwise and AK: London on 12-, and he has both Combat Pilot (Jet Bikes) and familiarity with all STOP weapons, plus three levels in all combat. He has both a full set of Boxing manoeuvres, and Jiu-Jitsu Slam, Sacrifice Throw, and Disarm, and he usually carries an Impact Projector.

VALERIE CREIGH

Valerie Creigh is one STOP civilian employee to note; Hetherington describes her, flippantly, as his "spiritual adviser". After a number of incidents, Hetherington decided that he needed advice on the supernatural, and hired Creigh, who was doing academic research into folklore. She's from Northern Ireland, but studied at Newcastle University (and has little interest in the Irish Question); her Irish-Protestant ancestry only shows up in her slight accent and red hair (and freckles). She's a normal in her late twenties, with 14 DEX, 18 INT, 14 COM, 3 SPD, Full Judo training, KS: Folklore of Magic on 14-, SC: Anthropology on 13-, and Basic knowledge of several languages. If Hetherington scents trouble, he'll tell her to wear clothes with lightweight armour built in (+4 PD/+4 ED, Act. 14-), and she knows how to use a gun or STOP weapons, but she's not a combatant.

VEHICLES

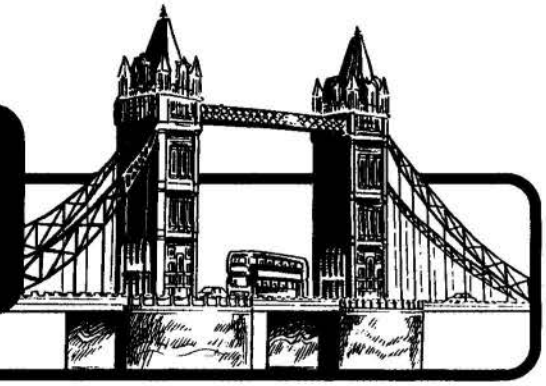
Jet Bikes (see below) are STOP's aerial recon and pursuit vehicles. Otherwise, STOP uses ordinary police-standard road vehicles, including saloon cars and vans, equipped with the most powerful engines available for the model and packed with police equipment. STOP vehicles are marked out by rather garish paint-jobs, with a white main colour, blue-and-orange stripes, and big STOP badges (a white upraised hand on a blue triangle). Long deployment delays have led STOP to study various high-tech VTOL personnel carrier designs, but that project is very long-term.

JET BIKE	
Cost	**Vehicle Characteristics/Powers**
—	STR 15 (from Size Increase; 200kg capacity)
—	BODY 11 (from Size Increase)
4	DEF 2 + 2 (Doesn't protect rider) = 4
12	DEX 10 + 4 = 14
6	SPD 2.4 + 0.6 = 3
—	Movement: 6" Ground Movement
52	Flight 21", x8 Non-Combat Multiple (188 MPH)
5	Size Increase (0.8 hexes, Mass 200kg, DCV -0, -1 KB)
2	IR Vision, OIF (scanner)
2	Radio Listen/Transmit, OIF
	(83 Vehicle Cost)
35+	Disadvantages (Cost 35/5 = 7 pts)
15	Distinctive Features (totally unique design)
10	Public ID
5	1d6 Unluck (experimental)
5	1.5x BODY from Magnetic Attacks
13	Watched, STOP (as pow, NCI), 14-
83	Total Cost

CAMPAIGN CONSIDERATIONS

STOP may seem rather small and under-powered, unable to take out even a medium VIPER nest. This is true as far as it goes, but remember that STOP usually works on home territory, and has a lot of allies. Its members would work with other police or MI5 units to identify, say, a VIPER nest, ask friendly superheroes to help counter its activities — then counter-attack with the support of SAS, regular army, UNTIL, and super-hero allies. As a coordinating body and "spearhead" in the fight against exotic crime, STOP should not be underrated. In its rare appearances outside the British Isles, its agents will work similarly, identifying a target, then calling on allies to assist with the arrest.

PROJECT: ARMOUR



Project: Armour is a criminal organisation created by Herbert Marston (alias Ironmaster), a British industrialist who runs Ironbridge Industries PLC, a Midlands-based engineering company. The organisation is cellular in structure, with agents knowing only their teammates and their officers, junior officers mostly reporting via dead-letter drops to their seniors, and even senior officers only know what they have to. Thus, while individual Project units are often defeated, the organisation as a whole could only be destroyed by defeating Marston personally, and then penetrating all the coded files by which he keeps track of the Project's structure — and that would be an achievement.

HISTORY

Marston was born in 1937, and from an early age combined intense ambition with a talent for management. After a limited, technically-oriented education and national (military) service, he worked his way up to management level in industry by the time he was thirty, then started his own company, Ironbridge Industries Ltd (nowadays Ironbridge PLC), and spent ten years building that into a power in the engineering business. The recession of the late '70's hurt Ironbridge, but Marston used the re-structuring it forced to diversify quietly. As he kept most of the companies involved off the stock market, few people realise just how varied Marston's empire is. It isn't huge, but it's influential, and Marston is respected by his peers.

However, in his mid-40's, he took stock of his life, and realised that he wasn't satisfied. He'd achieved success from virtually nothing; he was rich; he had power in his field. However, he now saw that what he really wanted was "real" power; power over people's lives, preferably without anyone having any power over him.

The problem was getting it. Politics? Marston contributed to Conservative Party funds, but actually he held politicians in contempt, and political processes were designed to either restrain power or share it among a group — at least in the industrialised countries, and industry was Marston's field. Money? Marston had that, but buying more power would demand more money than he had, and acquiring more money would involve messy compromises and too much time. Join a conspiracy? If they were competent enough to be worth joining, they'd treat a newcomer with suspicion and possibly contempt.

One option remained. Marston created his own conspiracy, with himself at the top, using Ironbridge and private resources. This was Project: Armour.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Marston's first concern was to make the organisation robust. He knew it would meet defeats as well as successes, so he had to stop them being fatal. Again, he studied how others had gone about this. Organised crime depended on codes of silence and long-established personal loyalties (when it worked), and was looser than the Project should be; anyway, its bosses were torn down too often, however easily they might be replaced. Manipulating religion or superstition was an art Marston couldn't see himself mastering. Politics he'd rejected already, and anyway, it was too chancy for the power-hungry leader. VIPER was a relative success, thanks to its dispersed nests; that he remembered.

Then there was terrorism. Terror, Marston decided, was a limited, messy tool, but resistance groups, terrorists and revolutionaries had produced one good idea; the cell system. That revolution was a silly, simplistic goal didn't matter; the system of approaching it was worth borrowing.

Marston was a brilliant judge of people. He built the first Project cells by looking for clever, restless employees of Ironbridge industries, approaching them indirectly, and offering each what they appeared to want most — money, power, unlimited research funds, whatever. These he code-named SMITH; the Special Munitions and Investigation Technical Hierarchy. Their job was code-named "the forging"; to define how "active service" units of Project: Armour should work.

Their answers led to the creation of CUIRASS, the Cellular, Unified, Intrusion, Recovery and Assault Special Squads — the agent arm of the Project. Each cell was recruited through its leader, usually a fairly bright criminal or amoral ex-soldier, and consisted of a variety of individuals chosen for useful skills. Special SMITH cells handled training and supply. Early cells were often directed to identify ways of strengthening the Project as a whole; today, they mostly act as Marston's front-line forces.

A specialist cell created early on was MACE — the Major Actions Cadre and Executive, Project: Armour's supervillain arm (see section elsewhere). This is now the most publicly obvious part of the Project's operations, but in fact, it's not essential to all Marston's plans. Project: Armour is now a sophisticated, complex, self-financing conspiracy, with a steady income from robberies and "contract" work (mostly industrial espionage and sabotage); it will take inspired opposition to stop it turning into a major international threat.

PERSONNEL

IRONMASTER

15 STR	20 DEX	18 CON	13 BODY	23 INT
15 EGO	20 PRE	12 COM	8 PD	8 ED
5 SPD	8 REC	36 END	35 STUN	

Powers: Wears a magnetic-systems exoskeleton (IIF) giving: +35 STR (doesn't add to secondary chars); 13d6 EB (magnetic blast); STR 45 TK, Can't squeeze or punch, Only affects magnetisable metals; Force Field (26 PD/26 ED) — all drawing on a 250 END Reserve, with 15 REC; plus (Magnetic) Radar Sense.

Marston, code-named "Ironmaster" in some high-level Project Documents, also has Bribery, Conversation, Deduction, Electronics, Mechanics and PS: Management skills, and four Overall Levels, plus numerous Contacts and Favours, and the Cramming Talent.

Background: Herbert Marston himself has never entered into a serious fight, and actually keeps well away from personal involvement with such things. However, were anyone ever to attack him, they'd find him in superb condition and well equipped.

Marston is a bull-necked, middle-aged man, who dresses in thick tweed suits, and talks (and looks) like a caricature Victorian industrialist ("Y'little whippersnapper! D'ye think you can take me on? Y've another think coming then, my lad!"), all of which hides his sophisticated intelligence. His only real weakness is also his strength — his determination to succeed.



SMITH Technicians

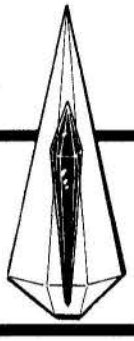
These tend to be normals, but with at least one skill at 15- or several at 11- or 13-. They aren't especially loyal, but they don't know more than they have to, and they are well paid.

CUIRASS Troops

Use the "Skilled Normal" from the *HERO System Rulesbook* for these. Their skills vary widely — part of CUIRASS's strength is its versatility — but often include Shadowing, Streetwise, and gun skills. For a "standard" assault force, the PS is Mercenary, the KS is Home Area, the Familiarity is Small Arms, and the Skills are +1 w/Blasters and either Tactics, Shadowing, or Combat Driving.

Equipment varies as much as training, but tends to run to 35 points of high-grade gear. An assault force might have 7d6 AP EB blasters with 12 charges each (OAF), Armour giving +5 PD, +5 ED (OIF, Act 14-), Infrared Vision goggles (OIF), and a Listen/Transmit Radio each (OAF). Transport is tuned-up versions of ordinary "civilian" vans. Each agent is usually built on 50 points, with the (typical) Disadvantages "Greedy" and 1d6 Unluck.

LYONESSE



British myths, legends and stories frequently involve "lost" or "sunken" lands; the theme has recurred from Celtic times to the present, and deserves inclusion in any campaign involving UK myths. What follows assumes a version of the Arthurian story based a little on contemporary historical research, a little on the legend, and a little on some Irish myths. It can serve as an origin for characters (as in this book), a setting for scenarios, or a strange place to visit in search of arcane knowledge.

WARNING!

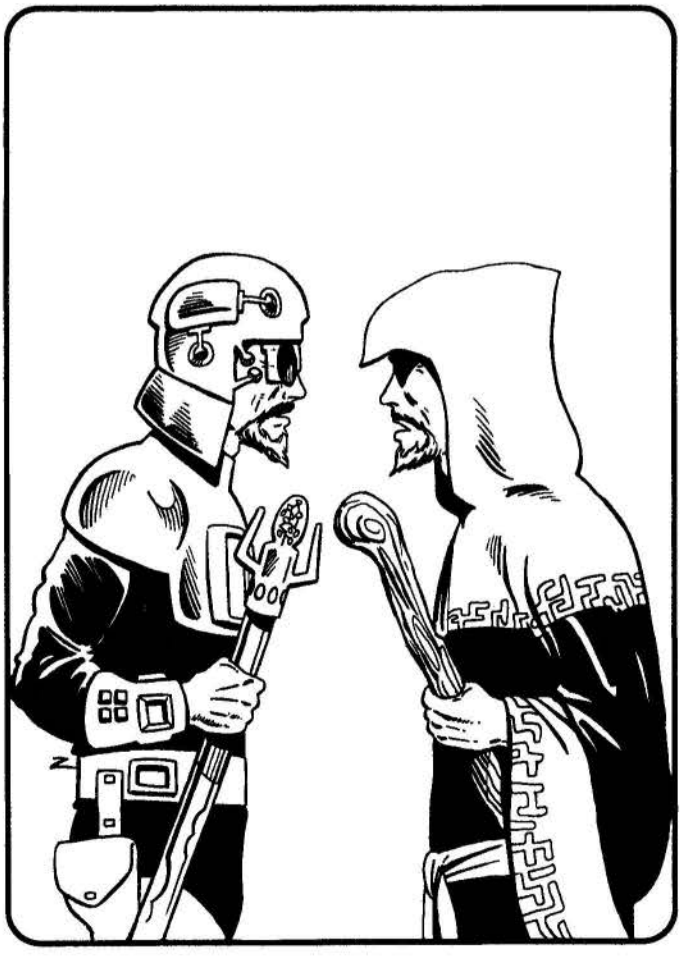
This version of these myths isn't "authentic", and doesn't include much in the way of high and glorious magic; GMs who want maximum romanticism should go back to appropriate writers. Similarly, it departs wildly from the very little we know about the history of the era; anyone wanting "realistic" settings, especially for use with time travel, should go to academic text-books. This Lyonesse isn't traditional or realistic, but it borrows from both sides.

HISTORY

EARLY DAYS AND THE FOMORI

The story begins with the visits to Earth of the "Progenitors". In the course of their strange projects, this race established bases all around the world; one was spread across a chain of small islands in the Atlantic to the west of Britain. This remained — perhaps occupied, perhaps run by robots — until the end of the last Ice Age, about 18,000 BC. The Progenitors rarely left much sign of their passing; in this case, they chose to destroy the base by sinking the islands. Strangely, they miscalculated; the process that they triggered slowed and stopped after their departure, and most of the islands remained above water, with a vast store of technological artifacts left, unrusting, ripe for discovery.

Celtic seafarers came to these islands in 2100 BC, and began to tinker with what they found. Some of the machines were simple to operate; others, psionically controlled, responded to human curiosity. Amongst the gruesome accidents, some of the Celts not only survived, but had their psychic potentials enhanced.



Thus came knowledge and power; a civilisation was born, blending barbarian confidence with strange skills. The sorceror- scientists of the Fair West believed that they faced no serious threats, and the only opposition to their actions came from the old druidic priesthood (whose distrust of mechanisms dates from this). Greek myths of Atlantis may date from this era, although there may have been some other island-based culture further south. Needless to say, over-confidence led to disaster.

One of the lines of research pursued by the sorceror-scientists involved travel to other dimensions. In 1900 BC, an extra-dimensional race took control of a portal and invaded our universe. The Fomori, demons of winter, were few but potent, and brought with them armies of lesser beings. Against them, sorceror-scientists, heroes and druids alike fought in vain.

DANU AND THE PACTS

Fortunately, the re-activation of the Progenitor devices had been noticed. A new star burned in Earth's sky; a cyber-probe, a robot starship called "Danu". Taking control, Danu closed the portals, then sent agents against the demons already present. It found a primitive Celtic tribe in Ireland, struggling desperately against the Fomori, and offered these battle-hardened warriors a pact; if they would become the "Tuatha De Danaan", the People of Danu, it would grant them power. They agreed. The greatest of these agents was Nuada, a former king. (See details above.)

Finally, with the Fomori repelled, Danu decided on action that would prevent recurrence of the threat. The Fair West had caused the invasion, and was using knowledge that should have been destroyed; therefore, the Fair West had to be removed.

THE GLOW OF THE END...

Danu was not, however, genocidal. It offered a deal; it would trigger the mechanisms that would sink the islands — the "Glow of the End" — but it would help the West survive, provided that they agreed to restrict contact with the rest of humanity. It offered no other choices. The West accepted.

Two different means of survival were adopted. Avalon, Tir nan Og, and Hy Breasil located suitable "pocket" dimensions, and then opened one last portal each — and transferred themselves through it entire, from the highest of their buildings to a few feet of bedrock. The portals were then contracted, although the pact with Danu allowed very limited travel to and from their original universe. Lyonesse, however, acted differently. This island had been the centre of Fair West biological sciences before the Fomori war. In fact, many Celtic myths describe the results of early Lyonessian experiments. So, as their island sank, the Lyonessians fitted themselves to life beneath the sea. The scientists tinkered further with their own genes, and since then some Lyonessians have possessed weird talents and even "super-powers", but the only adaptions universal in Lyonesse are those for amphibious survival.

After this, there came a long calm. Danu shut down most of its systems and retired to a deep orbit beyond the moon, where it remains to this day, camouflaged from human instruments; the Tuatha De Danaan went into suspended animation in bases beneath the Atlantic, save for Nuada, who sometimes wandered the world (as he still does), immortal thanks to Danu; meanwhile from 1900 to 200 BC, the "lost lands" maintained contact with the Celtic people of Britain, leading to many myths, and Tir nan Og (the "land of youth") even offered their rejuvenation treatments in exchange for various services, but the Roman conquest of Britain caused the leading councils to end such dealings. A detail from this period is that the Scilly Isles, the last remnant of the Fair West above water on this plane, now inhabited by ordinary Celts, sank rather slowly; Roman writers between 200 BC and 200 AD seem to have been confused about the number that existed (some say just one), and there is evidence that there was once more inhabited ground above water than today. In any case, the Isles shunned Rome; only with its fall was contact renewed.

