



BARROW WHERE
CHRONICLES

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Author's Note: This adventure was presented as a four-session convention game at Necronomicon, Sydney 2006 (2 x 3 hour sessions) and Sydcon, Sydney 2006 (2 x 3 hour sessions). It is a rewrite of a series of campaign adventures presented at the Guild, Wollongong in 2003.

Thanks to all those who took part.

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THE OUTLINE: The Barrowmere Chronicles is in part a homage to the wonderful world of British children's adventure series of the nineteen seventies and eighties, plus similarly themed children's book series like the Famous Five, Nancy Drew et al. As such, these adventures attempt to recreate some of the atmosphere and tropes of this kind of light entertainment. However, also present are strong adult concepts and themes, including depictions of madness, gore and indecent behavior to children. This is definitely *not* an adventure for young teenagers, or children.

The following outline represents how the adventures should *ideally* unfold, no adventure ever survives close contact with the players, but an understanding of the key aspects should help you navigate towards a rewarding, and hopefully, logical conclusion. There are a number of player handouts included later that should be issued at the appropriate juncture in time; they should also be read by the GM to help identify and understand some of key game concepts.

Story One Outline: In the small sleepy village of Barrowmere, in the serene Cotswolds region of England, a local schoolgirl named Stephanie Lewis has gone missing. A group of school-friends attempt to undercover the mystery behind the disappearance of their close friend. As the story unfolds, the teenagers uncover a local conspiracy to use the power of black magic to revive a long dead preacher named Thomas Crowley (after first reviving a legendary local footballer). They also uncover the remains of their friend Stephanie, who has been ritually slaughtered to empower the actions of the wicked conspirators.

Story Two Outline: Whilst participating in a football tournament (soccer) upon the village green, one of the teenagers disappears into a shimmering portal that opens up before him, just before scoring the winning goal in the final. The rest of the teenagers are compelled to enter the glowing portal to rescue their dear friend. They are unceremoniously transported back to the mid-1940s. Arriving in the 1944, they are confronted by six-men wearing cowls and chanting some very dark words, indeed. They escape from the seemingly overwhelming odds when a WWII air raid siren goes off. They later seek to solve the mystery of Barrowmere Manor. Why so many evacuee children have been sent to the Manor and have never been heard of again. The children discover that Lord Barrow of the Manor is in fact the long dead preacher, Thomas Crowley, recently revived with the blood of the long, suffering children held at the Manor. The teenagers attempt to rescue the remaining children and recover the *Book of Shadows* used by the coven, to find the right spell to get back to their own time.

Story Three Outline: The teenagers complete the spell to return them back to their own time, unfortunately, an error occurs, propelling them farther into the future than expected to 2064. The teenagers discover here that they are in fact fictional characters within the mind of the *real* Thomas Riley (the blacksmith's son). He has slain his abusive father for accidentally killing his only friend, Stephanie Lewis. He has constructed an elaborate fantasy to stave off the pain of his life and his actions. However, parts of his mental landscape are currently being erased: he is in a Bristol Asylum and is undergoing electro-shock therapy.

In his imagination, this damage takes the form of aliens landing that are made of pure electricity. They accidentally zap Miss Eliza Ricketts (a local schoolteacher) whilst she watches her 3D television, after one of the aliens *rides* the local power grid. Another alien unintentionally destroys an experimental rocket ready for launch and one electrocutes a local dog walking on the village green. It is left up to the teenagers to find some way of neutralizing the alien threat, or suffer utter annihilation. The teenagers eventually meet with a local, crazy cult leader who helps them return to 2003. Back in 2003, they arrive in time to attend a local harvest festival where Lord Barrow and his time-travelling cronies make a unexpected attack on the meddling teenagers, under the guise of being straw-bears. The children's nemesis is eventually defeated.

Story Four Outline: Six-months have past, young Thomas finds a pink and purple regency style powder tin lodged down the back of the bathroom cabinet whilst cleaning. He opens it to find a diary belonging to his late mother. After reading it, he discovers that his mother may have actually been a fairy who had the gift of prophecy. She outlines in her diary a series of six seemingly mundane events that point towards the end of the world. The teenagers must attempt to stop these events from occurring, or face unknown consequences.

After successfully finding a solution to the fifth event, the teenagers must find a way of entering the Otherworld – the abode of the fairies. The teenagers then merge into the body of Thomas, who stands before the Seelie Court (the Fairy Court). Mab (the Queen of the Fairies) remonstrates with Thomas for entering her domain (being a bastard half-human, half-fairy) and for also being underage.

However, she grudgingly concedes her respect and admiration for his persistence in attempting to gain entrance to the Court through his own dreamscape. She gives him a sapling of Yggdrasil, the tree of life, to renew the mortal world that he lives in and bids him good luck. Thomas returns to reality, a padded cell in a Bristol Asylum, and clutches a small oak tree. He has to escape the institution, and plant the tree to fulfil his destiny as the local manifestation of the Green Man. But he must first return to Barrowmere, and find and kill the Golden Cockerel, whose call will herald the End of the World (the sixth event to be averted)

The following stories are all inter-linked, it would be inadvisable to run the first (or second) adventure, without a proper reading through of part three (that contains the major plot twist) and four. These episodes contain portents and themes that need to be clearly illustrated leading into these later episodes. These themes are succinctly explored in the Psychoanalytic Breakdown of Themes chapter later.

STORY ONE: SINS OF THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION: Nestled amongst the hills of the Cotwolds lies the sleepy village of Barrowmere. Its golden-stoned buildings quarried from the ridges of the local hills. Off in the distance, baying animals can be heard heralding the new day. Frost lies like a bejeweled carpet under swollen skies, bringing the promise of yet further snow. The abundant village gardens are striped of their colors in these frosty winter months, except for the stark red berries of the pyracantha and the last of the orange rosehips. A red robin braves the chill, peaking out of its nest that is buried deep within a local hedgerow. It retires, thinking better of the pursuit of that early worm. Blue smoke wends its way from the open wood fires of the local cottages. Silver leafless trees shiver against the brooding sky; perennials in stark contrast, are coated with a thick powdery layer of snow. The village awakes slowly, and rather reluctantly, to greet the new day.

SERIES OF EVENTS

Story One is essentially a detective tale. As such, it relies heavily upon the timing of key events. I've attempted to lay it out the story in sequential order. Meaning an explanation of the abduction and murder follows.

THE ABDUCTION: Stephanie Lewis was abducted on Thursday 23rd October at around 6.30pm. The victim was concussed and dazed after being hit over the head with a large wrench by Thomas Roach. She was quickly bundled into his white transit van (despite cleaning, traces of blood are still soaked into the carpet in the van i.e. vital evidence). The victim was returning from visiting her friend, Laura Peckhurst. They had discussed plans to go into Bristol to see the band Scottish band, Belle & Sebastian, the following weekend (1st November). The unconscious Stephanie was taken to the Roach farm and placed in the meat cold store. She was tied up and hung from a meat hook. Roach rashly performed the act before full consultation with his Co-CONSPIRATORS. The three main conspirators (Roach, Wilt and Mortson) met for frantic discussions the next three nights (24th, 25th and 26th of October) to decide upon a course of action. The actual *death* of someone had suddenly become all too real to, at least, some of the conspirators (Wilt and Mortson). By Monday the 27th October, Roach had begun to suspect the others were not willing to take that next step, plus old habits were ensuring that having a tied-up attractive girl around was becoming too much of a temptation for the former rapist.

Roach opened up his victim's veins on Monday night (11.30pm), to aid blood flow out of her still, but barely, alive body. This act commits his co-conspirators to their much-talked about course of action. The cold of the storeroom ensured that this process was extremely slow and inhumane. In his frustration he eventually hacked off the poor girl's feet – to aid the blood flow. By Tuesday night, Stephanie finally died in utter agony and torment (around 11p.m). The spectral form of the girl ran distraught through the countryside and down the country lane, near the school and cathedral. She was spotted by both Adrienne Peckhurst and Todd Blakehurst at this time running straight *through* local cottages – something that ghosts generally try to avoid because it causes great discomfort and apprehension.

INTRODUCTORY VIGNETTES: The follow introductory scenes were designed to allow players to establish their characters and establish their inter-relations. It mirrors the kind of normalizing, everyday introductory scenes presented in children's drama that provide the necessary *grounding* for later strange events to challenge the prevailing status quo. Although not absolutely necessary, these events also help to lull the teenagers into a false sense of comfort that is unceremoniously ripped away later in the story.