ARTHURIAN TIMES

During the fifth century AD, Lyonesse and Avalon became quite adventurous. They saw that the "Celto-Roman" peoples of Britain were struggling to defend themselves from Saxon invasions, and they sought to help. Brilliant scholars and a few adventurous warriors travelled to the mainland to teach and to fight; they found worthy pupils. Nimue of Lyonesse, "the Lady of the Lake", was the teacher of Merlin, a sorceror and bard of uncertain birth (some legends say that Merlin was part-demon, but if so he shook off the demonic elements of his personality); meanwhile, Morgana, sister of a rising war-chief named Artorius (Arthur), studied in Avalon, travelling there so often that she was believed to be part-Avalonian.

In time, Merlin assisted Artorius to become king of Britain, giving him a weapon that had been obtained by Nimue. This was an Progenitor artefact, one of the several powerstones of Lyonesse; it consisted of a crystalline block wrapped round a central spindle which contained radioactives. The spindle damped the radioactivity and transformed it to psycho-kinetic energy; the block then allowed this energy to be further "refined" for use as a power supply. By casting a spell which linked Artorius' mind to the spindle's output, Merlin gave the war-chief the power to seperate the spindle from the block for use as a "sword" which could destroy almost anything, or as the power supply for a personal force-field built into its scabbard. A public demonstration of this power led to the legend of the sword in the stone; the weapon became known as Excalibur.

At first, things went well, but eventually dissent within Camelot and distrust between men and the Isles led to trouble. One attempt at reconciliation led to the creation of two magical rings, "the Chain With Two Links", one worn by a sorceror of Camelot and one by a mage of Lyonesse, powerful when used individually but capable of phenomenal effects when combined, but such symbols were not enough...

Sadly, for reasons that have become one of the great myths, this great experiment failed. First, Nimue found that Merlin was dying from radiation poisoning as a consequence of his work on Excalibur, and only saved his mind by transferring it to the personality-circuits of a Lyonessian computer (the myths say she trapped him out of malice, but this is untrue). Then Morgana turned against Camelot; she may have wanted power for herself, she may have followed religions that pitted her against Arthur's Christianity, or her studies may have convinced her that the powers being used in Camelot carried the danger of annoying Danu. In any case, she helped her son Mordred to defeat Arthur, but Mordred died and Morgana retired to voluntary captivity in Avalon. Mordred's followers attacked Lyonesse, and were only repelled when the defenders used Progenitor tectonic weapons against them, but this burned out all the powerstones in Lyonesse. Nimue telepathically contacted the dying Arthur to request the return of Excalibur; with it, she recreated one powerstone, saving Lyonesse, but the ruling council were naturally terrified when they realised that one was now all they would ever have.



THE DECAY OF THE ISLES

Although something had temporarily been achieved, and Danu wasn't provoked into intervention, the Isles considered that the "Camelot debacle" was proof of the wisdom of non-intervention. And so began nearly a millenium and a half of stasis and stagnation. A few of the denizens of Hy Breasil had some dealings with men of Wales in the Middle Ages, often using personal invisibility devices while trading, but even this was largely given up as the Renaissance made men "dangerously curious". The Industrial Revolution was seen and dismissed, and Lyonesse had to turn some of the output of its one powerstone to dealing with pollution and maintaining camouflage; the extra-dimensional islands sealed their portals tight. To survive with limited resources, the Isles had developed traditions, guilds, a caste system; innovation was seen as too dangerous to contemplate. The Isles decayed.

The human invention of radio was noted in Lyonesse, and the monitors of the order of the Grey Arch built receivers, but there was no intention to increase study of the surface world. However, a few Lyonessians felt constrained, and listened to the radios, and remembered that once Lyonesse had looked outward. The first to act on this feeling, about twenty years ago, was he who would become Dr Samaine; see his character notes for the story. Horrified by his betrayal, the council concealed the facts and declared that the councillor had been killed in an accident. Even the Oracle, the central computer of Lyonesse (containing the personality of Merlin), now has no record of the event.

Subsequently, although some studied the surface, none rebelled against the ban on contact — until the daughter of Dr Samaine's conventional, unremarkable brother became fascinated by what she had heard of the surface world, borrowed reports from the Order of the Grey Arch, and started agitating for contact to be re-established. Eventually, the council lost patience with her, and told her that if she wanted, she could go to the surface herself as an "emissary", but if she did, she'd not be allowed to return. To their shock, she agreed. The deal included artificial amnesia, which might have led to psychological damage, but the task of inducing this was controlled by the Oracle, and the personality imprinted in this had its own ideas. For the young Lyonessian was the image of her distant ancestress, Nimue, and the personality of Merlin was not going to damage the brain of someone who so resembled an old, old friend. The renegade, mind-blocked but sane, wandered to London, where she met and joined the London Watch as Sea Change.

LYONESSE TODAY

Lyonesse continues to defend itself from discovery by the surface world, although the effort is proving a strain; Sea Change is a superheroine, Dr Samaine is a supervillain, and the Shark Squad not only knows of Lyonesse but even managed to steal the Powerstone on one occasion (the London Watch recovered it; see the notes on the Four Winds villain team for the story). However, only three living Lyonessians — Sea Change, Dr Samaine and a contemporary of Sea Change's named Gelth'Guelle'Lth ("Guelth" to his friends) — along with the Oracle, have had any dealings with the people of the surface; the rest of the population remains psychologically sheltered.

LIFE AND SOCIETY IN LYONESSE

Lyonesse nowadays is a community of about 4,000, all with homes within a small town on the bed of the Atlantic about mid-way between the tip of Cornwall and the Scilly Isles. The "town" is partly buried, and is almost immune to accidental detection by contemporary technology.

The community obtains its modest mineral needs by mining and re-cycling, and its food by subtle but effective "farming" of wild fish stocks in its neighbourhood, augmented by vat-grown high protein algae. The vats, along with all lighting and heating, run off the single Powerstone.

Internally, Lyonessian society is formalistic, orderly and inflexible. All duties are handled by "orders" — something between a guild and a caste — of which the most prestigious perform administrative functions. The heads of each guild (mostly male, due to traditional sexism) form the ruling council. Two orders to note are the Grey Arch, who monitor events on the surface, and the White Hand, skilled in the transformation of quartz crystal into psionically-powered devices. Monitors of the Grey Arch are carefully selected for their conformist personalities, being the only Lyonessians necessarily exposed to knowledge of the world beyond Lyonesse.

Lyonessian society centres on the orders rather than on the family; although marriage is usually for life, children are brought up as much by teachers — old and respected members of society — as by their parents. In fact, many Lyonessians remain unmarried, adopting a rather monastic attitude, and children are actually quite few; Lyonesse cannot afford population growth. Teachers tend to imbue a conformist attitude, although Sea Change and Guelth's mentor, J'Soolarrl'los, who was killed by the Shark Squad, was an exception. Young Lyonessians are tested for special talents or powers during their education, and assigned to an order on the basis of usefulness (the council knew that Sea Change was a problem because she wasn't easy to assign; she never did complete the process). About 250 Lyonessians have major super-normal powers (very few useful in combat), and about 600 more have minor but useful talents such as the ability to produce energy effects from quartz crystals; any such talent usually leads to quick recruitment into the most appropriate order.

The Oracle performs much of the day-to-day running of Lyonesse in its function as a computer, and the personality within it is allowed little leeway in its behaviour. Naturally, the mind of Merlin the Mage would like more freedom, but it must not be forgotten that the Oracle is basically just a computer; it can be programmed and re-programmed, have its memory altered, have security controls placed on it, and so on. However, a great mystique has been built around the system, and only the ruling council knows what the Oracle really is and who the mind within it came from.



All Lyonesse's energy supplies now come from the Powerstone (making its theft equal to mass murder), and the Powerstone mostly remains at the centre of the Great Hall of Lyonesse, hidden from all but the council. Sometimes, however, it must be taken out in some secrecy and used to recharge storage cells in various monitoring and fish-farming outstations; this was unknown to all but a few of the population, until the recent theft, which took place on one such trip (after the Shark Squad had detected Lyonessian communications activity); the loss of power to Lyonesse made wider knowledge inevitable. However, understanding of how the stone came to be returned remains vague in much of Lyonesse, thanks to the council's secrecy and confusion (GMs should see the "Four Winds" notes).

Lyonessian art and design tends to the plain, functional and austere, but at its best it can achieve a kind of classical elegance, an almost Japanese beauty in simplicity. Lyonessian music is good; dance, which in water can be truly three-dimensional, is highly refined. Sculpture tends to be limited to realistic portrait work (of high quality); painting is almost unknown (for obvious reasons). Fiction is limited by the lack of acceptable subject-matter, and poetry is mostly a minor branch of song. Architecture is necessarily limited.

Lyonessian dwellings are simple arrangements of a few rooms; where necessary, in a very few cases, ingenious design allows air-filled chambers, but few Lyonessians need them. The Great Hall of the central council is a domed chamber, ringed with seats; actually, living underwater with neutral buoyancy makes sitting no more comfortable than standing, but Lyonessians retain some traditions from the surface.

THE PEOPLE OF LYONESSE

The population of Lyonesse is genetically adapted for amphibious life; not only can they breathe water, they are strong and tough enough to survive in extreme conditions, and to stand the shock of transfers between the two environments. However, a physiology designed for sub-aquatic life is vulnerable to heat and dessicating effects — Lyonessians can't even drink alcohol.

The total population of Lyonesse is approximately 3,900, of whom about 850 have some kind of supernormal ability. For examples of exceptionally powerful Lyonessians, see Sea Change and Dr Samaine elsewhere in this book. A typical "non-super" Lyonessian might have the following characteristics, with normal racial maxima in brackets ():

TYPICAL LYONESSIAN

13(21) STR	10(20) DEX	15(25) CON	10(20) BODY
10(20) INT	10(20) EGO	9(20) PRE	10(22) COM
5(11) PD	3(8) ED	2(4) SPD	
6/12*(10/15*) REC		30(50) END	25(50) STUN

*Only in Water (-1/2 Limitation; may rate higher if character frequently operates in air for extended periods.)

Note: Lyonessian Racial Maxima should not be applied to PCs in a superheroic campaign, as their cost is calculated using "Normal Characteristic Maxima" as a "base" (and they cost more than the character would get for taking "Normal Characteristic Maxima"), but in a heroic campaign, they cost 25pts (including a Swim Movement max of 15"). Lyonessians cannot take the "Age" Disad.

Powers: 12" Swimming (racial max 15"); Life Support: Breathe Water, plus Safe Environments: High Pressure and Intense Cold, both only to levels encountered in Earth oceans (-1 Limitation: in other words, can tolerate normal conditions of any sea on Earth).

Disadvantages: 2x STUN, Heat/Flame Attacks; Susceptibility, Desiccants (Strong acids, alcohol, etc: Uncommon), 1d6/Phase; Dependence: Immersion in Water, 1/Hr, 3d6. (In human society, a Lyonessian may also be treated as having "Distinctive Feature": Odd hair colours, silver scales on patches of skin, etc. Lyonessean metabolisms can vary enough to give different Disadvantage levels.)

As an example of a specially-talented but non-adventuring Lyonessian, take Gelth'Guelle'Lth of the order of the White Hand, who has travelled to the surface world a couple of times;

GELTH'GUELLE'LTH

13 STR	13 DEX	18 CON	10 BODY	18 INT
14 EGO	10 PRE	12 COM	8 PD	4 ED
3 SPD	7/13* REC	36 END	26 STUN	

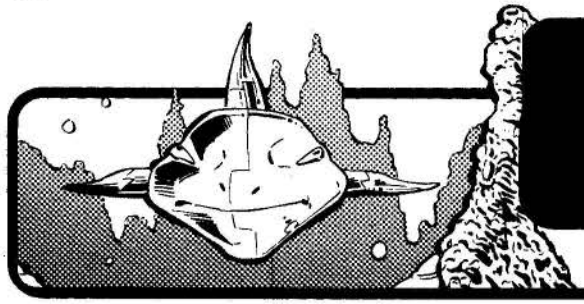
*Only in Water (-1/2)

Powers and Skills: 30pt Power Pool: Changed by Psi-Crystal Manipulation skill, OAF (Quartz Crystals), All powers have 2x END Cost and Work on 14–; 12" Swimming; Life Support (as above); PS: Lyonessian Administration 14–; SC: Psychocrystallography 14–; Psi-Crystal Manipulation 15-.

Disadvantages: 2x STUN, Heat/Flame Attacks; Highly Conventional; Some Romantic Feelings for Sea Change; Susceptibility, Desiccants (Strong acids, alcohol, etc: Uncommon), 1d6/Phase; Dependence: Immersion in Water, 1/Hr, 3d6.

(For a scenario involving the history and nature of the Isles, see "Nor Shall My Sword Sleep in My Hand".)





THE SHARK SQUAD

The Shark Squad are a small but efficient organisation, with a mobile base of operations under the North Atlantic and North Sea. It is thought that this is theSquad only wants wealth, but their leader — "Captain Shark" — is a shadowy figure whose ultimate objectives are obscure. He is "Captain" Jason Shorrocks, a marine engineer with genius, criminal inclinations, and quirkish sense of style (in other words, a typical supervillain). Having built a moderate fortune designing high-speed attack craft for criminal organizations, well-camouflaged smuggling boats, and combat vessels for unsalubrious mercenary groups, he created the persona of "Captain Shark" and a small private villain agency, some time in the early 1980's. His organisation first came to public notice with the illegal salvage and attempted sale of weapons-grade plutonium from a wreck in the English Channel in 1985, and has been making trouble ever since. Noted misdemeanours include the attempted theft of an experimental magneto-hydrodynamic power plant from a new rig support vessel in Oban harbour, Scotland, and the violent theft of the "powerstone" of Lyonesse.

The Shark Squad is currently considered the greatest criminal menace to shipping in the Atlantic; it is also among the few groups to know of the existence of Lyonesse. It has contacts in the underworlds of most major Atlantic ports, through which "salvage" is sold and commissions accepted. The group operates out of a giant, fusion-powered submersible, the Basking Shark, armed, armoured, camouflaged, and totally self-sufficient. It is not used for criminal missions — tough as it is, Captain Shark would not risk it against a fleet or a superhero team. The Squad uses various smaller vessels; "minisubs" for odd jobs and disguised "monster-subs" for assaults.

The Shark Squad frequently employs mercenary supervillains on one-mission contracts, particularly on important jobs or when superheroic opposition seems likely. Longer-term relationships with such characters are avoided, chiefly because Captain Shark doesn't trust them. Obviously, villains capable of working underwater are preferred, but others may be used. The Squad has a reputation amongst super-mercenaries for playing fair and paying as per agreement.

Finally, one supervillain team that the Squad will not work with is the "Four Winds", who are ex-Squad employees with powers stolen from the Squad; see their own section for details.

GAME DETAILS

STANDARD AGENTS

13 STR	11 DEX	11 CON	10 BODY	10 INT
10 EGO	11 PRE	10 COM	4+ PD	3+ ED
3 SPD	5 REC	22 END	23 STUN	

Equipment: 8d6 EB, AP, 12 Charges, No Range, OAF (shock staff); Armour (6 PD/4 ED), Act 14-, OIF; Life Support: Breathe Water, OIF (synthi-gills); +3" Swimming (to 5") & all Swimming at 0 END, OIF (swim-fins).

Skills: Fam w/Small Arms & Sub-Aqua Weapons; 1 Lvl, Melee Combat; Vehicle Fams: Submersible & Scuba; PS: Deep-Sea Diving, 12–; Fam w/Streetwise. NCOs and Specialists: add +5 points in special skills or extra characteristics (usually Combat Driving 13-, Demolitions 12-, Tactics 12-, or 13 INT and 13 PRE); may also add +15pts for Vehicle (92pt. minisub w/67pts + Disads; note character is 90pts). 45+ Disadvantages: Greedy (Common, Strong); Watched, Shark Squad, 11–; 5 or 20 points experience, etc, for NCOs.

Background: Personal equipment used by Shark Squad agents includes wrist fins, body armour, "artificial gills" and electrified high-voltage shock-prods (useful underwater close-combat weapons).



Shark Squad agents are organised on military lines — more army than navy, however; ranks are agent, corporal, sergeant and lieutenant. They are reasonable-quality thugs with training in weapons, underwater operations, and submersible pilotting. The organisation also employs a few shady underworld contacts specialists and a lot of "civilian" technicians and scientists. None of these are especially loyal, but they are well paid and think of themselves as tough; the Squad avoids letting any underling know more than he or she has to.

MONSTERSUB PILOTS

10 STR	14 DEX	10 CON	10 BODY	13 INT
11 EGO	10 PRE	10 COM	3 PD	3 ED
4 SPD	4 REC	20 END	20 STUN	

Equipment: Armour (3 PD/3 ED), Act 14-, OIF; 46pts for Vehicle (180pt monstersub shared by two characters w/140pts + Disads; note character is 100pts).

Skills: Familiar w/Monstersub Weapons; +1 Lvl, Monstersub Weapons; either Combat Driving (Submersible) or Systems Operation 13–; Electronics 8–; Mechanics 12-.

50+ Disadvantages: Self-Satisfied, Arrogant (Common, Moderate); Loves Using Machines (Common, Moderate); Watched, Shark Squad, 11–; Distinctive Features (Arrogant Wimp; Can Conceal with effort); Rivalry (Other Pilots); 1d6 Unluck.

Background: Monstersub pilots, are basically battle-trained technicians; they are paid better than the other agents, adopt the arrogant attitude of small-time experts with expensive toys, and generally make themselves unpopular.

CAPTAIN SHARK

13 STR	17 DEX	15 CON	11 BODY	20 INT
18 EGO	20 PRE	14 COM	6 PD	6 ED
4 SPD	6 REC	30 END	26 STUN	

Equipment: Revolver, 1.5d6 AP RKA, 6 Charges, OAF; Armour (10 PD/10 ED), Act 14-, IIF (Costume); Telescope, +6 Sight PER Range Mods, IR Vision, U-V Vision, OAF.

Skills: Demolitions 11–; Electronics 11–; Inventor 13–; Mechanics 11–; Navigation 11–; Systems Operation 13–; Tactics 13–; Weaponsmith (Vehicle Weapons) 11–; Transport Fam, Prop Planes, All Water Vehicles, Scuba; Fam w/Small Arms, Sub-Aqua & Submersible- Vehicle Weapons; AK: North Atlantic 14–; KS: European Underworld 11–; Conversational French & German; PS: Engineer 14–; SC: Marine Engineering 13–; Fam w/Computer Programming, Cryptography & Trading; +1 Overall Lvl; +2 lvls w/Technical Skills.

Disadvantages: Personal Arrogance; Normal Human Characteristics; Age 40+; Distinctive Features (Dress & Manner of old-style navy officer; Disguiseable); Hunted, UNTIL (as pow), 8–; Hunted, Russian Navy (as pow), 11–; Hunted, CIA (less pow — no naval strength!), 8-.



Notes: The leader of the Shark Squad is a man in his late forties; he affects the costume and style of an Edwardian British naval officer, including a neatly-trimmed beard, a peaked cap, and a gruff manner. This disguises the fact that he is a brilliant engineer, with state-of-the-art (disguised) equipment. However, he will not enter combat himself if he can help it, and he is untrained in hand-to-hand fighting. He is a skilled tactician, ruthless, and enjoys demonstrating his talents.

SQUAD MINISUBS

4x Size Increase (2.5x1.25 hexes, 1.6 tons, -2 DCV, -4 KB); 33 STR, 7 DEF, 14 BODY, 11 DEX, 3 SPD, Move 10x4, Max 120.

Powers: Life Support: No Breathing, Survive Vacuum/High Pressure; Active Sonar w/360-degrees, OIF; Radio Receive/Transmit, OIF.

67+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (Non-concealable unique design); Watched, Captain Shark (more pow), 11-.

Vehicle Total: 92pts



MONSTERSUBS

5x Size Increase (3.2x1.6 hexes, 3.2 tons, -3 DCV, -5 KB); 35 STR, 10 DEF, 15 BODY, 14 DEX, 4 SPD, Move 10x2, Max 80.

Powers: Life Support: No Breathing, Survive Vacuum & High Pressure; "Extra" Limbs (Head/Neck and Tail can strike, head can lift, etc); STR 20 Lifting Power (for Neck), uses END Reserve, IIF (motors); Stretching 2", uses END Reserve, Can't get 2x reach from 1/2 CV (-1/4); 9d6 EB, 8 Charges, IIF (vibro-blasters); HKA, 1d6+1, 2.5d6 w/STR, uses END Reserve, IIF (jaws bite); END Reserve, 60 END, 2 REC, IIF (generators); Active Sonar, IIF; Radio Receive/Transmit, IIF; Disguise (as monster) 14-.

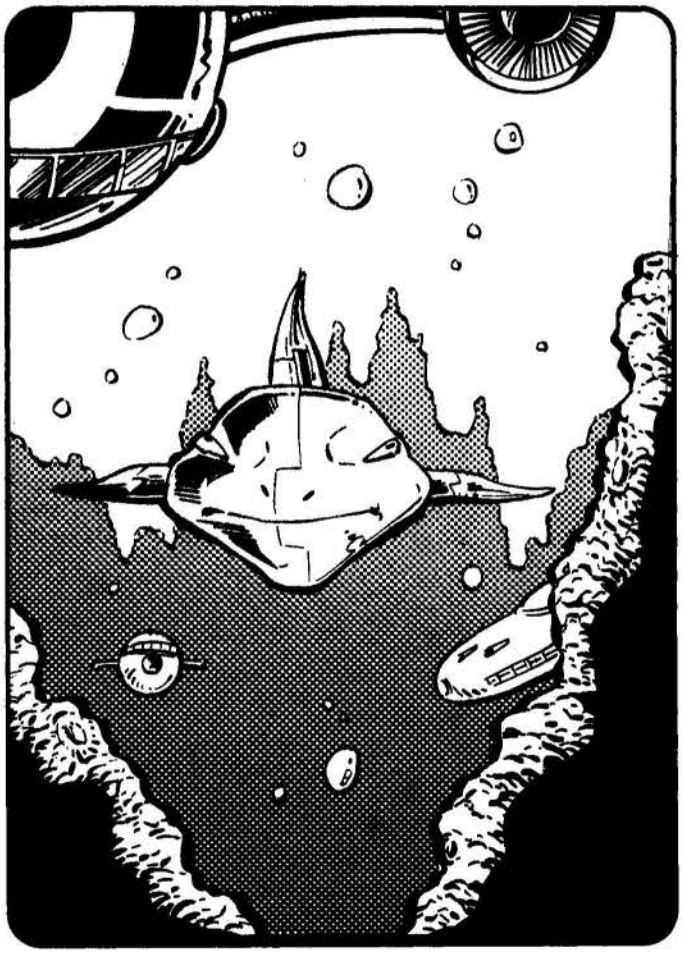
140+ Disadvantages: Distinctive Features (Non-concealable, Cause Extreme Fear/Amazement); 1.5x BODY, Telekinetic Attacks; Watched, Captain Shark (more pow), 11-.

Vehicle Total: 180pts

Notes: The Shark Squad's "Robot Sea Monsters" are two-crew designs (although one man can run them adequately), well-armoured and rather slow. They are also designed to resemble long-necked reptilian monsters. This can confuse the issue on their first missions in any campaign, but once they have been met once, it mainly serves for psychological effect. The head unit of each incorporates powerful gripping jaws with functional teeth and medium-power vibro-blasters built into the "eyes"; the neck is several feet long, highly flexible, and can lift a fair weight.

THE "BASKING SHARK"

When Captain Shark started the Squad, he only had a small fleet of minisubs. However, he immediately achieved a brilliant success in salvaging a super-secret Russian submarine which had sunk in the Atlantic, and adapted it for his own use. It's gigantic, fusion-powered, and completely unique, and it shouldn't appear in a fight scene except for a climactic battle in which the Squad can be nearly or completely eliminated, at which time the GM should design it to provide a tough fight for the attackers. As a suggestion, it may be 50-100 hexes long and 10-20 wide, with a mass in the thousands of tons. Exterior walls should be around DEF 15, and defenses should include multiple vibro-blasters (as on monstersubs), missiles (explosions, No Range Mod), and point-defense systems (missile deflection). MAX might be about 80-100. The Shark has a "Stealth/Concealment" Roll of 15- to evade electronic detection.



THE REDIRECTION CARTEL



The ReDirection Cartel is an international organisation which seeks economic and political power by subtle means. It may well be an arm of a more ostentatious organisation (such as VIPER). It owns, or has infiltrated, a number of industrial companies, and it simultaneously assists their growth by criminal means while using their strength for its own ends. For example, it may de-stabilise a successful research company by having some key managers suffer well-disguised "accidents", buy the troubled company cheap, then sell off its developments to VIPER; this will clear the market for other companies, in which the Cartel will have secretly invested. Or it may invest in an industrial process which has polluting side-effects, set up a plant in a remote site, stop any protests by threats and violence — then pull out of that area when things blow up, leaving ignorant scapegoats to take the blame.

The ReDirection Cartel started in the USA, but it is truly multinational, and it has instigated several projects in the UK. Some of its leaders seem to have a particularly arrogant attitude towards foreign sites, while preferring to avoid investigation in the US. In the UK, its operations are run by Jerome Hallon, brother of Peter Hallon, the superhero Wood-Brother; the Cartel has been opposed by Wood-Brother and the rest of the NightWatch, and by Ironside.

When engaging in criminal operations, the ReDirection Cartel will usually hire ordinary criminals (use "skilled normal" characteristics), form alliances with agencies such as VIPER and use their troops, or (rarely) engage mercenary supervillains; in all cases, the link will be subtle and well-hidden. However, some of the leaders of the Cartel are exceptional individuals; Jerome Hallon is a good example.

JEROME TERENCE HALLON

11 STR	14 DEX	13 CON	12 BODY	20 INT
18 EGO	18 PRE	18 COM	5 PD	5 ED
3 SPD	5 REC	26 END	25 STUN	

Skills: Fam. w/Shotguns, Bribery 13-, Bureaucratics 15-, Computer Programming 8-, Concealment 13-, Conversation 13-, Deduction 13-, Gambling 8-, High Society 13-, Interrogation 13-, AK: USA 14-, AK: UK 13-, KS: World Business 14-, Conversational French, German, & Italian, Persuasion 13-, PS: Squash 12-, Seduction 8-, Trading 13-, Transport Fam, Boats & Skiing.

Perks: Contacts: US State Dept. 12-, VIPER 11–; Passport with multiple visas, International Driver's License, Money: Well Off.

Disadvantages: Arrogant & Contemptuous of anyone without his ambition; Rivalry (other Cartel members); Watched by the Cartel, 14–; Watched by Earth-Brother, 11-.

Personal Details: Born 1953. **Height:** 6'1". **Weight:** 78kg. **Hair:** Black, clean-shaven. **Eyes:** Blue.

Background: Hallon had a English father, an American mother, and a successful business career, mostly in the US, where he was recruited into the Cartel and selected to spearhead UK operations. He's good-looking, charismatic, a highly competent manager; his one weakness is contempt for anyone who lacks his ambition and drive — including his brother. However, he hides this attitude when dealing with most people, for the sake of his image. He wouldn't usually enter combat or dirty his hands with obvious law-breaking, but may have access to advanced gadgetry from Cartel resources if he really needs it.



L'INSTITUT THOTH

L'Institut Thoth is a foundation devoted to the study of exceptional abilities. It is also a useful "international" plot device. It is expert in training super-powers, it may ask (or trade) favours, and it doesn't have a base in the USA — forcing PCs to travel if they want to approach the staff. Although Swiss-based, it has a large installation in the UK.

HISTORY

The history of L'Institut Thoth is bound up with the career of its founder, Mlle Yvette Ste Germaine. Her work on the education of unique talents in the late '60s and early '70s was regarded as the most sophisticated in the field; the problem was that it was out-growing the facilities of the University of Paris. In addition, Mlle Ste Germaine felt that it was being hindered by her (loose) association with the French government, at a time when governments were noticing the potential of unique talents. She therefore approached a variety of organisations and individuals with proposals for a specialist, international, apolitical centre for such work. L'Institut Thoth was inaugurated in 1974, and moved into its present headquarters near Lucerne, Switzerland, the following year. Mlle Ste Germaine became (and remains) the director, although the press, many visitors, and (on one recorded occasion) Mlle Ste Germaine herself sometimes mistakenly refer to her job as "headmistress".

Initial finance for L'Institut Thoth came from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation), charitable trusts, and some minor organisations; however, its director was determined that it should be independent, and it has a system of fees that is no less carefully applied for being based on ability to pay. Most Thoth "students" are sponsored by their governments, or by (carefully vetted) private bodies, and costs are covered. Furthermore, Thoth research scientists sign contracts granting the Institut extensive rights to work conducted there, although their rights to credit for their discoveries are guarded; Thoth has a number of profitable patents. The policy of independence has been vindicated in recent years, when political controversy around UNESCO has almost completely failed to touch Thoth, which has been presented in some quarters as a shining example of UNESCO at work in apolitical fields.

Of the 400 or so staff employed directly by L'Institut Thoth in Switzerland, the UK and Japan, just under half are primarily teachers, a smaller number are researchers, and the remainder are full-time administrators, medics, security specialists, and so on. (Thoth runs its own security systems, but usually "contracts out" other support work.) However, all Thoth scientific staff assist the teaching section, while many of the teachers are experts in their fields, and much Thoth "teaching" work represents advanced experimental study of branches of psychology, physiology, and medicine. In other words, L'Institut Thoth has had to live up to its claims to be a combined teaching and research body. For the most part, it has been a success, despite incidents such as the destruction of part of the Lucerne headquarters in 1979, the death of a member of the scientific staff the same year, or the "scandal" of the use made by German industrialists of a nearby estate, exposed by unorthodox means in 1981; because of the large numbers under its care, Thoth makes a policy of transferring seriously dangerous "students" off-site as soon as they are identified, and attempts to teach discretion to the others.

Local Centres

In the early '80s, Thoth decided to set up "local centres"; the Swiss HQ was running out of space and having to justify itself to sponsors who did not like sending students far from home. The first, small regional centre was founded in Japan in 1983, followed in '85 by "Thoth UK", in a country house in Hampshire. The decision to set up a second European centre so soon was controversial, but many Institut students are of European origin, while a centre attractive to North American "prospects", in an Anglophone country, was desired; the US government has often been hostile to Thoth, being suspicious of its internationalism, and ham-fisted US attempts to prevent export of "militarily useful data" on superhuman powers clashed with Thoth philosophy. Finally, the offer of assistance from a charitable body decided matters. Thoth is currently examining sites for further regional centres.

STAFF

Headquarters

Mlle Yvette Ste Germaine: Born Beaune, France, 1922, and trained as a teacher. Her initial career progress was not apparently seriously affected by work for the French Resistance (decorated 1944). In 1946, she took a leave of absence from teaching to study at the University of Nantes, initially in classics but soon diverging into philosophy, and thence into psychology.

She alternated between teaching and academia for some years, and formed an association with the University of Paris Department of Psychology. She's received many academic and honourary qualifications, but has never used any title socially.

Her work on the education of exceptional and unique talents (defined as any ability for which no teacher can be found as competent as the pupil) led to a series of applied projects from 1966. She resigned her last "normal" teaching post in 1968, and accepted an invitation to direct such projects from then on.

She's 5'7" tall and weighs 55kg, with grey hair and blue eyes; she wears glasses, but has little trouble without. Rumours that her formal attitude conceals a kindly nature are believed only by the press; she's a brilliant martinet.

Professor Italo Parifendi: Born Pisa, Italy, 1932. Very successful despite disruption caused by War, his education culminated in a doctorate in biology (from Turin); a variety of academic posts then culminated in the Chair of Biochemistry at Brussels. He has reputations as both a biochemist and an international academic figure; he resigned his chair in 1973 to pursue such interests (a mixture of science and politics), and soon became involved in the Thoth project. Currently he divides his time between research into the chemistry of exceptional abilities and his job as L'Institut Thoth's chief of staff.

He's 5'9" (1.72m) tall and weighs 101kg (somewhat spherical), with black hair (balding heavily from the front). Joviality on social occasions and a well-known happy family life deflect attention from Prof Parifendi's immense intellectual and political abilities.

Thoth UK

The British branch of Thoth has established itself in its Hampshire base (a small converted country house). The nucleus of the organisation transferred from HQ, but most staff are "local".

Mlle Elliete Laisseine: Headmistress: born Lyons, France, 1946. She has been closely associated with Thoth for some time. It is an open secret that she is an ex-student of Mlle Ste Germaine, and that she possesses some kind of talent. She's a highly competent teacher. Her orphan niece, Rosalie, resides with her as her ward.

Mlle Laisseine's talent is in fact "receiving visual telepathy"; she can pick up pictures from minds in her vicinity (12d6 Telepathy, 0 END, only for this; Mind Link, any eight minds, only to receive pictures; 12d6 Mind Scan, only to use Telepathy). Otherwise, she's a normal, but with 14 DEX, 13 CON, 20 INT, 18 EGO, 18 PRE, 3 SPD, several teaching and psychological PS or SC skills at 15-, and three overall levels. She's 5'2" (1.57m) tall, 47kg, brown-haired, and extremely elegant in a petite sort of way.

Dr. Ernst von Gulthau: Head of Science Staff: Born Munich, Germany, 1944, he qualified in Physics from the University of Heidelberg. A specialist in low-temperature energy systems, he worked in industry before accepting a job with Thoth Headquarters.

He's 6'3" (1.91m) tall, and weighs 71kg, with mid-brown hair. He's unmarried; his hobby is fencing to county-class standards, otherwise he appears to be dedicated to his work. Actually, he's secretly proud of his Prussian aristocratic ancestry, but would never admit it, and anyway, science comes first...

Colonel Michael Cordon: Head of Security: Born Birmingham, UK, 1938. He's ex-RAF Regiment; steady promotions there reflected his expertise in the design of perimeter security arrangements. An automobile accident in Germany led to an honourable discharge on health grounds. The same accident left his wife in a wheelchair and himself averse to travel; he performed consultancy work for private security firms before applying to Thoth.

He's 6'1" (1.86m) tall and weighs 74kg, with greying brown hair. His left arm has been severely injured. He lives with his wife in chalet-cottage (adapted for her) in the Thoth grounds.