Thursday 30th October

Thursday Morning #1

Frogmortson Household: As is the usual state of affairs for the Frogmortson household, Rodney has created his own particular brand of chaos – the player is asked to provide a suitable event. Suggestions provided by prior players include, Rodney hooking up a blender to a laptop that sprays custard everywhere; marbles spread across the staircase and the appearance of his lumbering father; *Retinol* gel used for pile relief squeezed into a toothpaste dispenser. The tumult finally results in mother, Juliette, dispensing her usual brand of good-humored, but scathing barbs, through too outright threats of sanction to her errant son, Rodney - whilst father runs away as usual from his parental responsibilities to the *City*.

Peckhurst Household: The mother, Dervla's usual placid demeanor is currently being sorely tested by her frantic husband's behavior. He should have left home for his weekly voice over recording session in London, over 50-minutes ago. *The Sun* newspaper phoned yesterday, threatening to publish a story about the actor's early days of petty-thieving, if he doesn't give them the exclusive 'contrite confession' story. This could prove embarrassingly problematic for the voice of animated character, *Bob the Burglar*. He is absolutely paranoid that a photographer lies in wait outside in Mrs. Ogden's award-winning privet hedge. He can't make it out to his car. He needs his family to assist him. If unaided by the teenagers, he will eventually put a black garbage bag over his head, cut out some crudely fashioned eye-holes, and presently go outside and dive into his yellow Citroen car and drive straight into the next door neighbor's rubbish bins.

Riley Household: The son of the blacksmith wakes up to a cold morning and proceeds to go through his usual daily routine. He cleans the kitchen area up (whiskey bottle smashed in the sink, yet again); he clears up the rest of the house, prepares his own breakfast and irons his own school clothes. The player should be prompted to make a *Brains* roll to see whether he remembers to go downstairs to clean the smithy area up, as wrath tends to await poor Thomas after school from his father if its not done.

The stairs leading down to the smithy area are completely dark; the light bulb here has apparently blown. This is the place where the MURDER took place (see story three). Even if the light bulb is replaced, the area is still pitch black (a void exists here); this is especially strange, as there is a window at the back of the smithy area. It floods in sunlight, this sunlight or anything else in the room cannot be seen from the bottom of the staircase (see DELUSIONS)

Thursday Morning #2

The story essentially opens with the couple of the children wending their way to school on this frosty winter morn, only to see a blur of red and blue lights emitted from a police van pulled up outside the churchyard. Upon closer inspection, a man in a white plastic jumpsuit (with 'police' stenciled on its back) and mask is found swabbing what appears to be blood from the doors of the church (main doors and vestry door) with cotton-wool (a forensics expert). Constable Broadhurst is presently putting up perimeter tape around the potential crime scene; he has a furrowed brow and grim expression. A number of local village woman stand around chattering, talking about satanic worship and how the young people of today are the source of all the world's woes. Closer to school time, Miss Ricketts will attempt to herd the straggling students into the nearby schoolyard, barely able to conceal her own grave expression. This is because Stephanie Lewis, a popular local schoolgirl, has recently gone missing (just seven days ago on the 23rd October).

The police investigations continue throughout the morning, with Detective Constable Neil Perry taking charge at the scene by 10 around o'clock. The local constable, Matthew Broadhurst, is seen weeping at the scene at this time, and has to be comforted by Cherie Heltzflug (the local Tea Shop Owner). Also present is the brusque, but dedicated journalist Daisy Meadows, who is the most likely suspect to pass on any tit bits of information that has been gathered by the police, but only if her questions are answered in kind by the youthful amateur detectives.

By late afternoon, the police will have identified the blood-type, it's the same as Stephanie (A+). It won't be until late Friday afternoon that a positive D.N.A test will have been completed, so that the source of the blood can truly be identified. The photographs of the crime-scene show that the blood has been carefully and liberally daubed all over the main doors and the vestry door. The blood will later be washed away by Constable Broadhurst (midday). The bloodstains look as though a brush has been used to apply it. Those attempting to smell the blood will notice the faintest hint of incense.

If the players explore around the back of the churchyard, they may spot the chunks of meat placed beside one of the remaining black standing stones (near the village green). The meat has been disturbed by crows, who have been eating it, the meat is now somewhat scattered. The blood appears to be reasonably fresh (placed last night). There is also dried blood present at the base of other remaining standing stone (located at the back of the churchyard). This human flesh has been cut from the body of Stephanie and placed there by the handyman, Mortimer Weekes.

THE BLOOD: The blood has been daubed on the cathedral doors because a local coven of warlocks – **THE CONSPIRATORS** - are attempting to keep the fabled Green Man of legend in the realm of the living. In the pagan religion, the Moon Goddess and the Green Man have a symbiotic relationship (see handouts), whereby the power of the Moon Goddess is partly dependent upon the passage of the Green Man. He disappears at Samhain to the Otherworld (Underworld or Summerland), and is reborn at Yule as the Mabon (he is a manifestation of the seasonal procession). An important rite of traditional British farming life is to keep the last harvested sheaf of wheat; this represents the Green Man's plight. It is kept and often displayed proudly on the altar of the local church as 'the living spirit of fertility'. This is particular case, the living spirit of Barrowmere's fertility – see **ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION** in story three and four for more.

By daubing the blood 'of the innocent' on the doors and casting a binding spell, the Green Man is unable to depart our world for the otherworld: substantially weakening him, and in turn, weakening the Moon Goddess – the symbiotic relationship. They hope to enslave the Moon Goddess, by effectively holding the Green Man to ransom.

This celestial symbiotic relationship, at least in Barrowmere, is mirrored in the relationship of young Thomas Riley (the Green Man/ the Mabon) and in the late Stephanie Lewis (Moon Goddess). The blood of Miss Lewis has enough power, in this particular case, to halt the departure of the Green Man. In doing so, the ascendancy of power experienced by the Moon Goddess (in becoming her Crone aspect at this time) does not occur. This leaves her prone to enslavement by the **CONSPIRATORS**.

A manifestation of the Moon Goddess is actively attempting to stave off this enslavement at this time, but her powers are slowly ebbing (because the Green Man's is unable to renew himself by departing to the Otherworld). The Moon Goddess will attempt to influence others to intercede on her behalf, to stop the daily binding spell the CONSPIRATORS need to undertake to keep the Green Man held. A direct consequence of stopping the Green Man from departing is that the fragile balance of nature has been upset, this ultimately leads to the events in story four relating to ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION and RAGNAROK (end of the world). Throughout the following adventures, Thomas (a living representative of the Green Man – metaphorically so for game purposes) is struck by the continued destruction of the flora and fauna locally (i.e. he sees and even 'feels' that the plants have lost their luster).

Finally, despite the blood being washed down from the front doors, the binding spell cast on the doors remains, until such time as two of the CONSPIRATORS are unable to assist in the renewal of the necessary daily binding ritual.

THE CHURCH: The church still retains some pagan elements harking back to the neo-gothic style of its original construction. Its ceiling has a series of flying buttresses; laced with images of woodland spirits, including the odd representation of the Green Man – that have gone unnoticed by the teenagers throughout their lives, until they make the pagan connection. The exterior roof still has many of its original gargoyles, peering down from up high from the seclusion of the eaves – the ones that were unable to be reached during the renovations in the 1950s. The grandiose peaks of the gothic roof dominates the local skyline.

The interior in winter is laid out formally with gold embroidered white and green lace. White lilies are found in abundance. The 12 stations-of-the-cross are dotted around the interior walls (this Catholic iconography represents the procession Jesus took to his crucifixion). A font of water, used for christenings, is locked safely away behind a copper mesh enclosure at the back of the church. Old rickety stairs ascend to where the old pipe organ and choral seating is located; beside these stairs is a roughly fashioned compressed cardboard confessional. A gray stone staircase can also be found at the back of the church that ascends to the belfry, where the church-bells are located.

The vestry lies at the right hand side of the altar. In this room are stored all of the church supplies, including the priest's pressed robes and accoutrements. The vestry is sometimes used as a meeting place for local community groups, like on Saturdays when it is used by the Country Women's Association. Presently found displayed at the front of the white marble altar is a sheaf of wheat – i.e. the living spirit of the corn a.k.a. a symbol of the Green Man. Although the wheat can simply be removed from the church, the bindings that keep the Green Man's spirit imprisoned still remain (see THE BLOOD). The only way to stop this process from continuing is to make sure that two of THE CONSPIRATORS are arrested (or confined) i.e. 2 out of the 4. If only two remain at large in the village, they do not have enough personal power to renew the daily binding ritual. The town's ghosts cannot enter through the binding spell effects. This hasn't always been the case because Adrienne Welsh has regularly attended it on Sundays to pray for her sister (and family).