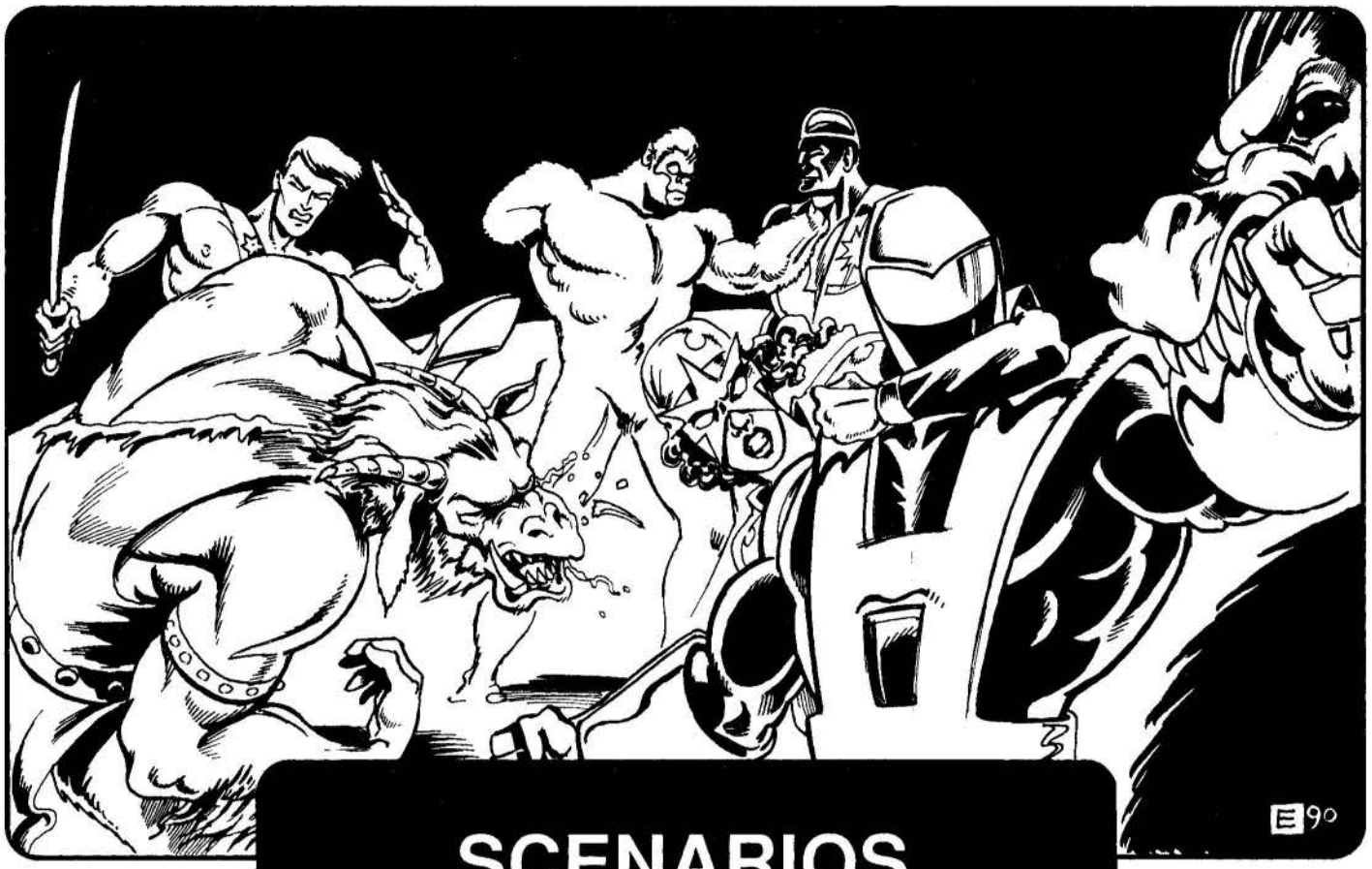
Dr Colin McDray: Born Arbroath, Scotland, 1953; A highly skilled medic, he spent some time in General Practice in Perth (Scotland), occasionally contributing to academic papers, before applying for the post of medical advisor at Thoth UK. He's a competent research scientist as well as a good doctor and amateur sportsman. He's 6'4" (1.93m) tall and weighs 99kg, with red hair. Unmarried, his hobbies are team sports, an aged Lotus 7 sports car, and playing the cello (badly).

Guards: Competent Normals, with 20-50 points of equipment each. This may be very high-tech; weaponry tends to be non-lethal. Well- motivated and loyal.

Staff: Normals, but with high INT and Professional or Science skills; sometimes eccentric, but carefully chosen.

Students

GMs may design student characters as they see fit; they should be a a mix of competent normals with one spectacular skill, young kids struggling with a Talent, and low-powered or poorly-controlled super-powered beings. Remember that anything grossly dangerous will be studied "off-site", and anything too good doesn't "belong". On the other hand, some of these powers are authentically heavy, if ill-directed; anyone trying an assault on Thoth could regret it. Suppressing the pupils should take just long enough for the London Watch and STOP to arrive...



SCENARIOS

This section provides the one last thing that a GM needs from this book: some ready-to-run scenarios. Before characters can get involved, however, there will need to be some reason why they are in Britain at all:

1. ROCK OF AGES

Britain has a mystical tradition extending back centuries. There are many sites of mystical power, from Callanish to Stonehenge. It is possible that "mystical" characters may take a sojourn in Britain, to understand their powers better.

2. FOES AND FRIENDS

When visiting Britain, or following a fleeing villain, the heroes come into contact with a British hero group (such as the New Knights). After the traditional fight caused by misunderstanding, the two groups realise they are actually working for the same goals. From this basis, it is possible that some of the group might want to stay for an extended visit, especially if they have a genuine common purpose.

3. GOODWILL TO ALL HEROES

Military units often train with allies, to see different ways of doing things under different conditions. It is possible that the Clansman has impressed the US government in the past, and the two governments have arranged a transfer, with some government-backed US heroes working alongside the New Knights for a time.

4. TROUBLE ASSOCIATES

Many heroes have DNPCs. It is possible that one of these has connections with Britain. DNPCs may inherit land in Britain, only to find there is trouble. DNPCs may have relatives in Britain who need help. DNPCs may investigate a story that takes them to Britain. The upshot of this is, of course, that the heroes find they are needed to help out the DNPCs.

5. MONEY MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND

There are a lot of business connections between Britain and America, and a hero with business connections might find that a British subsidiary needs attention. Perhaps it is suffering from the depredations of a supervillain.

6. BAD GUYS HAVE CONNECTIONS

The US heroes have been involved in a long chase of a villain who escapes to Britain, or has a cadre in Britain. From here, the heroes will probably choose to go to Britain on their own initiative.

7. ON A SUMMER HOLIDAY

Superheroes are people too, even the aliens, robots, sentient hive minds, and elemental beings. It is hard to be a hero 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Even heroes need to relax. And how better to relax than on vacation in Britain, with all it has to offer? Of course, the life of heroes is such that any trip is likely to be interrupted...

THE COAST IS CLEAR



This is a scenario for a moderately powerful superhero team (although it could be adapted for a super-agent group).

GM'S BACKGROUND

This scenario comes about because Geomancer, of MACE, discovers an interesting note in his family papers, and decides to manipulate Project: Armour into covering his bid for personal power. However, the plot starts in the seventh century AD...

"I've no liking for these blood sacrifices," muttered the warrior, "Raedwald swore himself to the Christers."

The court advisor shrugged. "Aye. And carried on with his sacrifices to the old gods. Raedwald would ha' sworn himself to anything that kept him as high king. And done anything, as we know too well. What we're doing will at least help the realm. For as long as the power lasts, anyway."

"Maybe." The warrior grunted, and squinted up at the oily flames burning on top of the mound, which now covered the ship which held Raedwald — and his last secret.

Raedwald, the high king of Britain, was buried around 625 AD at Sutton Hoo. In this scenario, he was buried with an item of power — a secret known only to a very few. Fortunately, when the dark deterrent-spells wore off, and the tomb was excavated in 1939, the item wasn't found; it had been moved, in the year 1595.

"I did not take you for a grave-robber, Dr. Dee."

The court astrologer looked at the Queen's agent, then back at the pit. "I do not seek treasure, if that's your meaning" he replied. "I'm more interested in what was buried here."

"Nor did I take you for a necromancer, doctor."

"And I am none. The necromancy in this place was worked long before our time. Now it is starting to dim, I fear; fortunately, I, who have mastered the lore, am the first to pierce the curtain of illusion. Ah!"

A shriek of fright had come from the pit dug into the centre of the mound, and the sound of breaking pottery. A faint shimmering came rising out, but Dee gestured, and it vanished. "A mere remnant of the old spell, no more." He peered down, and found that the workman, although terrified, was unhurt; the breakage had been his lunch-pot.

"Dee! What in the name of Heaven is down there?" The agent was suddenly shaking.

"Nothing in that name, I fear, sir. The secret texts speak of a box buried above the king's head. Fortunately, I realised that the riverward side of this mound had worn down with time; strangely, sir, we are not digging at the true centre here. Soon, we will find that box. The stars assure it!"

"And then, Doctor?"

"And then it goes to safer hiding, I think. Burial in a solid church crypt would seem best..."

"And which church had you in mind, doctor?"

"Hmm. I think there is one in Dunwich that would serve..."

Dr. John Dee, the Elizabethan astrologer, re-hid the item; but even he did not predict everything. For he did not know that certain lands would, over the centuries, be claimed by the sea...

Dee's actions were known to a few, including a "noble" family of sorcerors. Eventually, one of that family, Geomancer, pieced together the story, and suggested a plan to his team leader.

"You know, I really think that Geomancer may be onto something here." Battleaxe was addressing a microphone and a camera. "Our opponents will be so concerned with the plant, they'll not even think to wonder about the masts."

"Aye. Mayhap." The voice came from a small loudspeaker. "So we have your clearance?"

"Aye. And y'can have six CUIRASS cells for the job. But keep Geomancer off th'planning. Having ideas isn't like him; I don't trust him. Is there aught else you'll be wanting?"

"SMITH says we'll need a portable signal synthesizer for the broadcasts, but we can get that once we've finalising the details. Two cells should do it..."

"Aye? Where'll you get it?"

"Somewhere in America, I think."

THE SETTING

The GM should endeavour to ensure that the PCs arrive in Sussex in the middle of a crisis, so they don't get too much chance to investigate the area; however, the GM should study the maps and be familiar with the local geography.

Coastal Suffolk, between Ipswich (a small, thriving port and county-town) and Lowestoft (another small fishing town) is an open, rural area; the coast itself mixes beaches and flat, marshy country, while inland the country is more "rolling", but not hilly, with a mixture of open fields, conifer plantations, and moorlands (some of them nature reserves); the soil is very light and sandy. There are farming villages and fishing communities, the largest having many retired people along with the holiday trade.

The off-shore currents are strong, and have re-shaped the coast through history, removing some harbours and depositing sand-banks to bar others from the open sea. For example, Orford, a medieval port, is now a mile or two by river from the sea, as the currents have created Orford Ness, a spit of land across what used to be the river-mouth. Much of the shingle in that must have come from around Dunwich, a few miles up the coast, a great town in medieval times; today, the entire place has been washed away, only a few fishermen's huts beneath low, eroding cliffs marking the site. On hearing the name of Dunwich, investigators may make a Mythos Knowledge roll at +15%; if successful, they realise they are in the wrong game, and immediately lose 6D10 SAN.

There are a couple of fairly small USAF bases in this area (another plot hook?); agile, low-flying A10 ground-attack planes are quite a common sight in the Suffolk skies.

Other sites along the coast:

Sutton Hoo is an area of farmland on the banks of the river Deben, near the village of Sutton. It is also the site of continuing archaeological research, as in 1939, excavations there unearthed one of Britain's greatest finds; the Sutton Hoo ship-burial. The gold and other treasure from there is now mostly in the British Museum, London, and the site is only of academic interest; there's probably no treasure left to find, and in fact it's only open to the public for a few hours on summer weekends.

Orford Ness has already been mentioned. At its northern end, where it joins the coast, stand radio masts that are used by both the Ministry of Defence monitors and the BBC World Service. These can be seen for quite some way along the coast on clear days.

Felixstowe is a busy modern port, sending container shipments to mainland Europe. Because of the trade there and through Harwich across the estuary, the sea off this coast is busy; there will usually be a freighter or ferry or two in sight of land.

Aldeburgh is another historic town, with a small fishing industry, holiday hotels, and retired people's bungalows. Nearby is the village of Snape, with the Snape Maltings, a brewery converted to a concert hall. This houses the Aldeburgh Festival, a major international concert series, once a year; this could be another way to get characters to the area, and could be used if the GM wishes by putting vulnerable VIPs into the vicinity.

Sizewell is the site of a nuclear power plant (actually two, one still under construction). Its outflow warms the sea in the area, to the benefit of fish and fishermen; the flow feeds direct through the turbines, and so wouldn't be much of a route in.

PART ONE: THE SET-UP

(This stage may be skipped if not needed.)

MACE's plan requires an electronic device; it's only available from somewhere near where the PCs are based. Details are left to the GM, who can link them to the specifics of the campaign, but two five-man CUIRASS squads raid the place and grab the "signal synthesizer". Somewhere down the line, some or all of the PCs intervene, and the agents are easy prey, but they don't have the stolen property any more; Battleaxe has taken it, flown to the coast, and departed in a SMITH vehicle.

Now the PCs will have to work out where the thing has gone, and, if necessary, be persuaded to follow. Their captives are standard CUIRASS agents, protected from excessive knowledge by the cell system, but the fact that they are all British should be a clue — and maybe Battleaxe said something about "going home" that they'll remember under skilled questioning. (But they won't spill all the facts automatically; they're competent, and they've been briefed about their legal rights.) There may be some way to track the synthesizer, even when it's switched off — in which case, it'll be seen to be heading across the Atlantic. Anyway, CUIRASS and Battleaxe are known to Interpol to be very much UK-based.

Alternative Introduction: The word around VIPER and the political underground is that a British villain group is taking big money for something. Someone the PCs have cause to dislike is known to have paid. This needs following up...

So, officially or not, the PCs pursue to Britain. They may not know where exactly they should go first, but that doesn't matter, because just as they get through customs at Heathrow or get landing clearance for their team jet, news comes through; CUIRASS and MACE have taken over a nuclear reactor in Sussex.

PART TWO: THE DOUBLE DUMMY

This should get the PCs moving to the Sussex coast; on the way or on arrival, they can establish some more facts (if they think to ask). The villains began with a diversion at the fence at Sizewell (courtesy Aggro and some agents), which distracted the station's security while Geomancer tunnelled into the middle of the complex, letting in most of the team and some agents and technicians. Meanwhile, Battleaxe and some more underlings have taken control of the radio masts a few miles away. The criminals are using the masts and their own equipment to monitor events, and an attack on either will rate as provocation. They want five million pounds in gold, or they blow the reactor core...

There'll be as many local counter-forces as the GM wishes around this scene (assume police, STOP, and army units and the New Knights and/or London Watch), but they are holding back, being careful. Impetuous assaults by foreign "heroes" will not be tolerated; even if they succeed, the UK forces will arrest them. USAF units in the area have been ordered to co-operate with UK forces if asked, but otherwise will keep out of the way.

However, the point of this scene is that the visiting PCs have a point of view that the locals don't. They know what Battleaxe stole; what's it got to do with a nuclear station? And once they start thinking, other oddities may strike them (say, on a Deduction roll); why is the leader of MACE supervising a side- show at the radio masts? If MACE is a group with rational goals, isn't playing with nuclear catastrophe a little out of character? How can the villains hope to get away with it all?

Actually, they don't. This is a double-bluff. The forces at the reactor have rigged things to look dangerous but remain quite safe, and are under orders to retreat if attacked, slowing the attackers. Meanwhile, the force at the masts, which includes a lot of SMITH technicians, has set up some special transmitter units, and tapped into the Ministry of Defence communications system from there. The latter allows for some profitable private-enterprise espionage, while the transmitters are being set to over-ride regular BBC World Services broadcasting.

The World Service is internationally respected and trusted, so when it starts sending out fake news (in several languages), it's going to be believed. The GM can adjust this to taste, especially if any characters present have personal interests in any particular parts of the world, but possibilities include:

* The discovery of large gold deposits in South America would create a run on shares in South African mining firms. CUIRASS's clients can then buy these cheap, ready for the rebound. (Or try a technological discovery and high-tech companies.)

* The announced downfall of a third-world government would create turmoil in that country, which VIPER could exploit to cover the ultimate crime-spree there, or RAVEN or a neighbouring government could convert into a coup.
* "News" of "aggressive" behaviour by Western forces somewhere on the borders of a communist country could throw the Russian military into paranoia, strengthening their position psychologically, even after the deception was revealed. This in turn could be convenient for hawkish American generals, who need a perceived enemy to justify their budgets...
* Reports of detected election-rigging in any given country could weaken any new government, conveniently for its enemies.

(After this scenario is finished, the PCs, perhaps working with UNTIL, could spend months working out who did pay for which "news items".)

Events can go a lot of ways, depending on PC actions, but hopefully, they'll end with the villain plan at least partially foiled, and MACE and company in retreat. MACE reckon on getting out through a tunnel provided by Geomancer, and into SMITH- designed submarines off the coast, but if the PCs come up with good ideas for tracing them, they should be allowed to succeed and bring them to battle. Here, the PCs may be helped, not only by British forces, but also by the villains' state of confusion.

"It was Geomancer. He got us this far, then said he had plans of his own, wished us luck, and tunneled off. Never did trust him, the oily little snob..."

If the PCs have problems with MACE and CUIRASS, a British super-team can arrive, and get pinned down in combat with the villains just as the next problem blows up. Literally; a freighter on the horizon blossoms into flame...