Thursday Morning #3

The primary school is such a small school that the students are simply divided into two classes – Juniors and Seniors. The smaller children (Thomas, Rodney and Imogen) are in the junior class conducted by Eliza Ricketts, and the teenagers (Laura and Ryan) are in the senior class conducted by the Principal, Gary Strang. The morning starts with the usual Thursday lessons, but the Principal takes time out quickly to tell the senior students to avoid speculating wildly about events at the churchyard this morning, and to help out in comforting the smaller children. He eventually excuses himself from his senior class, and enters the junior classroom; he does so in an attempt to allay the fears of the smaller children. However, being as tactless and immature as he is, he does anything but. Hopefully, the players will play along as you blunder your way through his attempts to belie their fears, ending with the exasperated Principal leaving quickly in an effort to limit the damage caused.

Eventually, the lunchtime bell will ring. This leaves the players the opportunity to sneak out of the schoolyard, or go off to the library to do some research, or go and see Stephanie's parents, or whatever they feel is necessary to achieve their aims.

Thursday Afternoon

The school library also acts as the local community library. For many years, Mrs. Cerys Morag stormed the library shelves, dispensing justice and violence where necessary (even after so-called 'corporal punishment' was outlawed). She died three months ago and was replaced by a mysterious and well-spoken gentleman named Rupert Giles (exactly the same character as in *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer*). He has been seen at times furiously wending his way through a book called *Malleus Maleficarium* (1486) that is otherwise known as *The Hammer of Witches*, which is about the witch burning trails in the Middle Ages. Sometimes, he can be espied sharpening long sticks of wood that he euphemistically calls 'tent pegs', despite not knowing the first thing about camping. The *Watcher* has been sent to Barrowmere to keep a close eye on local occult activity.

The junior children are scheduled to do library research in the afternoon for a project about local customs.

On this particular afternoon as the children enter, an animated conversation can be overheard that emanates from the downstairs reserve section area. Giles is yelling: "I'm the librarian! I wouldn't throw that, if I was you! I've dealt with *your* kind before!" He stumbles up the rickety old staircase, glasses lopsided and shaking, he slams the door behind him as something simultaneously thumps heavily on the other side - a thrown book. He will be evasive about what has just happened and strongly denies that anyone is down there. He will refuse to let the children downstairs for research, and eventually he will make up a story about serious flooding, and how Mr. Weekes the handyman is presently downstairs dealing with it.

The trouble downstairs is caused by the poltergeist of the late Mrs. Morag, she is attempting to drive out the 'interloper librarian' from her literary domain.

Rupert Giles will dispense clues where necessary, although, the specifics of this particular conspiracy will evade him. He might even be tricked into talking about other spectral investigations he has undertaken. He has done advanced calculations about the local area and has identified Barrowmere as the present meeting point for the natural *ley-lines* of cosmic power. They were formerly over Glastonbury during the Middle-Ages, with natural shifts in the Earth's magnetic fields that have occurred over time, they have moved over Barrowmere. Giles formerly taught in Sunnydale, America; here the 'hell-mouth' was located, it was closed by Buffy the coveted Vampire Slayer; Giles now resides in Barrowmere, where he strongly suspects the 'hell-anus' is located.

THE LIBRARY: The library is the repository for most local knowledge. It contains editions of the *Cotswold Times* dating back to its first issue in 1955. Downstairs there is a small locked cabinet of banned books (like a well-thumbed book of the *Malleus Maleficarium* that pertains to witchcraft, books on communism and curiously, Victorian erotica). Although the card system has a reference for the book *Restorations: The Remaking of Barrowmere Cathedral* Gray Press 1965, author Mr. Harold Wilt. The book has long since been misplaced (or more to the point, stolen). The book can be purchased at Barrowmere Books or the teenagers can ask the local Lord to see his copy residing in his manor library.

Pertinent resources present here, include:

- ❑ *Churches of the West Country* Blake Press 1972 John Amis
- ❑ *Pagans, Wiccans and the Magical Sceptred Isle* Osborne Holdings 1932 Emma Ferris
- ❑ The Cotswold Times Newspaper 1955-2006

The library also has one old computer that is hooked up to the internet.

Thursday Night #1

One of the conspirators, the local handyman named Mortimer Weekes, returns to the church around 1pm bearing a set of keys and disappears into the church through the vestry doors (the doors have been locked since the macabre events earlier in the day). Once he reemerges, he will be clutching a metal pale and then proceeds to walk in the darkness, to one of the remaining black standing stones; he will furtively dump some meat and offal (more human remains of Stephanie) – he doesn't know what has occurred today. If the teenagers accost him, he will deny everything, and threaten them that he knows powerful people who could easily do them harm, being one of life's inveterate cowards.

THE CONSPIRATORS: The four conspirators are Major Alexander Mortson (a local councilor), Cecil Wilt (the churches' secretary/handyman), Thomas Roach (a local dairy farmer) and Mortimer Weekes (the local handyman). Cecil Wilt, whose father, Harold Wilt, wrote a book about renovations to the church, used THE TUNNEL to gain access to the MANOR HOUSE, after being curious about the events that occurred there during the WWII (see second story). He found a secreted copy of the *Book of Shadows* used by the WWII COVEN in the Manor library. He idly thumbed through its contents during the prior curate's legendary mind-numbing, long-winded church services for many years, but only found a real use for it during a late night drinking binge down at the Black Swan Pub. The conversation had blearily turned to 'who was the best ever, local footballer' and how the likes of Todd Blakehurst, the legendary Blackburn F.C Striker, would not come around again. Wilt interrupted and stated perhaps that might not be the case, and that he had a way of making it so. Nothing more was said that night on the matter, but at a late night poker game at Roach's farm in June 2003, Wilt drew out the book and outlined how the late Todd Blakehurst could in fact play his 54th game for the local Barrowmere Football Club team. The team affectionately known as 'the Badgers', their playing kit of brown and white stripes.

He further explained that he had done research into the events at Barrowmere Manor during the war, and related that he was certain that the late firebrand preacher, Thomas Crowley, was revived at this time, but was ultimately vanquished. He believed it could be done again. Despite skepticism, the other men decided it was worth trying out some of the other spells contained within the Book of Shadows, they worked. After some months of deliberation, they quickly overcame their resistance to the necessity to kill (or at least Roach did), to get what they wanted.

Alexander Mortson is the stronger personality of the group; Wilt and Weekes both fear him. Cecil Wilt has the wicca knowledge and is methodical in his approach to the practicalities of their actions. Roach was implicated (but never charged) in the disappearance of Swedish tourist, Helga Helgstrom in 1994 (see story four or handout). He stalked her and eventually raped and killed her. The late Heather Riley prophesized this occurrence and tried to warn the tourist, but to no avail. Roach's psychopathic nature made him a natural for selecting and killing the innocent victim – his only moral dilemma being the incapacity to rape his victim this time around, because of the necessity to draw 'innocent blood'. Her body was left to drain on meat hooks in his cold meat store: traces of blood still linger in the drainage pipes despite efforts to wash down the evidence. Her feet were unceremoniously hacked off to aid in the collection of blood, done whilst she was still very much alive. The day after her death (Wednesday 29th October), Mortimer Weekes was called upon to 'get rid of the body'. Despite his shock that the others had actually gone through with the plan, he did their bidding, mainly because of threats of violence issued by Thomas Roach. He thought about going to the police, but then considered how it would all look, he had prior knowledge of what was going to occur – even if he didn't fully believe it would occur at the time. "Why didn't he stop it earlier?" the police would say. Weekes, not being particularly blessed with brains, wit or guile, sought to remove the flesh from the corpse and feed it slowly to a local flock of crows. He put the body safely in THE TUNNEL on Wednesday night around 10 p.m. Unfortunately, the rest of the CONSPIRATORS then sought to cover the church doors with blood at midnight. Weekes hadn't been privy to the specifics of the ritual, they didn't think him smart enough. Weekes has spent a long day working over at the O'Reilly's farm installing electrical cables, completely oblivious to events that have occurred in the village.

Thursday Night #2

Over at the Roach farm, the three main conspirators are busily holding a séance to get in touch with the spirit of the famous dead football player, Todd Blakehurst. They are completely unaware that the spirit is in actuality, already in the land of the living - at least in spirit form. He has waited patiently since his death for his childhood sweetheart, Margaret Willets to die. He is blissfully unaware that she eventually married local fireman Harold Corbett, who has recently died. Harold is advising the Goddess (see THE THRONE). Blakehurst died in a tragic car accident in 1957 after winning the cup final with Blackburn F.C (see handout). Even in ghost form, the footballer is still in his famous blue and white Blackburn strip; he dribbles around a luminous, incorporeal light blue football. He is absolutely overjoyed about the offer by the CONSPIRATORS to return him to the land of the living, to play on the left wing for the Barrowmere Badgers F.C. on Sunday. The Conspirators also perform the necessary renewal of the binding spell, whilst sitting around Roach's kitchen table.

Friday 31st October

Friday Midday

The forensics report is faxed to the local Police station from Scotland Yard confirming that the D.N.A from the crime scene, the blood on the door, matches hair samples taken from Stephanie Lewis' clothing (supplied by her parents). Constable Broadhurst suppresses this news from the locals, by this action, he hopes to buy himself a little more time to catch the killer. That doesn't stop Daisy Meadows though, from obtaining the information from one of her inside sources at Scotland Yard.

Friday Night #1

Laura Peckhurst cannot sleep during the night, at least, the time she isn't out playing 'amateur sleuth' in the freezing night air. She presently goes down stairs to get some milk, and is disturbed to hear her mother still weeping, whilst working away on children's book illustrations in her den. She has been depressed since the death of her sister, Adrienne Welsh, from breast cancer and attempts to hide it away from her family. If Laura enters the room, she maybe startled to see a blonde haired woman staring back at her through the windowpane i.e. Awareness roll. It is her late auntie Adrienne, keeping tabs on her distressed sister, but she also manages to spend time watching the soap opera *Eastenders* on the television, left on mute in the corner of the room. If Laura investigates outside, she will see her Auntie cowering in the shadows of the wooden shed out back (i.e. away from the light that ghosts naturally fear).

Alternately, after Laura returns to her room and settles down, she may hear metallic creaking. In the gloomy moonlight, she can see her Auntie, bathed in blue light, despondently swinging away on the plastic children's swing set in the yard, looking like a lost child.

She will relate that she is sticking it out here until her sister is once again, happy.

Adrienne isn't particularly good at talking with children (or teenagers for that matter); she never had any kids of her own and it shows. She is also highly neurotic and self-conscious about her gangly body, despite it being beautiful gangly body (see LOCALS 2003). She has seen a couple of ghosts hanging around the village ('the footballer' and old dear Harold Corbett), but she is more keen to know just what has happened in *Eastenders* of late (How's Little Dot? fore instance). Although her sister leaves on the television, she doesn't have the presence of mind to also put on the hearing impaired subtitling.

Eventually, she will point up to the sky and lament she couldn't leave even if she wanted to i.e. THE THRONE. Adrienne did see a teenage girl ghost running through the town on Wednesday night (from the outlying farm area through the town region, and even *through* some of the houses. A big ghost no-no. Adrienne tried to go the church early Thursday to pray for her, but she couldn't enter despite having been there countless times before – the binding spell forbids her to enter, as it stops spectral forces from either leaving, or entering.

THE THRONE: The black rectangle shape in the sky blocks out the light of the moon (see handout). This shape is actually the Moon Goddess seated upon her golden throne - observed from the wrong direction (just present the handout, and don't explain exactly what is happening). Harold Corbett has become her de facto representative of late (the silhouetted man). The Goddess never speaks directly to any mortal. The reverse image would show a golden throne where a figure of pure white light sits proudly; she bears a sobbing child (Stephanie Lewis). Harold Corbett stands resolutely by. Under normal circumstances, the dead are *compelled* to head towards the 'white light' of the moon, here they enter the afterlife (Otherworld). The Moon Goddess' gambit in response to the plans of THE CONSPIRATORS is to effectively blockade the afterlife - so that the conspirators cannot bring people back – stopping the conspirators from bringing back Crowley, even if they presently wanted to. This gambit is steadily draining her powers, and once midnight comes on Saturday night (i.e. Samhain/Halloween) the spirits wanting release from the Otherworld will push her feebly aside. The only way now to stop the conspirators is to scuttle their plans, or get at least two of them arrested (to break the *power of three*). If they are incarcerated, or cannot perform the necessary renewal ritual every night, their newly acquired powers will dissipate. The Goddess cannot offer anything other than her best wishes.

The Goddess her self cannot, 'interfere in the lives of mortals'. So even under the present circumstances, she cannot relate who the conspirators are, or any information that might compromise them. She can relate that the Green Man is bound in the church, and the nature of the spell.

Friday Night#2

The conspirators are meanwhile, back down at the Black Swan pub, rashly celebrating their impending success. After a few beers, Wilt approaches Benny Mandelson (Football Coach) and announces that Barrowmere F.C better leave a spare space on the touch line for their latest 'star recruit'. He taps a finger on the bridge of his nose, and then proceeds to stumble into a row of nearby tables, scuttling beers everywhere – they are *that* merry. It is noticed by all the pub patrons, including Tony Peckhurst.

Later that night at around 3am, Mortimer Weekes and Thomas Roach drive up the drive of the churchyard in a blue transit, and head over to the graveyard; they exhume the remnants of the body of Todd Blakehurst and take it inside the church to THE CRYPT. They then proceed to have an argument upstairs as Weekes relates that he has hid the body of Stephanie downstairs in THE TUNNEL. Roach goes to Weekes blue transit and gets a large plastic hold all and returns downstairs to gather up the remains of Stephanie. They eventually drive it to Roach's farm. Another argument ensues as the others hear of Weekes' blunder. Weekes leaves petrified, and the rest perform the daily binding spell, yet again.

Saturday 1st November

Saturday Morning#1

The village green is slowly filling with various vans and cars, people are putting up decorations and stalls for the impending Halloween celebrations that are due to take place on the green tonight. Despite fears for the children (potential killer on the loose?), the festivities are taking place - as an act of defiance by the local community. It was at the suggestion of the local Mayor, Alexander Mortson (the co-conspirator).

Saturday Morning#2

There is the local Barrowmere Youth F.C football match scheduled to take place on the football pitch against the Bristol Harriers. Ryan, being the local striker and youth team Captain, is vital to the team's success. Get him to make 5 successive Athleticism checks, for each roll of 2 successes or more, award a goal to Barrowmere. Roll secretly for Bristol Harriers shots (rating of 3)

Even during the winter months the Cotswold region attracts its fair share of visitors, they are generally rich day-trippers from London, out to sample some fine but freezing English country air, whilst paying exorbitant prices for the privilege. Cherie Heltzurg over at the teahouse especially enjoys re-chalking her main menu board, doubling her prices for the weekend.

Saturday Morning#3

The conspirators will be busily sleeping off their collective hangovers and nighttime labors, at around midday Mayor Mortson will be unceremoniously woken by his alarm clock. He will throw the said alarm clock, and then be forced bleary eyed to go down and check upon how the arrangements are coming along down at the village green – being Mayor.

Saturday Night#1

By nightfall, the village green has been transformed into a sea of glowing stalls, stages and fairground attractions. The celebration of Halloween (Samhain) has always been a big event on the local calendar. Especially, since it was discovered to be a major draw card for rich American tourists, wanting to sample that *authentic* Halloween spirit. Local councilor, Alexander Mortson, identified it as, “a strategic holiday calendar event to boost flagging local sales during those slow winter months”.

No expense has been spared in the last two years to ensure that black witches, skeletons and goblins are out in abundance – despite being only tangentially linked to traditional celebrations. Barrowmere Council, having employed the services of a marketing guru called Martin Kerr to promote the villages’ interest, identified in focus groups that ‘kitsch Americana’ was vital in holding the interest of visiting Americans – who are known for their notorious short attention spans. Amongst the more garish displays of tat that can be found over at alternate-alternative culture stalls are day-glo trinkets (amulets), books on crystal healing by discredited Indian Gurus and hippie-style clothing made of pure polyester - much to Cecily Moon’s chagrin (that being her job). Elsewhere, reside fortunetellers, psychics and plain-old con artists, just looking to turn a modest-to-large fortune. Many skeptics go from stall to stall, ‘Tsk’ing’.

Some traditionalists are dressed in plain white (to resemble ghosts), others wear disguises made of straw; some dress as the opposite gender (Principal Gary Strang looking striking in pink chiffon and taffeta ballgown): these are all traditional ruses to confuse the dead and nature spirits. Bobbing for apples, is amusing some of the local kids that were not raised purely on *Nintendo*, the tradition states that apples cut in two show a natural pentacle shape. Some of the other local kids raised on *Nintendo*, are in a corner busily playing on their linked *Advanced Gameboys*, playing *Pokémon Apocalypse*.

The main stage is home to an assortment of local performers working their way through woeful renditions of specially themed-songs like the Timewarp (from Rocky Horror Picture Show), the Monster Mash, the classic jazz standard Witchcraft, Break On Through To the Other Side (the Doors), Gypsy (Fleetwood Mac) et al. An even worse cultural crime is place around the stalls as jugglers and mime artists, *entertain* unsuspecting members of the public, violence being occasionally visited upon them. The local children’s choir is about the only true respite – being a small town - Julia Whitbread (a local recital winner) *is* the choir.