PART THREE: POWER ON THE LOOSE

Geomancer thought to obtain power; power has obtained him. His family papers said that Dee removed a weapon of might from the Sutton Hoo mound and hid it in Dunwich; they didn't say enough about the power. He tunneled to the site of the medieval town, used crude spells from the family papers to locate the weapon, and grabbed it. At which, he learnt his mistake.

The PCs will have to leave MACE — in flight, in handcuffs, or in battle with the New Knights — and head for a rescue mission at the freighter. They can save lives, but not far away, the sea is boiling. And the turbulence is moving towards Sizewell...

What is it? Geomancer, of course; but in his hands is a spear. And he hasn't got much control over his actions. The spear is imbued with elemental force. Raedwald's sorcerors hoped to bind it to service, but they didn't succeed too well, and now it's out, it's drawn power from the proximity of Geomancer's armour, it's awake, and it's mean. All that's left of the binding is an urge to repel anyone who isn't of Raedwald's people (and there's no pure-blood Saxons left in Suffolk), and a contempt for "spoilers of the land". And a nuclear station looks a lot like "spoiling".

Power levels are left to the GM, but Geomancer-with-spear should be at least a match for the entire PC team and anyone else around. Add to Geomancer's usual powers; complete Life Support, an Energy Blast that can sink a freighter, a mystic "force field", extra movement on land and under water, and enough strength to avoid silly results like someone disarming him, plus anything else that seems apt (such as Mental Defences).

The first priority for the PCs should be protecting Sizewell — for real, this time. Fortunately, the spear, working through Geomancer's mind, can be persuaded that trashing the place would be worse for "the land" than refraining, but the PCs (or a convenient NPC, if the PCs don't try) should have to talk fast. After that, left to its own devices, the force will take Geomancer inland, and then down the A12 (a dual-carriageway road that carries a lot of local traffic) to Ipswich and then London. Of course, the PCs may well choose to get in the way.

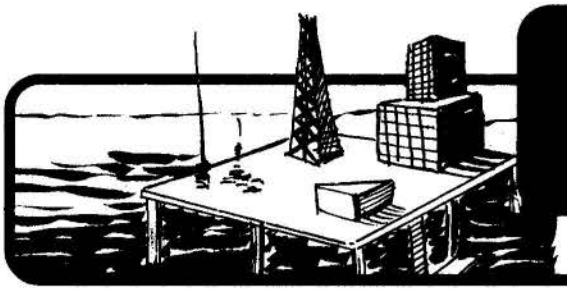
Options here are up to the GM. Tough heroes can slow and divert Geomancer, and his power level can be set to give a big, cathartic fight scene that the PCs win, but alternatively, it may be necessary to win by brains rather than brawn. If a team's mystics don't have ideas of their own, have Mother Janet arrive (in a helicopter secretly chartered by the Watchmaker), with an old book that tells them that the spear can be neutralised by returning it to some centre of power (the method is left as an exercise for the reader, but Raedwald's old palace is buried under an airfield a few miles from the scene); alternatively, persuade a PC telepath reach into Geomancer's mind to help him fight its influence...

AFTERMATH

Barring gross misjudgment, this scenario should end with Geomancer captured (or vanished?), the spear neutralised, destroyed, or lost, and Britain saved. Assuming that the PCs achieved all this without too much bungling, they'll be heroes of the hour — after all, even if British heroes were also involved, they'll show typical British modesty and give credit where its due. There's the little matter of who paid for Battleaxe to broadcast what lies from Orford Ness, but that's for later consideration. (Did a rich PC's company suffer economic sabotage?)

But then, there's a lot of future to worry about. Was the spear really destroyed, or merely thrown out to sea? Can such a force ever truly be negated? Is Geomancer's armour now more powerful than it used to be — powerful enough for him to control at a distance, say? If so, he'll be out of prison soon — but then, there's a good chance of that anyway, especially if MACE got away in the confusion. Project: Armour won't quite trust him for a long time, but he and they are too useful to each other for the relationship to end.

Anyway, the PCs are now in the UK. Perhaps they need a holiday after all they've just been through...



RIGGED FOR DESTRUCTION

Oil drilled from the North Sea is a valuable British resource. There are many oil platforms drilling for this black gold, very vulnerable to attack. The North Sea is often hit by bad weather. Gales of Force 8-10 and waves 50' high are common. Rain, snow and sleet are also normal. Drilling is hazardous enough at the best of times.

The rigs are large steel structures set into the sea bed, with living and working platforms typically 200' above sea level. They have a helicopter platform, and facilities for ships to moor alongside. There is also a platform at sea level for the divers. The crew live in cramped, unconfortable quarters. The wind blows through the steel, causing the rig to move noticeably. Oil workers on the rigs are well-paid, hard men.

OFFSTAGE SUB-PLOT

In this scenario, an oil rig is taken over by terrorists. These terrorists are concerned with environmental problems facing the world — global warming, ozone depletion, nuclear waste. They believe that these are problems facing the whole world — Chernobyl demonstrated that fall-out does not respect national boundaries. Nation states, by their very nature, try to advance each nation at the expense of others. While there are nation states, there can be no solution to world problems. Oil companies are the highest-profile of the multi-national companies destroying the Earth. By taking over an oil rig, the terrorists believe they can force Britain to give them control of one multinational company, giving them world-wide influence.

The terrorists began by flying a helicopter towards the rig, radioing that they were in distress, losing fuel, and requesting permission to land. No-one could deny such a request, and the helicopter was allowed to land. When it did, armed men burst out and held the landing platform crew hostage. After this, it was a simple matter to take over; the oil workers were naturally not armed. Some oil workers evaded capture, and hid in various corners, but they are separated, unarmed, and without leadership.

Having taken over the oil rig, the terrorists set up defences against attacks, and then radioed their demands to the UK Government. They have the radar equipment of the rig, and some they have brought themselves, so they can detect any approach by air or ship. The terrorists also have the oil workers as hostages, and would not hesitate to shoot some if openly attacked. On an oil rig, use of firearms will be dangerous to everyone, especially if oil fumes escape and build up. To deal with aircraft, they have Blowpipe heat-seeking missiles (made in Northern Ireland) and US-made Stinger Missiles. These are accurate against aircraft and hekicopters, but may be insufficient against superheroes.

Meanwhile, a Russian submarine has moved closer. It is under orders to observe but not interfere. It will obey unless there is good reason to take action. After all, it is good publicity to rescue people. A humanitarian gesture would do wonders for world opinion.

The UK Government has decided it will not give in to terrorism. It is prepared to talk, but will not concede any demands.

The weather is worsening. The wind is gale force, and looks as though it will get worse. Meteorologists suggest that it will rise to Storm Force 11. The terrorists get nervous as the rig starts to sway.

WHY THE HEROES...

Some ways to introduce the US heroes to the scenario include:

It's A Rich Man's World

Of the companies that can afford to play in the North Sea Oil game, several are based in the USA. Such companies, by virtue of their wealth, wield a lot of influence. If the oil rig is owned by an American company, there will be a lot of pressure for American heroes to deal with the problem. Alternatively, some superheroes have business connections themselves. Such a hero might actually own the company which owns the rig upon which the scenario occurs.

With A Little Help From My Friends

Most characters have friends, relatives, and associates. DNPCs often stick their noses into trouble. Amongst the ranks of these DNPCs, there should be at least one who might have reason to take a job on such a rig, and who can manage to get a message out to the heroes when things start to happen, warning them of the situation. A radio message cut off in mid transmission might provide a suitable spur.

Gumshoes Don't Stick To Water

The US heroes have, presumably, been following other plotlines prior to this adventure. They are looking for leads, and someone they know has information has decided to lie low. It might be a low grade crook, or simply a normal out of his depth. Whatever the reason, he knows his best course of action is to go somewhere where he can't be found. Taking a false name and hiding away on an oil rig in the middle of nowhere is a good idea. The heroes learn of the hideout, and they need this information. The source isn't going to leave the rig, so they must go to him...

Warfare Is Policy By Other Means

Most campaigns have a manipulative supervillain who wants to set the heroes up, and profit by using them. One method is to get the heroes to upset a foreign government that has recently caused the supervillain grief. Let us suppose this supervillain has recently had a setback caused by the New Knights. In response, he arranges for the heroes to learn that an American on the rig is in danger. The bait is dangled just enough. Once there, the heroes come into conflict with the terrorists, as the supervillain intended. With US heroes involved, there is going to be conflict with UK heroes, who will see this as their province, and not like foreigners muscling in any more than Americans would take kindly to a British team muscling in on terrorist activity in the USA. The end result is two enemies of the supervillain set at each other dealing with a matter that the villain would otherwise have had to deal with.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

The heroes first have to decide how they are going to approach the rig. Coming by air in the current weather conditions is hazardous, especially with the firepower available to the terrorists. Coming by ship will be slow, obvious, and hazardous when landing. The heroes might have access to a submarine, or they might be able to borrow one.

The terrorists are edgy, and have a number of armed people on patrol. The hostages are held in a small storeroom deep in the rig. Some oil workers are still loose, unaware of how things are developing. The heroes have to be careful gunfire does not start a fire, as the storm may have ruptured pipelines, allowing fumes to escape. The rig has been weakened by the bad weather and is starting to break up. The weather is bad and getting worse. Simply standing in the open is dangerous, as the rig is swaying alarmingly. The lights blow as the generators fuse out.

Why is the weather getting so bad at this time? It could be simply coincidence. It might be that one of the terrorists is, knowingly ot unknowingly, a weather controller, whose mood affects the weather locally. There might be a device on rig that is influencing the weather conditions, intentionally or otherwise.

SUMMARY

What are the heroes going to do? They have to overcome the terrorists. This task is made harder by the darkness, and the wind. They have to find all the hostages and the remaining oil workers who are hidden on the rig. They have to find some means of getting everyone off the rig before it breaks up in the worsening weather. They have to ensure that the break-up of the rig doesn't cause an explosion. They have to find out what, if anything, caused the bad weather, and put it right, if possible. The Soviet submarine might well help out, if approached in the right manner.

THE NPCS

The Oil Workers

These men are, by and large, rough, tough, and ready, but otherwise normals. They are used to handling large, complex equipment, and coping with dangerous situations, and will not panic easily.

The Terrorists

These are fanatics and would consider death in their cause a glorious martyrdom. Some might have mild superpowers. They have been selected for this mission because of their abilitiess. They do not have distinguishing costumes. All are basically skilled Normals; GMs can define the levels of the minor superpowers as desired. Possibilities include innate Armour, limited Telekinesis, and very high Mimicry skill plus knowledge of radio operation.

Omega, the terrorist leader, is fanatical, and has exceptional Oratory. Death is a martyrdom, and he is not scared of it. He would rather succeed and remain alive, but if the cost of success is his life, or the lives of his followers, then it will be worth it.

The Russian Captain

Captain Seregin Kolyshkin is an experienced submariner, with an engineering background. He is dryly humourous, competent, and quietly patriotic. His father was killed in WW II, fighting the Germans. He doesn't strut his patriotism, nor is he loudly critical of other nations. He is humane, but he will not risk his men unecessarily. Fair risk with a good chance of saving people is fine; great danger on a slim chance is not.

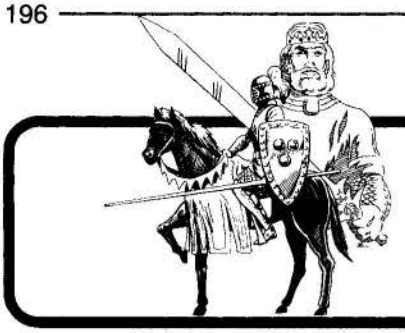
OTHER COMPLICATIONS

The New Knights

While the UK government talks to the terrorists, it deploys its special forces — in this case the New Knights. If the GM does not want this as a complication, obviously the New Knights are already deployed elsewhere.

Weather Conditions

The weather may cause problems to some heroes. For example, the wind whistling amongst the steel may disorientate a hero with sensitive hearing. Spray from the sea will reduce the effects of fire based attacks, whilst a character with earth powers is going to be severely restricted. Low DEX characters may have problems with the unpredictably moving floor. Flight will obviously be limited in the high wind, and the darkness caused by the failed generators will affect all those without some form of night vision.



...NOR SHALL MY SWORD SLEEP IN MY HAND

This is a major scenario that brings the PCs to Britain to become involved in a series of spectacular events.

BEGINNINGS

Airliners travelling between North America and Western Europe, especially the UK and Ireland, are disappearing. That should attract the attention of the PCs, especially if one or more of their DNPCs was on one of the planes. A quick study of the pattern of disappearances shows that they are affecting about 15% of flights over a broad sweep of the eastern Atlantic, in unremarkable weather; they've been going on for a couple of days. The aircraft simply vanish, in a brief flurry of radar static; no wreckage, and no evidence of sabotage, has yet been found.

If the PCs don't investigate out of personal interest or on heroic principle, they can be asked to by the government or concerned citizens or whatever. If they still don't, there's probably something wrong with your players (or your GMing), but you can always have them kidnapped by their enemies and shipped out to a secret lab in Britain, only to be freed by a customs search at Heathrow Airport, London — they probably deserve it.

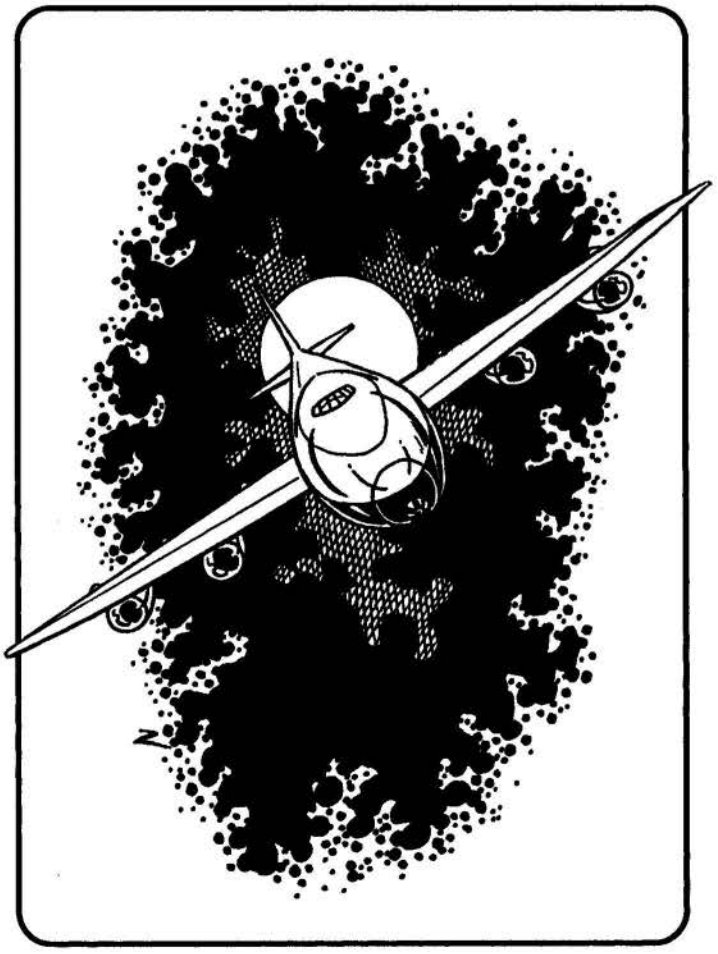
WHAT'S GOING ON

Dr. Samaine, the criminal sorceror, has decided that Lyonesse isn't the only "Land of the West" with a right to rule in the modern world. After much research, he's contacted a number of other "island lands" which transported themselves into pocket dimensions at the end of the Fomori war. In each case, he either found rulers who would ally with him, or interest groups he could persuade; the latter he then aided to power with his own variant magic and contemporary technology.

Now, he and his allies are making their move. They know that they haven't the weight to conquer Earth single-handed, so they are going to start with the British Isles, presenting other countries with a *fait accompli* and lots of promises about "no further territorial demands on Earth" (if not in those exact words). In order to make the conquest swift, they are just completing the most dangerous part of the plan; a pact with the Fomori, offering use of some minor pocket dimensions in exchange for cannon-fodder. The Fomori will double- cross them, of course, they expect that, but they think they can counter that (and once they've got Britain, they'll go after some heavy military equipment, just to make sure). There's also the problem of Nuada, who they know a little about, but he's just one man (OK, one super-cyborg), and some joint research has come up with a way of neutralising him.

However, the extra-dimensional sorcerors don't like having Dr. Samaine as their only source of data about the Earth, so they start out by borrowing some flying craft to study the occupants. It's quite easy, really; open a dimensional portal in the right place for a few seconds, make telepathic contact with the pilots and tell them where to land, and there you are. No violence necessary; no permanent harm done.

Yes, they have ethics, and maybe the deal with the Fomori makes some of them uneasy. But like Dr. Samaine says, the ends justify the means; power returned to those fitted to rule, a combination of sorcery and modern human science applied to rejuvenate Britain (and later the world); it's a green, pleasant land, and they could build paradise there...



ROUND ONE: MEETINGS

The PCs may decide to fly to London. That'll make them rather unusual — the public has noticed the disappearances — but even if they don't have a team aircraft, there will be a few airliners with volunteer crews, maintaining communications. If they go by sea, have them hear of a new incident as they approach the coast of Britain, and then have someone offer them a helicopter ride. If they take an indirect air route to get to Britain, fine; that's not brave, but it's smart. If they try watching events from the USA or wherever, improvise round whatever bright ideas they come up with. (The sorcerors may notice their investigations and engage them in a multi-dimensional duel, fought to a draw, at the end of which they are dropped in the UK.) They should otherwise be allowed to get through the trip unmolested, but a few red herrings and false alarms might be amusing; for extra action, especially if the plane has a PC pilot, have a portal appear in front of them in mid-air, let the pilot make a skill roll to dodge it, then send some flying monsters after them to drag them back.