The latest evictees from *Big Brother*, who everyone has already forgotten about, is the perky M.C. for the night’s entertainment. The young buxom blonde female is rather a hit with some of the village’s middle-aged men, despite not being able to string two words together. In the wings, Harold Corbett ruefully looks on, forlornly remembering better days – this event used to be his big magician’s turn of the year. For the past 25 years he has entertained, it isn’t going to be this year.

Saturday Night#2

THE CONSPIRATORS by around 9pm will make their way to the church in Weekes’ blue transit van. The Mayor will duck off to put in his compulsory appearance at the festivities. They gain entrance to the church with Cecil Wilt’s set of keys and make their way down into the CRYPT area. Once inside, they will start to make ready the remains for reanimation (by this time both the coffin and the body is but soil). By 9.30pm, they are ready to start the spell/ritual. Mortson, Roach and Wilt will undertake the rites, whilst Weekes is detailed to go outside and keep an eye out for anyone coming towards the churchyard.

The rites finish half an hour later, when the football player emerges from the tangle of matted weeds and soil; he is extremely agitated and shivering (being nude). He cannot utter any words, but can moan in recognition. If the ceremony has been left undisturbed, he is then hastily bundled into Weekes van, and driven off to Roach’s farmhouse. They put down his lack of communication skills to the disorientation sustained in being revived.

Saturday Night #3

Around midnight, a number of strange occurrences will start to take place all over Barrowmere if the conspirators haven't been caught or stopped.

- ❑ Harold Corbett (or someone looking *very* much like the late magician) will appear suddenly upon the stage, wreathed in a silvery halo of light, and implore those present to leave the celebrations and return home immediately.
- ❑ Some audience members will momentarily hear the voices of long dead relatives with something important to tell – like Mrs. Joyce Mortson hearing from her mother about her husband's many infidelities. Some will start to freak out and run.
- ❑ The Conspirators from 1940s will return to track down their foes (see story two) to get their revenge - *even* if the teens have no idea of what they have done to deserve it (if this takes place ignore THE CODA in story three later). These ghosts have the same basic attributes as the living, but they are incorporeal (of course) and cause sanity loss, instead of physical harm when they strike.
- ❑ Throughout the night, a number of vivid dreams of long dead relatives, are experienced by the living. Most local people barricade themselves and their families up inside their homes. A tremendous gale starts blowing up, it seemingly comes from nowhere; doors start slamming and creaking, trees sway and yawn in the wind, and windows rattle.

Sunday 2nd November

Sunday Morning

This follow scene depends upon whether the conspirators have been caught, or not. If they have, the players are ready to commence story two. If not, proceed on with Sunday's events.

At mass on Sunday morning, there are a *lot* of people in attendance, many who do not regularly make it out of bed this early on the Sabbath, if at all. There are animated, but whispered conversations breaking out amongst the pews about portents of doom (as Father Stephen Laycock speaks), especially by some of the more *dramatic* members of the congregation. Some of the more rational ones ascribe the events of last night to either practical jokes, or to the psychological effect of holding such a night: the phenomena of ascribing plain and ordinary events to supernatural origins.

Sunday Afternoon #1

Wicca Wares To Go is doing a roaring trade in amulets, talismans and charms this morning. Some suspect Cecily Moon of - somehow - orchestrating the events of last night. Daisy Meadows, sensing a breaking news story, has made her way to the village on a Sunday morning to get news and interviews with some of the locals, with a small high-8 camera in hand. A local television career awaits?

Sunday Afternoon #2

It is assumed here that the teenagers have been unable to stop the summoning of Todd Blakehurst.

Around half time, when the local team is losing by 0-2 to Bristol Harriers F.C. Cecil Wilt will arrive in Mortimer Weekes' blue handyman van. He escorts the still moaning (and dribbling) legendary local football player to the bench; most people don't notice him to be the legendary local, but they *do* notice that he is twitching, pallid and gaunt. After so many years being a spirit, the demands of controlling a cumbersome body are a little beyond him at the moment, but he is eager to play his beloved game. One attendee in particular, Margaret (Willets) nee Corbett is in no doubts who it is, and she is slowly sliding into shock off her plastic seat, whilst in attendance with her bored nephews.

The team coach, Benny Mandelson, who was busily roasting his players in the change-rooms at halftime when Blakehurst arrived, hasn't really registered the murmur coursing throughout the crowd, caused by the appearance of the new sub. Five minutes later, he points absent mindedly at the player, as another goal rattles into the Barrowmere net, and tells him to get ready. He ineptly attempts to unzip his tracksuit, and in that moment, his footballing brain finally kicks in; he goes onto the pitch and proceeds to score four glorious goals, to complete a late rout of the Harriers (4-3). Blakehurst is chaired off the pitch and is taken down the Black Swan Pub in celebration.

At this stage, THE CONSPIRATORS think of bringing back the firebrand, insane preacher Thomas Crowley. If this occurs, the events in the second story may as well as just take place around the activities of the 2003 conspirators (coven). Thomas Crowley will have little time for any of the conspirators, except for the cold-hearted Thomas Roach.

The powers of the Goddess finally give way completely, and the gateway to the Otherworld is left open, permanently. There isn't a huge influx of spirits (they generally have got better things to do in the afterlife than come and bother the living). There is a steady increase in poltergeist activity (the moving objects et al), hauntings and malign forces disturbing the very fabric of time and space (i.e. as in THE ALIEN destruction as outlined in story three). Under these circumstances, parts of the town will start to disappear and be replaced by blackened voids (see THE DELUSIONS).

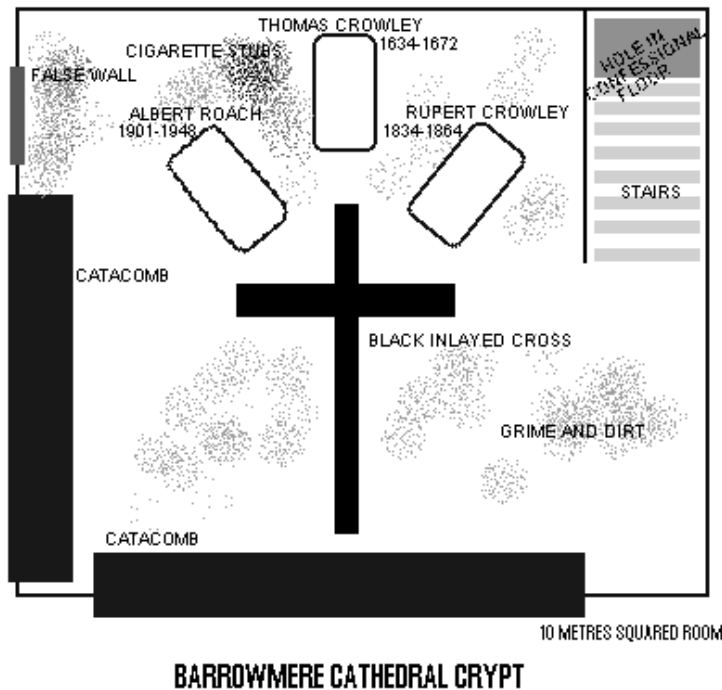
THE CRYPT: A major plot element to be uncovered by the teenagers is the presence of a crypt under the church. In recent years, it has been covered over by the renovations to the church. In line with the church changing from a Protestant church to a Roman Catholic one, a confessional has been installed. The locals always resented protestant control of the church ever since the death of Thomas Crowley (see handouts); they took the controversial step in the 1950s of changing their religious allegiance, and even dubbed their church a Cathedral to further incense. It only became possible with the secularization of social life after the war

In Roman Catholic observance, each individual is encouraged to go to confession, to confess their sins to a priest, who absolves them under the behest of being God's representative – this doesn't occur in Protestant circles (your contrition doesn't need a third party, its your own dialogue with God that counts). As such, the renovators took the opportunity to install a set of wooden confessionals over the entrance to the crypt region. The crypt being covered mainly because it contained protestant individuals laying in state, but also because it is lined with black stone inscribed with pagan symbols. The Aurg' Gak black stones were hauled from Wales and were used in the construction of the pentagram that once stood on the boundaries of the church – two remain. It forms a large black cross inset in the floor.

Present in the crypt area, are a number of elaborate white alabaster effigies on sarcophagi engraved with the likeness of the tomb's inhabitant. One of the three present is that of Thomas Crowley. Others Albert Roach Mayor 1930s (1901-1948) and Rupert Crowley a descendant and priest (1834-64). Amongst the dust and debris to be found on the floor are the stubs of *Gitanes Blondes* cigarettes (these French cigarettes have a particularly strong pungency and identifiable logo; they are smoked exclusively by Alexander Mortson. Robert Arkwright can confirm he gets them in especially for the retired Major).

A closer examination of Thomas Crowley's sarcophagi reveals that someone has in the past used a crowbar to lever off the top (groove marks scratched in-between top and bottom). This damage takes place in 1944 (see story two). If the lid is to be removed – it will take considerable effort by the children to do so – it reveals a mummified corpse bearing a large silver medallion decorated with jade, showing an effigy of the Green Man. The Barrowmere locals in the 17th century believed Crowley to be an aspect of the Godhead. The two others present managed to convince locals that they were in contact with the long dead preacher through visions.

There are also a number of unnamed mummified bodies of locals in the catacombs inset in the walls.



THE HOLLY KING versus THE OAK KING: The Holly King and Oak King relationship is played out in Thomas Crowley (Holly King) being defeated by Thomas Riley (Oak King). The second story essentially goes back in time to when the Holly King was in his ascendancy (1944 – after effectively being reborn). Crowley is ultimately defeated on the Twelfth night of Yule 2003 (Straw Bears CODA to story three) – when the new Oak King is of age i.e. when Thomas Riley turns 12, he is ready to deal with his destiny and reality of becoming the Oak King. He needs to do it to have the power to save Barrowmere (his mind) from complete destruction (stories three and four). The time travelling that takes place in the following adventures is indicative of the Eternal struggle between these two Kings, birth and rebirth (see handout).

It is only when Thomas can acknowledge that the Holly King (Crowley) is an aspect of himself, as Crowley is a killer, so Thomas is a killer (see THE MURDER). Crowley is an aspect of Thomas' DELUSIONS that attempts to hide this reality, though evidence still exists in the naming of THOMAS Crowley, and THOMAS Roach. It isn't just mere coincidence.

THE TUNNEL: A part of the crypt area has been filled in with mesh and plaster-of-paris to create a false wall, unfortunately, the plaster has steadily decayed over time and come partially away. This leads to a brick-lined tunnel that leads off towards the MANOR HOUSE. It was constructed during the early 1940s to provide cover during German air-raids. However, the air-raid shelter proved superfluous, as the Germans preferred to hit major targets like London and Coventry, British areas of manufacturing.

This tunnel leads to a rickety wooden staircase that in turn leads to a door with a large rusty lever inset. Light can be seen filtering in from the surrounds of this door, and if the lever is pulled down the door swings out into a Manor library. The door is secreted amongst a row of musty old books, installed originally by the 17th Lord of the Manor (Julius) to readily escape his creditors during the reign of Queen Victoria (1901). The tunnel walls have collapsed in a little from water damage and subsidence over time, a number of the bricks have fallen through and in the gaps, a number of roots have taken hold, growing through and hanging down like spectral tendrils. There is also a substantial amount of water present on the floor of the oval brick construction.

This tunnel potentially becomes an important plot element in the second story, when the teenagers need to affect a rescue of the held children.

THE BODY: About 10 meters into the mouth of the tunnel (church side). The body of Stephanie Lewis lies bedraggled and mutilated. Her face is still recognizable and looks like she died in total agony. Large chunks of her flesh have been hived-off her torso with a machete (that lies rusting nearby with Mortimer Weekes fingerprints upon it). The body is almost completely white (systematically drained of blood by hanging on meat hooks). A number of beetles and centipedes are crawling through her hair and out of her bloodstained and wet (discarded) clothes.

THE END: Once the body has been found and the teenagers report it to the police, it effectively ends story one. In the few months before story two starts, a string of new stories related to the pagan activities of the conspirators captures the attention of the nation. Also, the teenagers are likely to be called up to give evidence. The story that emerges shows Weekes quickly collapses under pressure and identifies all of his co-conspirators. The locals are shocked by the ferocity of the killing (i.e. draining body on meat hooks, chopping off feet 'etc').

Another possible story outcome is that one of the teenagers may be caught during sneaking around the church. If this occurs there is a spare character provided (Perry Lewis) who can be quickly inserted into the plot (he is also following up on his sister's disappearance in true amateur-sleuth style). The point being, it is a mystery tale, therefore, it is unwise to give away the plot by letting the character escape (see TIME TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTING).

If one of the characters gets caught, it also provides good character motivation and impetus, it also provides a more involved and dramatic ending: they will need to discover and locate the killers quickly to save their friend's life. The binding spell usually takes place at Roach's farm around 4 a.m; this is where the teenager will be held. On Roach's sheep farm, he has a number of large sheds outback (hayloft, farming equipment shed, cold meat store and shearing shed). The teenager will be held in the cold meat store, hung on meat hooks and tied securely from behind by ropes. You may like to taunt the player in the character of Roach outside the game room environs; Weekes might even enter the meat store and say how truly sorry he is – he might be even tempt to let the teenager go if the plot is close to resolution.

THE TOWN 2003

Barrowmere is a small English village in the Cotswolds region, a popular holiday destination for foreign tourists and day-trippers from London. The Cotswolds region is often represented in picture postcards purporting to show real English country life. Tourists often come to the region to find a place of tranquility, to enjoy rambling (walking) holidays and to sample fine English country fair. Barrowmere is a composite village of the overall Cotswolds region. You will find the an atypical village green, Gothic church, criminal stocks, ancient standing stones and water pump.

Most of the towns in the Cotswolds region aren't really working country towns anymore, they are more often than not geared solely towards tourism; they present an idealized version of English country life. You find a proliferation of stores geared towards selling English souvenirs and antiques, plus heritage restaurants, delis and pubs. The local councils here stridently preserve the old buildings within the towns environs and bar new modern-style developments.

Another aspect of southern rural life in England is the gradual creep of the 'stock broker belt' across from the suburbs of Greater London to the country. Given that England is a relatively small country, in the 1980s many professional people realized a country lifestyle was within their reach (less than two hours away). Many rural properties have been taken over by the professional classes, often highly resented by the locals.

The town of Barrowmere blends many of these issues into the back-stories of the locals.

The village of Barrowmere isn't given an exact location, but it is presumed to be not far from Bristol. The dwellings in the village are all made out of Cotswold sandstone; this distinctive golden brown color is typical of many of the smaller villages in the region. The population of Barrowmere is estimated to be around 300.

Barrowmere Blacksmiths is a working smithy, it still assists the local sheep farmers in re-shoeing horses and creating ad hoc mechanical pins, joints and locks. Jack Riley also makes a decent living out of charging £10 pound for lucky horse-shoes and trinkets. The actual building in fashioned out of dark wood, the Smithy section is found downstairs from the dwelling above (see handout).

Barrowmere Primary School is a small provincial school that would have been closed years ago if the locals hadn't rallied vigorously in its defense. It is a small quadrangle building consisting of 4 classrooms, a main hall, toilet block, administrative office and the local library. The building is made from old gray stained sandstone and has been in service for over 90 years.

Barrowmere Police Station contains a waiting room, toilet, incident room and two holding cells. When Constable Broadhurst is out on duty, there is only an answering machine left to take local calls. Emergency calls are redirected from regional command straight to Broadhurst.

Arkwright's General Store (formerly Willet's General Store) has been in operation for over 200 years. Until the 1950s it was the only store in Barrowmere. Arkwright is rather vexed by the intrusion of tourists in Spring/Summer season; he refuses point blank to stock 'Good Old Britannia' type of souvenir tat, but actively supports local farmers, conserve makers and weavers. The store has typical groceries and all manner of farming supplies. The store has changed little in the last 100 years; there is still the old fashion wrought-iron till, copper basin weighing machine and even an abacus present. Customers can still buy goods in brown paper bags, and lollies are still displayed in glass jars along the back wall. Old general stores like Arkwright's tended to display their wares *behind* the counter region, so that no one could make off with their stock, this is something the mean-spirited retailer has taken to heart.

Mandelson Motors is basically a small country petrol station that also sells the occasional vehicle. Mandelson has a part-time mechanic on the books, who is rostered on a couple of days a week to fix local vehicles, if needed. The small lot is where most locals get their annual M.O.T slip renewed. There are only ever on average between 8 to 10 cars on the lot.

The Black Swan Pub is a large two-storey country pub built out of solid sandstone that is now heavily tinged with green through years of moss and water damage. Ivy has grown almost completely over the back pub garden region, providing ample shade during the short English summer. The bar region is split into two regions, the main saloon section and the entertainment section. The main saloon has padded green leather saloon-style seating; the rest of the saloon has teak tables and turned-wood chairs present. The main bar has chrome tap fittings and plenty of bitters and ales on tap. There is always a television muted in the corner of the room displaying England's latest spectacular sporting defeat.

The other side of the pub is a less salubrious affair; it is decked out with plastic fold up tables and chairs and there is also a small wooden stage present. The 'entertainment section' is primarily used by the locals for hosting kareoke nights. The odd live band generally appears on the stage at the height of mid summer, curiously it's usually an Irish traditional roving group. There is also a small serving hutch inset in the wall here, counter meals are sold at lunchtimes and at dinner. The fare usually comprises of a simple ploughman's lunch at noon and typical restaurant-style fare at night (steak, chips and salads).