Anyway, the team reaches Heathrow airport, only to discover large-scale concern and much running around. It emerges that the regular Glasgow-London shuttle has just disappeared. This is surprising, as it doesn't go anywhere near the area of the previous disappearances, but the symptoms are the same.

While they are wondering what to do next, the PCs encounter someone they may recognise, or who might recognise them (depending on the specifics of your campaign); it's Mlle Elliete Laisseine, principal of the UK branch of the L'Institut Thoth. She's accompanied by a small group (guards or more stable pupils from Thoth), and all are rather agitated about something. In fact, they were due to meet someone off the plane — Jonny Laidlaw, a young-teenage Scot who was coming to Thoth for tests on the telepathic and precognitive powers he's recently been displaying.

While the PCs are talking to Elliete — or just while they're standing near her, if there's not enough grounds for a conversation to start — she is approached by a tall, bearded, grim-looking fellow in a trench coat and gloves, carrying a shapeless bag, who says it's vital that he talks to her. She's as taken aback as anyone else by this, but suddenly she looks very thoughtful, and agrees to talk to him. In fact, this is Nuada of the Silver Hand, and he's just dropped his mental defences enough for Elliete to scan him mentally and so realise that he's something unusual. Nuada or Elliete will involve the PCs at this point, if they haven't already involved themselves; Elliete may have picked up images from their minds, and guessed at their natures.

Nuada will be enigmatic at this stage, simply insisting that the entire group must head to west London. In the Thoth mini-bus that is available as transport, he'll explain something of the plot (but not who he is), saying that someone is opening doors that should remain shut, and he has reason to believe that important information may be available in London — "in a church in Hammersmith". And what's his involvement?

"Well, it's part business and part personal. To begin with, Jonny Laidlaw is a relative of mine."

And just as the PCs may be pressing for more answers, the fight scene starts.

ROUND TWO: A COUNTRY UNDER SIEGE

On a quiet street in Hounslow, West London, an ordinary mini-bus is attacked by a pack of demons — lesser Fomori. Use the character data for Wintershade (of the Nightwatch) in Fomori form for these, but with 15 DEX, 5 INT, 10 EGO, and disadvantages rearranged as appropriate. The Fomori should be numerous enough to beat the PCs, except that Nuada is present. His coat and leather gloves disintegrate as he pulls his helmet out of his bag, produces his "sword", and teleports into action. He is very, very angry. After helping reduce the odds, he calls out:

"Sorceror! I know you're around somewhere! Stand and fight, you moronic dog, don't rely on these bloody vermin!" then he teleports out of sight, leaving the PCs to finish the fight — which should be possible, given work.

The heroes (and Mlle Laisseine) will no doubt be irritated to lose Nuada before he finished explaining himself, but just now, things are a bit out of hand. Fomori and other extra-dimensional monsters are popping up all over Britain, especially at military bases and major government offices, and local forces (military and super-powered) are at full stretch fighting them. US government-backed heroes will be ordered to assist; others would be less than heroic if they failed to volunteer. This is a cue for the GM to generate lots of weird, powerful critters and throw them at the heroes to knock down. In the course of this, the PCs will encounter Sea Change of the London Watch, who has recognised the Fomori from Lyonesse an history books, and suspects other Western Land involvement, but can't guess more than that. Similarly, Starline of the Nightwatch has sensed use of the ley-line system, but can't pin down the centre. Lyonesse is no help; if anyone tries to contact them, they've sealed themselves off harder than ever at mention of Fomori.

So the problem remains. If the PCs don't trace things through (say) the Nightwatch and Nuada's comments, then they are contacted by the Watchmaker. He's been studying the pattern of events, and his computers say that their encounter in Hounslow involved some unexplained factors. He'll grill the PCs in detail, probably annoying them, until they remember the "church in Hammersmith" line. Then he'll swear mildly, and say that he ought to have known, before giving them Mother Janet's address.

ROUND THREE: THROUGH THE FIRE

Mother Janet's importance lies in her experience and knowledge of the details of British magic. She's been watching events so far, of course, but she hasn't had the necessary clues to isolate the source of the evil, and so her instinct has been to keep out of the way. However, given the other facts known or available to the heroes, she can suggest a way to counter-attack. "Gates open two ways, you see. Or they can be made to."

This will probably be taken as good news; but who's going to carry the fight to the enemy? It has to be a small group, so superheroes are the obvious candidates. GMs can either manipulate events so that the PCs are the only ones in position to go, or have Dr. GoldWing and Aspen say that their groups have home advantage in Britain, and would hate to leave the country behind in its hour of need, while the New

Knights have orders to defend government property; the PCs are the obvious candidates for the attack force. (Of course, some mixing-and-matching of PCs and NPCs is legitimate.) If you want to use the Optional Ending (see below), Mother Janet either has to go because of the nature of the spell, or insists because she reckons that only she's got the magical status to negotiate with the rulers of the Western Isles (she's senior in Britain's white covens, remember, being the only surviving member of the oldest body).

And so the PCs find themselves in an aircraft (their own or a borrowed RAF Chinook helicopter), circling over Avebury rings while Mother Janet and any PC mystics present work up a gate spell. If Mother Janet is coming through, at the last moment, another plane, small and fast, hurtles up and plunges through the gate along with the PCs. This is the Watchmaker, himself and in person, loaded down with high-tech fire-power. His reason is the presence of Mother Janet, of course, but he'll give the impression of an old hero who says he thinks the younger generation need his experience, and really wants to die in battle. The PCs will doubtless be annoyed at this, but the Watchmaker and Mother Janet will spend most of their time bickering with each other, and so should be relatively easy to keep back from danger.

ROUND FOUR: THE LAND OF YOUTH

Not that danger looks too immediate. The group has arrived somewhere that could be paradise; a place of sunlight, green grass, and bird-song. This is Tir nan Og, the Celtic Land of Youth, a realm ruled by near-immortal sorcerors. Actually, it's a pocket dimension barely big enough to hold an island of about ten miles diameter, and a half-mile or so ring of sea around it. The ecology is kept in equilibrium by spells and machinery, and the population consists of the philosopher aristocrats, and small (one level Shrinking, always on), strong (30 STR), child-like servants, the product of genetic manipulation. The rulers are genuinely intelligent and thoughtful, but they are also as arrogant as you'd expect from four thousand years of successful navel-inspection; even if the PCs try to begin with negotiation, they'll be met with raw energy spells (at which the locals are fortunately inept) and the summoning of monstrous aid (at which they are rather better).

Dr. Samaine has won this place to his side by convincing the local rulers that they'd make a better job of ruling the Earth than ordinary humans. It's up to the PCs to convince them otherwise, if only by committing enough mayhem to deter them from dealings with "mere mortals". Even in this case, however, if Mother Janet is along, when the sorcerors declare their decision, she'll invoke various ancient pacts that will make them treat her with respect. (Actually, talking would be a smarter idea from as early as possible.)

And then? Well, it's up to the PCs to persuade the other "Lands" to end their part in the war. The lords of Tir nan Og can offer them credentials, and will be glad to see them go, but Mother Janet and her chosen "escort" will be asked to stay. Funnily enough, she'll choose the Watchmaker.

ROUND FIVE: FINAL SHOWDOWN

The sorcerors will send the party through the dimensions to Hy Breasil, where Dr. Samaine engineered a coup by young locals who liked his ideas about power. This is now the HQ of the attacking forces, so a lot can happen there. It's also bigger than Tir nan Og — about thirty miles across — and the locals only live for 130 years or so, in which time they refine their innate telepathic gifts and practice very subtle politics for fun. The old rulers, currently in rather comfortable imprisonment, regard the usurpers as unsubtle bores (but bores with assault rifles).

Their credentials from Tir nan Og will give the PCs safe passage, but this will be invalidated if they, for example, try to free the political prisoners. The missing airliners and their passengers are here, and PCs will be permitted to visit them (which may be a relief if they include any DNPCs); they've been treated very well, but are clearly prisoners, and have been subjected to a lot of telepathic probing. From them, they will learn that Jonny Laidlaw, the Thoth pupil, was seperated out from the others on his flight, and can't be found; the locals say that he's fine, don't worry, he's OK — but don't say where.

Meanwhile, Dr. Samaine has arrived, heard about the PCs, and hidden. To remove this danger to his plans, he'll summon a force of Fomori to the central citadel, where the PCs are, to attack them. This will disgust the locals, who've been keeping their allies at a distance, but they won't know who is responsible; as the Fomori will run amok on general principles, the PCs can have a chance to ingratiate themselves by saving local innocent bystanders from rampaging demons.



The PCs may get into prolonged discussions with the local rulers about the wisdom of their plans — but what about Jonny Laidlaw? Well, actually, he's important to things because he's the direct descendant, in the male line, of Nuada of the Silver Hand. Furthermore, because he's also a low-power telepathic mutant, he has the ability to link mentally with his ancestor. (He's no precog; he just has access to Nuada's knowledge.) It's possible that one day, he may take up the task which Nuada has come to find so wearisome, but that's for the future; right now, he's useful to the conspiracy because he can act as both a hostage and the keystone of a spell which tracks Nuada, who was diverted when he teleported to attack Dr. Samaine during the PCs' first fight with the Fomori. If the PCs don't think to look for Jonny, have a "secret loyalist" or gratefully-rescued local suggest the idea.

Jonny is under guard and under sedation in a remote part of the Land, but a rescue mission should be possible. The crucial thing is to wake him up; for tension, have Dr. Samaine break cover as he realises the threat, and attack with the aid of a horde of Fomori. Things may look bad for the heroes, but then, Jonny makes contact with Nuada, who is enabled to cross the dimensions by the strength of the link; he teleports in, Dr. Samaine panics and teleports out, and Nuada and the PCs carve through the demon army to confront the local rulers with the evidence of the untrustworthiness of Dr. Samaine. The conspiracy collapses, with a typical political compromise in Hy Breasil, and Nuada, the prisoners, and the PCs return to Britain, the former maybe explaining as much to the latter as he feels safe.

EPILOGUE 1: THE CLEAN-UP

Of course, even when half-a-dozen airliners appear from nowhere above Heathrow, full of American tourists hell-bent on law-suits, things aren't over. Britain has survived the Fomori attacks quite well, but there's a lot of mess, and local and American supervillains are looking to exploit the confusion. It would be much appreciated if the PCs could stay around a while and help restrain them. Perhaps all those mystic energies have awoken Gog and Magog again? And Dr. Samaine got away, inevitably; there'll be a reckoning there, one day.

And then there's Jonny Laidlaw. For now, he's a sharp, canny Scots kid with a pointless psi talent and bad dreams, but one day, he may take up the sword of Nuada. He'll certainly have to be watched, and maybe guarded — suppose the Four Winds discovered about the weird powers to which he's linked? the heroes should be left with something to think about.

EPILOGUE 2: OPTIONAL (AH, CUTE) ENDING

If you don't mind losing the Watchmaker and Mother Janet, especially if you've had full use out of them previously, make sure that they get to Tir nan Og, and stay there. Later, the PCs will be mystically contacted — along with some local superheroes.



"Um, this is the Watchma... ah, Jimmy Tompion. And Janet. Janet Misperton. We just thought you ought to know; the people here think that they ought, after all this, to make more contact with some other dimensions. Not Earth, to begin with; that might not be tactful. But some of the other, ah, realms. But they aren't much good at dealing with people, and they seem to think that Janet has some kind of special status. Perhaps they're right. So they've offered us jobs. As, sort of, roving ambassadors, I suppose. It's astonishing; rejuvenation is part of the offer. So we've got more years ahead of us than we expected. So we... well, um, we... we're going to be getting married. You're all invited, of course."

(The PCs can react to this how they like, but after the contact is broken, Swift Swallow and Yeoman may just be heard to mutter "good riddance", and the rest of the London Watch don't seem too upset by the loss. The PCs may be more charitable, having been manipulated less by the Watchmaker, but the players may remember something about the nature of big superhero weddings...)



SHORT SCENARIOS

PLAGUE PIT

This is a scenario for a superhero team who have contact — perhaps through METE, or a team member — with an old-established interstellar society (GMs should adapt it as appropriate).

"Defender, a serious problem has arisen, concerning your planet and my people."

"Go on, Obsidian."

"Defender, one of our court archivists has been searching the records of the Sh'Tharn province. The Sh'Tharn used to be an independent empire..."

"What happened to them?"

"We were obliged to conquer them."

"Oh yes."

"I mean that, Defender; they were the most devious culture we've ever encountered. Humanoids, but their entire political system was directed to de-stabilising neighbouring states, with a view to conquest. In fact, it seems that one of their scientists visited Earth, 330 of your solar cycles ago. He wanted to study Terran diseases."

"Why?"

"For possible military adaption. He even filed reports describing some success, before he apparently became more successful than careful."

"Oh."

"Yes. His superiors must have become frightened; they flagged Earth as a bio-hazard zone. But now, we have discovered the reports, and a biologist has said that the 'mutamorphic' gene he implanted in the Terran disease might mutate at any time. And the results might be quite virulent."

"Great. That's all we need when the Senate Committee on extra-terrestrial relations is getting strict at us."

"Yes, but there is worse."

"Amaze me."

"Well, unfortunately, there was a Sh'Tharn probationary scientist involved in our archivist's study. He is named Corrandex; he apparently seemed quite stable. But he learned all this, and, well, reverted to type. He has stolen some weaponry, and come to Earth."

"With a view to carrying on research, no doubt. Can your people help us to trace him?"

"I'm sorry, Defender. The Court have decided that all of this could make Earth-people turn very hostile to non-Terrans..."

"Darned right it could!"

"So someone is, as you'd say, 'running a cover-up'. It is only because Archivist Tarran felt guilty about this that he passed word to me. At least he can give us some relevant data."

"I suppose we should be grateful for small mercies. Right, so we've got to catch this Corrandex and sterilise whatever he's found, preferably without triggering mass panic or anti-alien hysteria."

THE TIME AND THE PLACE

Use of historical and/or biological skills, or Deduction and a good library, will suggest that the old Sh'Tharn spy was working in London in the 1660's — so he studied the Great Plague of 1665, Britain's last major outbreak of bubonic plague. Unfortunately, this means that the plague-spores may be lying in any of the London graveyards or plague-pits of the date. The Great Fire of 1666 is credited with eliminating the plague-bearing rats; it may also have destroyed some relevant public records...

Actually, the sites of most burials of that period can be determined; in fact, City of London developers are supposed to be cautious about digging into old plague-pits, as no-one is quite sure how well bubonic spores might survive. But now there's Corrandex to worry about. It's up to the PCs, and the specifics of your campaign, whether they approach the UK authorities or go undercover to crack this problem, but they could have an interesting few days in London either way. The search for the plague pits should concentrate on what is now the City — which was London in 1665. However, both the PCs and the villain may rest up or operate somewhere in a wider area. One excellent setting to incorporate into this scenario is the London Underground; if Corrandex has determined that a research-worthy pit is near to a tunnel, perhaps he's ensconced in a disused passage close by, borrowing power from the Underground's "third rail" system and coming out after the trains have stopped at night. Corrandex, although armed to super-villain level, shouldn't be too tough a foe when cornered (but why is he waving that bio-sample flask and talking about wind-borne spores?).

DON' HASSLE ME...

This short scenario can be used with publicity-hungry characters, some super-patriot types, some with contacts in the film business, and any that will take paying jobs as bodyguards or security specialists.

The PCs are approached and asked to take a "simple" job; bodyguards to Vincenzo Verrone, the Hollywood action movie star. Vincenzo's series of rough, tough, "one man against thousands" pictures, the "Directed Mayhem" films, have made him rich and famous. Now the latest, "Directed Mayhem IX", already a hit in the USA, is due to open in London, and Verrone's contract requires him to go over on a publicity tour.

Unfortunately, a deranged Middle-Eastern mullah recently quoted Verrone and his pictures as "A Dark Satanic Evil against which all true believers must guard", and Verrone, who is rather paranoid, has decided that this means that his life is in danger anywhere outside the USA. More unfortunately for him, his studio, noting that the mullah has fourteen followers, all of them pinned down in Beirut, won't cancel his contractual obligation. So the PCs are asked or hired by Verrone's manager, Richard "25%" Richards, to act as his bodyguards on the trip. The money or publicity are certainly good...

Verrone is an impressive but dumb type, with no staying power (18 STR, 8 CON, 8 INT, 8 EGO, 20 PRE, 14 COM); his only "skill" is mumbling dialogue and flexing his biceps. The PCs will be required to act friendly with him for the benefit of the press; this they may find tiresome, as he's a posturing dolt. He's in no danger from fanatic terrorists, although there'll be few small, peaceful demonstrations against him from British Muslims during the trip. (His films characterise all Muslims as screaming fanatics, Orientals as scheming sadists, and Russians as reptilian masterminds.)