Outback of the establishment there is a small beer garden that is usually packed out in Summer, but only ever frequented by drunken rugby teams at other times – irascible Walters usually insists. Although children are allowed in the entertainment section at mealtimes, they are otherwise *encouraged* to play outside in the beer garden – generally by shouting.

Cotswold Fine Antiques is a pokey little shop that is crammed full of low brow antiques. Serious collectors run a mile rather than waste their time here, but Graham Sutherland knows his customer base: rich day-trippers looking for something rustic (read: decrepit) to show off to their equally clueless city friends. He can sometimes be seen outback during the off season, ‘aging’ some of his ‘works of art’ with a used toothbrush and paint stripper.

Barrowmere Books is a cluttered medium sized store, tourists often describe it as *quaint*; it isn’t, but that’s what tourists usually say about anything related to the English countryside – Johnson would be proud. The books are usually piled high where they were originally left, in no particular order. The carpet is stained with red wine and some of the shelves have been hastily repainted to cover over the marks from several fires caused by the owners excessive drinking and smoking. There is also the faint smell of ‘dead cat’.

Wicca-Wares-To-Go: This spirituality/new age store does a roaring trade selling trinkets, performing tarot readings and undertaking classes in healing crystals. The owner Cecily regularly hosts aroma-therapy, shiatsu massage and astrology classes, as well, plus any other buzz-word class she can think of designed to capture a lucrative slice of the *newer* new age market. During the summer months, she also does a thriving trade in introducing to foreigners to traditional Celtic pagan rituals, usually involving inexcusable bouts of middle-aged nudity and embarrassment. There is also a computer present in store, linked to Cecily’s online site that *neopagans* sometimes utilize to book the full pagan experience holiday.

Although Cecily is quite happy to take gullible tourist dollars, she also has a dedicated apothecary outback of the store, stocked with every magical ingredient you could ever wish for. She has a number of local clients (white witches) who she is fiercely protective of.

The Barrowmere Tearooms is a highbrow affair catering to the richer end of the tourist scale, those wanting to sample higher forms of English quality country fare. She doesn’t tell them most of her ingredients come from Tuscany. The tearoom is fitted out with china blue wallpaper and houses lacquered teak chairs and tables, the fittings and fixtures hint at rustic, but instead deliver sophistication. The *authentic* atmosphere comes at a hefty price, with many tourists looking in and then beating a hasty retreat back to the pub. However, there are enough unscrupulous rich tourists vamping around who are willing to sample basic English scones and tea, albeit with continental ingredients, at a rich teacake price.

Sterling & Sons Butchery is your typical no-nonsense butcher’s store. The butchery provides simple prime cuts as laid out on their chalkboard menu, the shop still retains sawdust on its bare stone floor (to absorb the spilt blood). Sterling & Sons tries to support the local cottage industry by selling traditional English pork pies, sausages and cheeses, as well.

THE LOCALS 2003

Here is an outline of the local identities circa 2003:

Tony Peckhurst: Tony is the father of Laura and Ryan. He is an excitable, gregarious actor who has had to rely upon the talents of his devoted wife for many years, because of a general lack of work, not his lack of ability. At least that is what his agent says. He moved to Barrowmere at his wife’s insistence after his mother-in-law died 12-years ago (the Welsh family estate). He thought about giving up the acting game, until luck recently struck in the form of popular children’s television animated character *Bob the Burglar*. Similar in concept to *Bob the Builder*, but the show is more of a morality tale about an impulsive thief who always suffers crippling pangs of guilt and subsequently returns the shop-worn goods. Furthermore, he generally tries to help his victims in any way he can in compensation. He goes up to record the show in London every couple of weeks, and sometimes takes his growing teenagers along to shop. He is currently in a state about the *Sun* Newspaper threatening to expose his ‘secret life’: in his early teenager years he fell in with the wrong crowd and was arrested for burglary. This potentially threatens his squeaky-clean image and his lucrative television contract. This character is based on Tony from the British Comedy series *Men Behaving Badly*.

Dervla Peckhurst: The wife of Tony and the loving mother of Laura and Ryan. She first met the fledgling actor at an artistic party in Islington in 1986, in London, whilst studying illustration at a local technical college. Her intelligence is a foil for the Tony’s impetuosity and brashness. She is a relatively calm and collected individual, providing the necessary stability that the family requires. Lately, she hasn’t been able to perform this function, because she is still grieving for her late sister, Adrienne. She has a slight lilting Irish accent from her time in Ireland, living with her estranged father, Sean in a town called *Ballykissangel*. Her young father had been unable to settle down in either Barrowmere or London, and also juggle the demands of his young family; he went back to his hometown and took over the running of the family’s pub. This character is loosely based on the character Asumpta in *Ballykissangel*.

Jack Riley: Is the local blacksmith and the father of Thomas. He is ill-tempered and violent, especially when drunk. His malcontent nature doesn't usually manifest in public, it's only when he returns home from the Black Swan Pub that he proceeds to exorcise his demons by hitting his young son. He blames his son, in a bizarre drunken nonsensical way, for the death of his late wife called Heather. He was blissfully happy once. He is still effectively grieving for his dead wife. He resents having to care for his son (see story three THE MURDER for more background).

Heather Riley: The wife of Jack and the mother of Thomas died when he was just a baby (1992). Thomas has always been told by his father that she died from breast cancer (this is not true – see the story four arch and handouts for further information). Thomas has been told she came from Surrey, in the South of England. He has also been told that her family was wealthy landowners and landed gentry.

Richard Frogmortson: The father of Rodney and Imogen and the wife of Juliette; he is a merchant banker of note in 'the City' for *Lloyds Bank*. He rarely has enough time to dote on his children, because of work commitments, but adores them all the same. He is representative of many professionals who have moved their families from the City to England's home-counties. The country estates around London have slowly become the *stock-market belts* of the 21st Century. This reality is keenly resented by the locals. Richard is the son of Albert Frogmortson (this provides for THE PARADOX story-line in story two), so paradoxically, he is the son of one of the oldest families in Barrowmere. Richard has moved his family back to the family estate in the last six-months, after the death of his father. Richard is an affable, kindly man, who could be amply described as being infuriatingly straight-laced and English. He went to Eaton and Cambridge, and majored poorly in Commerce. He isn't anywhere as smart as his wife, but has the necessary background and connections to make up for it.

Juliette Frogmortson: Is the wife of Richard Frogmortson and the mother of Rodney and Imogen. The former marketing/PR executive has had to abandon her career since moving to the country; never missing a beat, she has set about becoming the local leading socialite and event organizer – the locals are somewhat non-plussed as they have never needed their social lives *managed* before. This year's Halloween festivities have gotten the 'Frogmortson make-over'. She almost borders on neurotic in making sure that her family *keep-up-appearances*. She grows increasingly impatient with her husband about his indulgence of their son, Rodney. Due to her former working life, she has a witticism ready to hurl at an instant in response to one of Rodney's excuses for his errant behavior, although it is more often than not said in jest – at least, that is what she hopes. She has started to suspect that her husband is sleeping with his attractive secretary, Inga (attractive Norwegian, mid-twenties, blonde) – moving the family to the country is seen as *convenient*. This is more likely than not, just pure paranoia. She is a dutiful wife when it comes to spending countless hours in preparation for welcoming her husband's city clients into their home, although this is often done with a measure of zeal beyond anything approaching sanity. A psychologist might say she is funneling all of her pent up energies into home-making in response to her loss of self-esteem and purpose, that she used to tie to her professional working life.

Gary Strang: The Barrowmere Primary School Headmaster is probably one of least convincing parental figures ever to be thrust upon school age children. He is at times petulant, insensitive and immature. One could speculate that he gets along with the kids so famously because he *is* a big kid himself. He has a habit of leering and making suggestive comments to his attractive female staff members, and pleads absolute innocence if reproached. He has been seen, an awful lot of Eliza Ricketts in the supply cupboard, after class. He gets along famously with Tony Peckhurst, especially with Tony's good line in juvenile humor. This character is basically the same character as found in *Men Behaving Badly*.

Eliza Ricketts: Is a schoolteacher at Barrowmere Primary School. She is bawdy, vivacious and clever. She *always* has the last word. She is fiercely protective of all her students, and most of them appreciate it in return. She has an absolute crush on the local priest Father Stephen Laycock, but is seeing the Principal, Gary Strang until 'something better comes along'. This character is loosely based on the title character from the comedy series *Linda Green*.

Rupert Giles: Is Barrowmere Primary School's new librarian. He has spent sometime in America and has returned home in the last three months to take the place of Mrs. Cerys Morag, who recently died of a heart attack. He is quite eccentric, and spends many hours in contemplation reading Latin tomes. He is essentially the same character from *Buffy: the Vampire Slayer*.