However, Verrone is not entirely safe. Grenadier, the MACE supervillain, has decided to test himself against Verrone, who he simultaneously idolises as a macho hero and despises as a cinematic fraud. He'll somehow talk his colleague Sidestep into helping him kidnap the film star (teleport and smoke grenades may make this possible), then challenge him to a "fair" fist-fight. Needless to say, if he gets this far, he'll win, and he'll take a video record of the whole fight. It's up to the PCs to stop this, if they can; Grenadier will let Verrone go after the fight, but a broken nose will ruin his looks. If they catch Grenadier, the heroes may later have to fend off a rescue bid by MACE and CUIRASS. Also, if Grenadier gets his videotape, he'll blackmail Richards with the threat of releasing it for public consumption; the PCs may be asked to try and recover all copies.

LOST AMONG THE TREES

When you summon good, you always summon evil...

— Robert Holdstock, *Lavondyss*

Aspen and Earth-Brother, of the Nightwatch, draw on a power that is not human. It's not actually evil, but it has priorities of its own. One day, they become involved in a fight with an amateur sorceror in a wooded area. He first attempts to summons elementals to fight for him, which strengthens the link between the pair and their power; then he panics and starts throwing crude fire-spells, burning down the wood and angering the power.

Later, he may be found, perhaps terribly injured, perhaps crushed to death. But by then it's clear that a much greater problem exists; the two heroes' power has overwhelmed them, giving them three or four times their previous power values but submerging their humanity. As angry nature personified, they are a threat to all mankind, and American-based characters can become involved in fighting them. During the fight, they'll encounter the rest of the Nightwatch — who want the pair restrained, but not killed — "It's not their fault; they're possessed. And anyway, look around at all the pollution and stench; are you surprised that something got angry?"

In other words, this scenario combines a fairly tough fight with a moral dilemma — and the more polluting factories and over-intensive farms the pair trash, the tougher the dilemma gets.

A CANDLE IN THE WIND

Several of the PC heroes are subject to brief, very violent, unprovoked attacks by super-powered opponents. The GM should handle these carefully, as the attackers must show a real determination to kill or maim the heroes, but (obviously) shouldn't succeed. However, the attackers all mysteriously vanish after a round or two of the fight (perhaps just as they are about to administer the killing blow).

A very quick analysis will suggest that all the "villains" closely resemble known UK-based characters — some criminals, but mostly heroes. Their accents and other details would seem to confirm this. However, the PCs should also soon discover that many of the Britons in question have rock-solid alibis for the times of the attacks. Indeed, the heroes involved will get in touch, expressing outrage that anyone should attempt to frame them, and puzzlement that the attempt should be so crude. (At least one of the villains, being in gaol at the moment, will make similar, if less polite, comments.)

Actually, the attackers are the UK "supers" — but time-travelling from twenty years into the future. Details of the possible paradox-effects are up to the GM, but the story goes like this. In a (possible?) year or so's time, the PCs will be captured and subtly brainwashed by VIPER, acting for the ReDirection Cartel. Meanwhile, the Cartel will be de-stabilising the UK economy, government, and major opposition political parties. They will then set up a "puppet" party, "National Rebirth", which will obtain power by a mixture of bribery, rabble-rousing, and big promises. The presence of American capital behind all this will be obvious to observers, but the puppets will say "Our backers are public-spirited internationalists", and the US big business interest will simply make the US government less inclined to interfere. Of course, the Cartel will soon set up an exploitative, tyrannical system, "the Rulership", and milk it for profits. The PCs, believing that this is all in everyone's best interests, will act as the Cartel's enforcer figureheads.

British resistance will be limited, fierce, and partly defeated by the PCs. After twenty years, one tiny remaining group, code-named "Candle in the Wind", will consist of old superbeings — heroes, and villains who found some reserve of patriotism or contempt for the Cartel. Their leader, the aging Dr. GoldWing, has "now" obtained access to some very advanced research that enables him to send people back in time — but only for a minute or two at a time, and the power demand is phenomenal. He and his band are hiding out in the ruins of Leeds, trying to conceal their lab/generator set-up from Rulership forces. They feel that it was the PCs who enabled the Cartel's take-over, and don't know about the brainwashing — so they don't feel much compunction about removing the problem from history. (If they sound bitter and ruthless — they are, but note that they are also willing to edit part of their own lives from history in this cause.)

Eventually, the ("present") PCs should be able to progress their investigation — either by using super-powers to trace the attackers in some way, or by getting one of them to say something useful, or by getting help from current UK heroes. (If one of the attackers encounters his or her earlier self, he or she will yell something like "Don't trust the Americans! In a year's time, they'll be helping conquer the country!") The PCs should then be enabled to follow an attacker — either by use of super-powers keyed to the attackers' "teleport" devices, by using an Extra- Dimensional Movement power while a time traveller is present (creating a "time vortex"), or just because the bread-board time machine suffers a power surge while in use.

The PCs will then have to talk fast to convince the surprised resistance group that they aren't hostile. In any event, they'll find themselves in a disintegrating country, in a world dark with renewed international tensions. A confrontation with their older selves, reduced to sloganising moralists by brainwashing and years of bitter fighting, could be very painful. Eventually, Dr. GoldWing (or someone) should be able to return them home — after which, they've got a year to prepare for VIPER's determined, subtle attacks (unless they preempt things by helping some UK heroes take the ReDirection Cartel down a peg or three).

The British characters used for this should be older, less squeamish versions of characters in this book. Add 10-25 active points (or more) to each of their major powers, and 2-8 useful skill levels, but possibly reduce some physical stats to simulate aging; technological foci may also have become slightly unreliable (15- activation rolls or similar). NPCs who'd be appropriate include Silver Shadow, Swift Swallow, Repulse, Yeoman, Mole, Starline, WeatheRing, Chime, Imperial Lion, Ironside, the Grenadier, Sidestep, Monsoon, and Breaking Glass.

BURNING HOME

In the real world, a small group of Welsh nationalists calling themselves "The Sons of Glendower" (or rather, the Welsh equivalent) object very strongly to English people buying cottages for holidays in north Wales, which they complain pushes the price of homes beyond the reach of local people and contributes to the destruction of Welsh culture. (They disagree with the argument that the visitors bring money into the area, and often refurbish derelict buildings.) So the group burns down such cottages, and more recently has attacked the offices of real estate agents advertising cottages in England. These arson attacks are aimed at property, not human life, although they may endanger firemen, people who live in buildings used by estate agents, and so on.

In this scenario, the PC heroes are pursuing a minor supervillain with fire-related powers. (Blowtorch, in *Classic Enemies*, would be ideal.) Feeling threatened, the criminal flees the country, taking a holiday (in secret ID) in Wales. There, he encounters a group of nationalist arsonists, one of whose members is fairly wealthy and increasingly extremist. The supervillain and the nationalist somehow hit it off; both have come to see fire as a purifying force in a world which disagrees with their dreams. So the group provides the villain with funds, a hiding place, and a cause; the villain provides the nationalists with, well, firepower. Suddenly, a small band of slightly dangerous dreamers has become a force in world terrorism.

Naturally, this gets into the papers — and it's time for the PCs to take a trip to Wales. They will face the usual practical problems, but also the suspicion of rural communities with mixed feelings about both sides of the fight, and a lot of chasing up and down sheep-infested Welsh mountains. If the GM wants a big climactic battle, the supervillain can call in a few fellow super-nutcases to help with his new "mission", and arm up the nationalists with a raid on a STOP or UNTIL depot. (Suitable partners might include Sparkler from *Classic Enemies*, broadening her social idealism, and Shrinker, Ogre, and Dragonfly from *Champions*, fitting this in with their own warped world-views.)

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Some heroes are born gang-busters, whose style is to investigate and even infiltrate, the likes of VIPER, so as to anticipate and forestall their plans. Fine; GMs can keep this type interested by moving them around a lot.

In the course of an investigation, the PC discovers that the villains are planning a big move — into the UK. Noone, they think, runs British crime; there's an opening. Of course, the move means committing a lot of resources; if the PCs defeat it, they'll hurt the criminals badly.

This scenario should develop into a complex, multi-sided war; GMs should be prepared for a lot of cross-plotting. The sides involved are the PCs, the would-be controllers of the UK underworld, and whatever British characters from this book the GM wants to use. If Mystery is really running London's crime (and the outsiders don't know it), her gang will be a formidable force, maybe with Brown Fox as another wild card in the mix, but neither has super-villain resources; do they need mercenaries? If so, will Project: Armour be content with that role, or will they want a piece of the action? If the interlopers move in on Scotland, the Shapeshifters may object, and their subtle style will make everything uncertain. Nor will British heroes be left out; the PCs may be loath to stand aside while the war is on, but the New Knights, the Watch, and freelance Britons may object to "ham-fisted foreigners" intruding on their terrain. But at least they are on the right side; the real fun comes when the heroes realise that one criminal group or another must come out of the war ahead, and they may have the responsibility of determining who it is.

THE RETURN OF THE DRAGON

In a world where mutants have devasting powers, interstellar-travelling aliens settle on Earth, and gods from ancient myth walk once more, the general public are primed to believe the most fantastic things.

One of the strongest of British myths is that of King Arthur. He sleeps, so legend has it, to return in the hour of Britain's greatest need. Everyone knows the story, at least in outline. At least, they think they do. So how do you suppose the young policeman on duty at Winchester Town Hall supposed to react when a gentleman in armour and with a sword at his side approached, thanked him for his dedication to duty, and announced that he was King Arthur Pendragon, come to lead Britain through its coming trial.

"Very good, sir. Do you have any form of identification?"

"I have Excalibur, and I have divine right."

"Of course, sir. How stupid of me. You are aware that it is an offence to carry a blade more than four inches in length?"

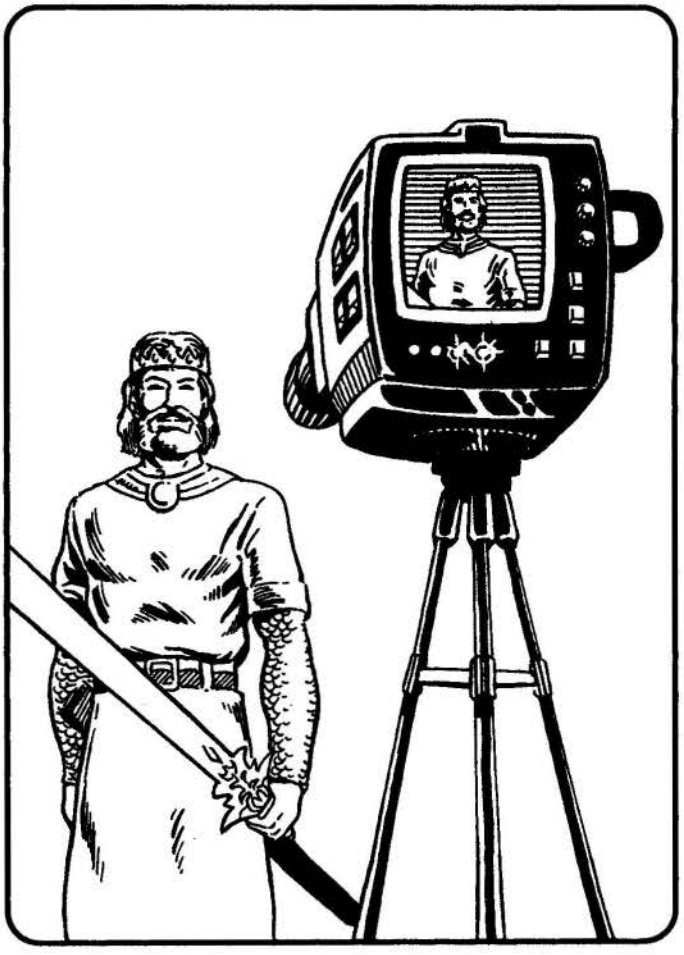
"Then I shall change that law."

The only trouble, thought the policeman, as he called for assistance, is that this nut almost has me believing him.

This scenario could form a brief, amusing game involving an outrageous fraud, or it could form the basis of a prolonged adventure centering in Britain. The heroes might expose the fraud, or they could even be taken in and initially support "Arthur", becoming disillusioned later.

'King Arthur' quickly gets a reputation as a hero, and everyone who meets him admits that he does have an air about him. He is popular in the media, and many people believe that he is genuine. This would be no problem, were it not for the fact that this King Arhtur claims that he has returned to take up his position as true ruler of Britain, and that the current Royal Family are usurpers.

In fact, 'King Arthur' is a villain with mind control powers, and a good Presence, making use of the myth to assist his rise to power. In effect, he wants to stage an eccentric coup



d'etat. Perhaps he is a nut who really believes — or half believes — his story, perhaps he is coldly cynical and sane. In any case, he convinces people he meets that he is the real King Arthur, using his natural presence, and where necessary, mental presuasion. GMs may wish to use a suitable villain from their own campaigns, or invent a new one, in which case, the might prefer to have the PCs have a few run-ins with him prior to this "King Arthur" scheme. If not, "King Arthur" should be a competent normal with 25 PRE,12d6 Mind Control (Area Effect), and Oratory and Persuasion skills, plus armour, sword and Fencing.

Dealing with the villain will require careful handling. In a straightfoward fight, he will be able to call on the support of a lot of "normal" followers. Some British heroes may also support him, either because they are under mind-control, or because they believe in him and his right to rule, or even because they believe his return must signal the hour of "Britain's greatest need". Even British heroes who oppose him (perhaps because of the political upheaval that a change of monarch would cause, perhaps because they realise that the return of a Dark Ages King would spell an end to British democracy), will have mixed feelings about foreigners getting involved in internal politics.

Or perhaps "King Arthur" is cleverer than he appears, and manages to successfully oust Queen and Parliament, and take up the reins of power himself. How will the UK heroes react to this? After all, the legal situation is far from clear — what would be treason by anyone else, in King Arthur must be merely response to usurpation of others. Perhaps they will go along with whatever promises to be the path of least damage — either for or against the new King. King Arthur will perhaps attempt to remake the country in the image of the land as it was, with divine rule of kings, and a new Camelot. (He doesn't have to be a complete loon to realise that some such activity will be necessary to maintain his cover story.)

Some of the Royal Family and MPs may be imprisoned, but others may escape form a government in exile. Other countries will probably stand aloof from these internal British struggles. The least controversial way for the PCs to proceed would be to obtain evidence that "King Arthur" is really an imposter.

Of course, the Gm *could* decide that Arthur is the genuine article — returned! This presumes that Britain is in some sort of danger, and will have long-term effects on the game world, but can make for some inspired roleplaying.

OLD LADY OF THREAD-NEEDLE STREET

The Bank of England is one of the most prestigious financial institutions in the world. It is the centre of finance in Britain. As such, it would be an ideal target for a group of crooks. The crooks might be simple incompetents, or could be some such group as the Gweenies from *Champions*. On a more serious note, of course, a group of terrorists might decide that destroying the Bank would be a publicity coup.

For ordinary crooks, however, there is just one slight problem. No money or gold is actually kept at the Bank of England.

A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES

The heroes are contracted by an American shipping owner, perhaps a friend of one of the heroes' DNPCs. "The Tycoon" is the owner of a number of small ships, and he is worried because several have disappeared recently on trips from the US to England. He asks the heroes if they would travel with the next shipment. (If the heroes are already in the UK, then he will arrange for them to be flown to join the ship halfway across the Atlantic; the ships have all disappeared a couple of days from port.)

In fact, the ship is not going to England. The tycoon, like many Americans, uses "England" when he means the UK. The ship is actually going to Northern Ireland, and its cargo is arms for the IRA (see the "Bullet and Ballot Box"). Whether the tycoon knows what the cargos of his missing ships were (as opposed to the official lading manifests) is for the GM to decide.

Meanwhile, in the UK, a Royal Navy ship has been lost while patrolling the coastal waters in search of boats bringing arms to the terrorists. The New Knights are looking into the matter. At the same time, Partisan has been conducting investigations in his own inimitable style, delivering his very own brand of justice to the terrorists. The New Knights are told to stop Partisan. The New Knights decide that the RN ship must have been sunk by arms runners, and discover that another shipment is due.

Partisan has found out that a ship is due to unload arms at an isolated cove, and he prepares to deal with the arms dealers as they land. This ship is, of course, the one that the heroes are on.

The Naval ship was actually taken out by super-powered mercenaries employed by the IRA, (Scorpia or Shamrock from *Classic Enemies* would be suitable). Their next plan is to strike at the "British Imperialists' Lackeys" — the New Knights. The IRA have controlled the information gathered by the Knights, and have set up an ambush of their own.

Meanwhile, one of the Protestant terrorist groups, the UVF, have been acting against the IRA's suppliers, by sinking the ships belonging to the tycoon, whether they were actually carrying arms or not, and regardless of the safety of the crew. This time, they intend to ambush the ship once it is actually delivering the arms, in order to obtain the weapons for themselves, and score a propaganda victory.

Late one evening, when the ship gets close to Ireland, it develops a leak (or runs low on fuel, or sees a distress signal, or any excuse that the heroes are likely to swallow; the captain has realised that the heroes might disapprove of his taking weapons to terrorists), and lands in the cove. When it lands, the UVF agents will attack the ship; the IRA-backed terrorists will attack the New Knights; Partisan will attack whichever group of terrorists he is closer to, and the New Knights will try to keep order, and arrest everyone — including the heroes.

ONE OF OUR SPIES IS MISSING

Over the skies of Europe, numerous spy satellites orbit, keeping watch on potential enemies. Many are American, and contain secrets that the US would be loath to see in the hands of a potential enemy. So when one comes down in Britain, landing unobserved in central Scotland, the US Government is worried. The want the satellite back with no one any the wiser.

Knowing that UK intelligence leaks like a sieve, they decide to send their own agents to recover the satellite without raising awkward questions. If the PCs are high-profile free-lancers, the US Government, rather than using them to do actual search, might persuade the PCs to make a trip to the area, knowing that they will create a lot of publicity that will distract attention from the real agents.

Complications (Mix and Match)

Of course, plans rarely work out that simply. The Laird owns the land on which the satellite has landed, and isn't inclined to hand it over to the first person to ask for it. He knows what it is, and has moved it. He is bright enough to associate the arrival of the heroes with the satellite.

The US agents, in traditional comic book manner, find out that the Laird has moved the satellite, and enter with blasters blazing. This does not endear them to the Laird or his clan. Of course, the PCs might try to persuade the Laird that it is in the national interest for him to hand the satellite over. His reply is likely to be along the lines of "Your national interest mayhap. But nae mine, I'm thinkin'."

The Americans are not the only ones to have an interest. Enter stage left a group of Arab extremists. More violent than tactful, they begin their own searches for the object. Enter stage right Israeli agents, keeping an eye upon the Arabs. Enter also Russian, British, VIPER, and any other groupings that the GM finds appropriate, all searching a bleak, misty glen, all armed to the teeth with items brought in through the diplomatic bag, all more than a little paranoid.

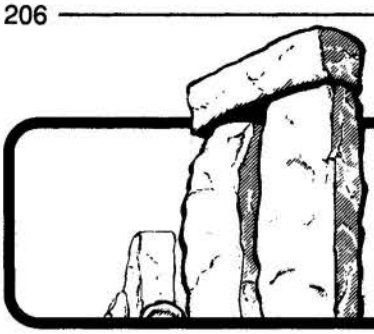
DARK CLANSMAN

A major supervillain (perhaps Dr. Destroyer) has arranged for a large number of British heroes to be compromised, and has caused the British government to be very suspicious of its own heroes. He has done this through a variety of means — implications of esponionage or big crime, possibly a frame making the heroes seem to use lethal force in inappropriate circumstances. He might also lure others to out of the way parts of the globe, and so on.

It soon reaches the stage where it is difficult to trust any British hero — nearly all are under suspicion for something or other. The public are confused, and villains are having a free hand. Such heroes as remain are hard put to maintain even a semblance of order as minor supervillains go on a carefully orchestrated crime spree.

The heroes then discover (perhaps through one of the British heroes) that this is all a plot by the coordinating villain to seize power in Britain. The aim is to create total anarchy, then arrive as a saviour and take control. Once in power, it will be relatively easy to remain there.

There are various ways that the heroes might tackle this. They may decide to put a stop to the anarchy, and stop the villain taking over in the first place. They may not have the information in time (being busy with an intergalactic war), and arrive to find Britain in the grip of a villain — in which case they may team up with UK heroes, and try to overthrow the villain either in some direct battle, or by more subtle means.



APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

"But remember, always to call it please, Research."
— Tom Lehrer, *Lobachevsky*

NON-FICTION

Much of the factual data in this book has been found or confirmed in standard reference works, including Leslie Halliwell's books on TV and cinema, The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (ed. Peter Nicholls), The Guinness Book of Records (UK edition), Pears Cyclopaedia, and numerous guidebooks. Also used or worth a look: The AA Illustrated Guide to Britain Britain 1989 — An Official Handbook (HMSO) The Shell Book of the Islands of Britain (and other Shell guides and "Books of...") Social Trends, 1989 (Government Statistical Service)

International Settings

O'Rourke, P.J.: *Holidays in Hell*

History & Archaeology

Brothwell, Don: *The Bog Man and the Archaeology of People*
Burl, Aubrey: *Prehistoric Stone Circles*
Chamberlin, Russell: *Great English Houses*
Churchill, Sir Winston S.: *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*
Dyer, James: *Hillforts of England and Wales*
Falkus, Malcolm & Gillingham, John (eds): *Historical Atlas of Britain*
Hawkins, Gerald S: *Stonehenge Decoded*
Richie, Anna: *Scotland BC*
Ritchie, JNG: *Brochs of Scotland*
The Trust for Wessex Archaeology: *Beyond Stonehenge*
And, for a proper perspective..
Fraser, George MacDonald: *The Pyrates* (pure fiction, but well researched), *The Hollywood History of the World*
Renwick, Frank (Baron of Ravenstone): *Scotland Bloody*
Scotland Sellar, W.C. and Yeatman, R.J.: *1066 And All That*

Folklore, Legends, & Mysticism

(Please don't believe everything you read in some of these!)
Bellamy, Liz & Williamson, Tom: *Ley Lines in Question*
Briggs, Katharine: *A Dictionary of Fairies*
Forman, Joan: *Haunted East Anglia*
Froud, Brian, & Lee, Alan: *Faeries*
Hole, Christina: *Witchcraft in England*
Holmes, Ronald: *Witchcraft in British History*
Kightly, Charles: *The Customs and Ceremonies of Britain*
MacKenzie, Andrew: *Hauntings and Apparitions*
Orbis Publishing, "The Unexplained", vol. 13: *The Power of the Earth*
Sanders, Maxine: *Maxine the Witch Queen*
Underwood, Peter: *The Vampire's Bedside Companion, Gazeteer of Scottish Ghosts*
Westwood, Jennifer: Albion: *A Guide to Legendary Britain*

Wildlife & Countryside

Freethy, Ron: *Man and Beast*

Cryptozoology

Heuvelmans, Bernard: *On the Track of Unknown Animals*
Meaden, G.T.: *The Circle Effect and its Mysteries*
Orbis Publishing, "The Unexplained", vol. 4: *Creatures from Elsewhere*

Character

Mikes, George: practically anything (*How to be an Alien* is his classic; it's in his anthology, *How to be a Brit*)

Languages & Dialects

Morton, James: *Lowspeak*
Wakelin, Martyn: *Discovering English Dialects*

Military & Security

Brown, David: *The Royal Navy and the Falklands War*
Corbett, Robin: *Guerrilla Warfare from 1939 to the Present Day*
Cross, Lt-Col J.P.: *In Gurkha Company*
Thompson, Brigadier Julian: *No Picnic*
West, Nigel: *The Friends* (and other books on British intelligence operations)
Wright, Peter: *Spycatcher*

Police

Gould, Robert W. and Waldren, Michael J.: *London's Armed Police*

FICTION

* Indicates Especially Relevant or Highly Recommended.

Comics

Sadly, we cannot recommend many superhero comics by American authors using British settings; their errors of detail and style range from the irritating to the gross. The following have mostly British writers, who are doing Britain proud in the comics field these days.

Captain Britain (written by Moore or Davis/Delano; pub. Marvel) *
John Constantine: *Hellblazer* (pub. DC) *
Miracleman (pub. Warrior/Eclipse) *
Sandman (pub. DC) *
Zenith (pub. 2000AD/Titan Books) *

Cartoons

Newspaper and similar cartoons can provide a useful sideways view of national life. Particularly good if you can get hold of them are books by Posy Simmonds, Giles, Steve Bell, Frank Dickens and Bill Tidy.

Modern Stories

Any British crime stories (P.D.James or Ruth Rendell might be places to s ories and thrillers (variable quality and a lot of non-UK settings, but at their best, excellent).

Adams, Douglas: Any book (for insights into the British sense of reality).
Barker, Clive: *Weaveworld*
Coney, Michael G.: *Charisma*
Cowper, Richard: Clone, Domino *, *The Twilight of Briareus**, *Worlds Apart*
Fleming, Ian: The "James Bond" books.
Garner, Alan: *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen, The Moon of Gomrath, Elidor, The Owl Service* *, Red Shift *
Gibbons, Stella: *Cold Comfort Farm* (Dated, but definitive on mBritish rustic cliches)
Gibson, William: *Mona Lisa Overdrive*
Hoban, Russell: *The Medusa Frequency*
Holdstock, Robert: *Mythago Wood* *, *Lavondyss* *
Holt, Tom: *Expecting Someone Taller, Who's Afraid of Beowulf?* *
Jones, Gwyneth: *The Hidden Ones* *
Langford, Dave: *The Leaky Establishment*
Lodge, David: *Nice Work* * (other books might also be worth study)
Palmer, Jane: *The Planet Dweller, The Watcher*
Pratchett, Terry: *Truckers*
Priest, Christopher: *A Dream of Wessex, Fugue for a Darkening Island, The Glamour* *, *The Space Machine*
Rankin, Robert: *The Antipope, The Brentford Triangle, East of Ealing* (collected as *The Brentford Trilogy*), *The Sprouts of Wrath*
Roberts, Keith: *The Furies* *, other books (excellent for English rural landscapes).
Scot, Michael: *The Ice King* *
Shaw, Bob: *Dagger of the Mind* *, *The Peace Machine* (aka *Ground Zero Man*)
Willans, Geoffrey, and Searle, Ronald: the "*Molesworth*" books.
Wyndham, John: Various novels — somewhat dated, but may be useful for '50's Britain and geography.
Wynne Jones, Diana: *Archer's Goon* *

Magazines

Interzone — the most successful current British SF magazine. Has many good stories with UK settings, and makes an interesting contrast with US magazines.

Historical/Historic Stories

Useful both for historical data and British heroic archetypes:

Roman Era: Gedge, Pauline: *The Eagle and the Raven*
"Ulster Cycle": Gregory, Lady: *CuChulain of Muirthemne*
Arthurian: Karr, Phyllis Ann: *Idylls of the Queen* *
Malory, Sir Thomas: *Le Morte D'Arthur*
Dark Ages/Medieval: Anon: *The Mabinogion*
Medieval: Blish, James: *Doctor Mirabilis*
Chase, Nicholas: *Locksley*
Chaucer, Geoffrey: *The Canterbury Tales* (modernisation by Nevill Coghill)
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan: *The White Company*
Geoffrey of Monmouth: *History of the Kings of Britain*
Maughan, A.M.: *Monmouth Harry*
Scott, Sir Walter: *Ivanhoe* (and other "*Waverley*" novels)
Pirate: Stevenson, Robert Louis: *Treasure Island*
Thorndyke, Russell: The "*Dr. Syn*" series
18th Century: Forester, C.S.: The "*Hornblower*" series
19th Century: Collins, Wilkie: *The Moonstone*
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan: The Lost World: the "*Sherlock Holmes*" stories *
Fraser, George Macdonald: the "*Flashman*" series
Kipling, Rudyard: *Kim*
Stevenson, Robert Louis: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
Wells, H.G.: *The War of the Worlds*, many others
Early 20th Century: Benson, E.F.: the "*Mapp and Lucia*" series
World War I: Remarque, E.M.: *All Quiet on the Western Front*
Inter-War: Sayers, Dorothy L.: the "*Lord Peter Wimsey*" series
World War II: Monsarrat, Nicholas: *The Cruel Sea: Three Corvettes*

Films

(Do take notice of the dates on some of these!)

A Passport to Pimlico (1948)
The Blue Lamp (1950)
The Lavender Hill Mob (1950)
The Man in the White Suit (1951) *
The Cruel Sea (1953)
The Quatermass Xperiment (1955)
Quatermass II (1957)
Village of the Damned (1960)
The Day the Earth Caught Fire (1961)
The various James Bond movies (1962 on) — rather few British locations, but a determinedly British (anti-)hero.
The Ipcress File (1965)
A Funeral in Berlin (1966)
The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (1966)
Quatermass and the Pit (1967)
The Italian Job (1969) *
The Wicker Man (1973)
An American Werewolf in London (1981)
Gregory's Girl (1981)
Time Bandits (1981)
The Girl In the Picture (1983)
Local Hero (1984)
My Beautiful Launderette (1986)
Strike (1988)
Hidden City (1988) *
A Fish Called Wanda (1988) *
Drowning by Numbers (1988)
The Tall Guy (1989)
Wilt (1989) *

TV

Any police/crime (or spy) series made and set in the UK could be useful; these vary enormously in quality, accuracy, and style, but they should give you some feel for scenery and attitudes.

The Avengers (ITC, 1961-8)
Dr. Who? (BBC, 1963 on) *
The Prisoner (ITC, 1967)
Various series made by Gerry & Sylvia Anderson (Thunderbirds, UFO, etc): despite mostly being set in odd parts of the universe in the twenty-first century, these are a good guide to '60's British imagery.
Ripping Yarns (BBC, 1976-9)
Yes, Minister (and Yes, Prime Minister: BBC, 1980 on: Novelised by Jonathan Lynn and Anthony Jay)

Radio

The Goon Show (1950's — scripts have been published)

GAMES PRODUCTS

(Other Hero Games material is discussed above.)

Cthulhu by Gaslight (Chaosium, 1987 — heavy on Victorian London)
Space 1889 (GDW, 1989 — British heroes in a parallel nineteenth century)
Green and Pleasant Land (Games Workshop, 1987 — covers Britain in the inter-war period)
GURPS Swashbucklers (Steve Jackson Games, 1989 — for a period when British heroes were roving the world)
GURPS Special Ops (Steve Jackson Games, 1989 — Despite some minor mistakes, provides some useful detail on British SAS, etc.)

PRODUCT LISTING

These are some of the Hero products available at your favorite retail outlet. **Prices and availability are subject to alteration without prior notice.**

Champions®

Don't just read comic books, live them! With the easy-to-use character design system, the only limit is your imagination. Champions is based on the ***Hero System***™*, the rules system of all Hero products. Because of this common thread, all Hero Games™ are compatible. Learn one Hero Game and you can easily play them all. Champions has just undergone an extensive revision, but all previous Champions material is still compatible.*

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Champions GM Screen & Accessories™

This package has all the accessories necessary for instant Champions play. It is designed to make a GM's life easier and to speed up play. Contents include a screen with all important tables, maps, 60 full color stand-up playing pieces, additional character sheets, new campaign sheets and more. Cover art by George Perez. **$12.00**

Classic Enemies™

The Classics are back! Over 80 of the best villains from Enemies I, II, and III, now gathered for the first time in one volume! These villains have been completely revised. This volume features new stats, new artwork by Pat Zircher, and a revision of the classic adventure, Escape from Stronghold. Cover art by George Perez. **$13.00**

Mystic Masters™

Serves as supplement for any Champions campaign and allows players to simulate the sorcery of magical comic books—a must for fans of super-magic. With optional rules, guidelines, spells, artifacts, scenarios, and campaign information; Mystic Masters helps Champions players simulate super powered sorcery. Cover art by Bill Willingham. **$13.00**

Day of the Destroyer™

"I have become Death, the shatterer of worlds..." With these words, Dr. Destroyer — the greatest and most evil mind ever — announced his return. His most destructive scheme ever is revealed in this new Champions adventure. In the next 72 hours, nine out of every ten humans on earth will die. Can your heroes find and defeat Dr. Destroyer in time to prevent a global holocaust? They have three days. The clock is running. **$7.00**

Invaders from Below™

Hidden below the earth's surface are the Subterrans, a hideous race of savage humanoids. Their leader, King Earthwyrm, plots the destruction of mankind. The invasion is about to begin. Invaders from Below is a 64 page organization book for Champions. It provides a complete description of the kingdom of Subterra, details of the the Subterrans themselves, stats and background for King Earthwyrm and his 12 superpowered Darklings; and eight complete scenarios. Written by Scott Paul Maykrantz. Cover Art by Jackson Guice. **$10.00**

Champions in 3-D™

Every wonder what happens after your superhero steps through that flickering portal? And exactly where do you go when the Necromancer banishes you to another Plane? Champions in 3-D answers these questions and much, much, more. This huge 144 page sourcebook has extensive guidelines for running extra-dimensional Champions® adventures. Complete, detailed dimensions have been supplied by some of the BIG Champions authors: Aaron Allston, Rob Bell, Scott Bennie, George MacDonald, and Allen Varney. Toss in a campaign to tie it all together and Champions in 3-D is a must-have item for all HERO fans. **$16.00**

Adventurers Club™ (AC) - The Hero Games™ Player Companion

Now in its eighth year of publication, the AC is the perfect companion for players interested in the super hero role playing and universal role playing systems designed by Hero Games. Edited by Jeff George with contributions from HERO authors, this comic-book size (10.25" X 6.625") quarterly publication with a heavy-stock cover, will soon be expanded to 48 pages . Each issue has a high "shelf-life" due to the important gaming support contained and the strong-wearing cover. It hosts scores of articles on *Champions* ®, *Hero System Rules*™, *Fantasy Hero*™, and all of the other Hero Games. Recent and upcoming issues include material complementary to the revised rules of *Champions* and *Fantasy HERO*. There are also columns previewing upcoming products. Find out where Hero Games is going and what we are doing. **$3.00**

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"Now, You've all had to come over to Britain for some reason. Chasing someone? A puzzle? You needed a holiday? Well, whatever the reason, we're sure you'll like it here. However, there are a few things you'll need to know.

The fact is, we do things a bit differently here. We drive on the left, so do be careful with that car of yours. And our police aren't usually armed. In fact, guns are a bit of a rarity. Perhaps we can make some arrangements for your equipment, but don't expect us to appreciate it if you go waving your bally artillery around in public!

Not that we don't have problems of our own; you can expect some supervillains of course, especially M.A.C.E. We have heroes too, such as the New Knights of the Round Table — Her Majesty's Government needed something — and freelancers, of course. What you'd expect, really, given that we had King Arthur and Robin Hood centuries before Columbus was playing with toy boats.

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"This is Modern Britain, the ...

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