Lord Hugh Barrow: Is a buffoon. A nice and charming one, but a buffoon all the same. He spends money impulsively; he seeks out the praise of others rashly; and is easily bored with his own business affairs. This is quite a setback for someone who has to administer considerable private holdings, and attend to matters of state as the local member for the House of Lords. Thankfully, his long suffering Private Secretary looks out for his interests. His latest endeavor is to convert his Manor house into a horse stud farm; he has no acumen in this field (or in any field, for that matter), but is willing to throw considerable amounts of money at anyone wishing to entertain his *studly* fantasy.

James Masters: Is the Private Secretary to Lord Hugh Barrow. The elderly retainer has spent many years in quite contemplation wondering just why on Earth he does it. Lord Barrow doesn't listen to his sage financial advice; he doesn't read the circulars he studiously prepares for his House of Lord duties; and he doesn't even appreciate his instruction into the formal requirements of etiquette, decorum and deportment for someone of the upper-classes. This reserved and patient man does so only to keep a promise to his late father, Lord Walter, "to look after the bubble-brain fool".

Father Stephen Laycock: Is the resident priest at Barrowmere Catholic Cathedral. He is a somewhat shy, but is diligent in his duties to maintain the spiritual life of the Catholic community, the local dwindling Catholic community. He understands that England today is slowly becoming a secular society, but takes the fall in attendance, at times, too much to heart. He attempts to hide his past indiscretions at his previous posting, a small village in Ireland named *Ballykissangel*, where he fell in love with the local publican's daughter, Dervla Welsh nee Peckhurst.

Cecil Wilt: Is the local church handyman/secretary and he also maintains the local parish records (financial and administrative). He is a part of THE CONSPIRACY. He is a rather haunted man, with the look of a startled barn-owl. He has managed to spook quite a few people in his time who have entered the supposed empty church: he is light of foot and deftly inconspicuous. He is deeply interested in both spiritual and mythological matters. His yearning for such esoteric knowledge triggers the events in story one (in response to his knowledge of events in story two).

Constable Matthew Broadhurst: Is the only permanent police representative posted to Barrowmere police station. He is a man of high moral standing and has been embraced by the locals since his arrival just three years ago – a relatively short time for a parochial small village. He broke up with his long-term girlfriend, Jessica and moved from Bradfield to Barrowmere make a fresh start. The village has provided him with everything his heart could desire, except for someone to love. This character is loosely based on the lead constable in the British series *Heatbeat*.

Detective Constable Neil Perry: The grimly determined detective is overworked and under-appreciated. His home life has come apart in recent months (his wife sleeping with his former detective partner), and he has funneled all his energies into his job. He looks haggard and spends his nights drinking his sorrows away, whilst watching detective shows. The type of detective shows where they spend their lonely nights drinking their own sorrows away.

Robert Arkwright: Is the local general store keeper who is known equally for his outrageous prices, and his pronounced stammering; he observes of the golden rule of general store shop keepers: sell them something *else* they didn't want. His vintage wrought iron till reflects his ambition, its jaws extract painful revenge on anyone wanting to make a withdrawal of change. Being the center of local affairs, Arkwright generally knows a great deal about local gossip. The character is taken wholesale, as it were, from the television sitcom *Open All Hours*.

Benny Mandelson: Is the local proprietor of the automotive dealership, Mandelson Motors. The sprightly, but rotund man is a jangle of nerves most of the time; he is forever drawing out his big blue hanky to mop off perspiration from his brow. His second hand cars are of dubious quality, and it's often best not to ask about M.O.T. He moved from his native Liverpool in haste after his development (read: confidence) scheme went belly up. The scheme to develop Anfield soccer ground (home of the famous Liverpool F.C) into a series of low-rent community housing projects effectively made him public enemy number one, two and possibly three. His love of football, in some respects, has made him a reformed man. He has found an outlet for his long dormant civic pride (and totalitarianism) by coaching the local football team.

Dennis Walters: Is the local proprietor of the Black Swan Pub. Walters is a serious-minded publican who is raking in the money from his various other financial pursuits (properties and shares), but is somewhat dumbfounded by the performance of his pride and joy, the Black Swan Pub. The pub isn't making a dime (ask his dodgy accountant for clarification). He occasionally finds time to relax in the company of his good friends (Mandelson, Peckhurst and Sutherland) and is actually rather pleasant company when not stressed. His famous gruff demeanor often gains full flight when minors enter the public bar main saloon area: he doesn't mind them playing out the back in the beer garden, though. He has had a series of waitresses serving at the pub in the last couple of years (since its purchase), they generally leave because of his grouchy demeanor.

Graham Sutherland: Is the local antique's dealer who runs Cotswold's Fine Antiques. He was formerly a manager of paper products' company in Slough, who took voluntary redundancy, or was more to the point, was forced too. He sank it all into his childhood fantasy, an antique's store. He knows next to nothing about antiques, but neither does his day-tripping professional customers – a perfect pecuniary arrangement. His one true asset is that he has more *front* than Southend beach, this ensures his business is thriving. He hopes one day to be able to move amongst the landed gentry of the country on equal terms, until then, he has resolved to be as obsequious as possible around them. He quite fancies waltzing around in a tweed cap, wearing waders and toting a grouse-shooting shotgun. In his spare time, he is quite the *lad* down the Black Swan Pub. So much of lad it seems that he is the other main reason why barmaids tend to be scarce around Barrowmere. He is prone to leering and telling rather inappropriate jokes whilst drunk – to say nothing of his wandering hands. He has been officially barred from entering Karaoke competitions at the Pub, there is only a relatively small cross-section of the audience who want to see and hear a middle-aged man cavorting around the stage, suggestively crooning *Right Said Fred's* nineties blockbuster "I'm Too Sexy". This character is closely modeled on the character David Brent as depicted in the sitcom, *The Office*.

Dylan Black: Is the misanthropic, drunken owner of Barrowmere Books. He is short with his customers and resents *foreigners* asking him questions about local heritage. The term *foreigners* tends to be loosely defined, as it also includes most of the British Isles, as well. He assures his more ardent customers that he is Irish, and that most Irishmen support the I.R.A - who would love to see all things *quaint* and English burn up in flames. He occasionally makes up extravagant lies about local heritage (the Barrows are haunted, the famed Beast of Barrowmere roams the countryside – alternately described as a 6ft tall badger, or a flying pig). His behavior doesn't seem to effect business, though - visitors by their very nature generally only turn up the once for the full *Cotswold experience*. He recently toyed with changing the name of the store to *Black Books*, after one of his cigarettes burnt down to his fingers, in his drunken state, and ended up setting fire to his desk and some of the teetering masses of stacked books. Still, he wouldn't change his lot for anything in the world: there is nothing better than winding up gullible tourists. Some may called it pathetic, but others call it a lifestyle choice. This character is based on the sitcom character, Bernard Black from *Black Books*.

Cecily Moon: Is the proprietor of the *Wicca Wares To Go* pagan store and its attendant web-site. She is frivolous and bubbly in public – some may say, even ditz. Her mother, Gertrude Moon, was a well-known psychic in her day, but her *Southampton University* humanities daughter favored the hippy aesthetic. She wended her way around Europe with a series of rock drummer boyfriends (nobody famous) and eventually found herself thirty and penniless. Despite having none of the spiritual gifts of her mother, she entered the spiritual business. She knows more tricks than a potential *Kruffs* champion (British dog show). She does quite a good business selling wicca supplies, mainly thanks to Norwegian and Swedish tourists who regularly visit to enjoy the true pagan experience i.e. nude, freezing cold and embarrassed, whilst chanting nonsensical gibberish, knee-deep in true English mud. It's almost like a return to her former commune days.

Cherie Heltzfurg: Is the co-owner of the Barrowmere Teahouse. Her Italian heritage (maiden name Lorenzi of Milan) is cloaked in the guise of modern British businesswoman. Her husband, Thomás Heltzfurg, is a high-flying German businessman who met Cherie in Milan, where she was working as a couture fashion model. After her modeling career slowed (with age), the pair sought to make a new life in the neutral English countryside (both families hoped they would settle in their respective cities). They both enjoyed it, but it proved impractical for Thomás' German based building contracting company and subsidiaries. They don't see each other as much as Cherie sees O'Reilly (the younger) named Seamus.

Nitin Ramesh: Is the head butcher of Sterling & Sons' Butchers. The Bradford native met Rachael Sterling (the daughter) at an inter-office training day for a large multi-national call center company. It was as close to love at first sight as can be, when you are supposed to be gunning down the opposition with provided paint ball guns. However, when marriage plans were announced to her father, Warwick Sterling, he vowed to disown his daughter if she married that 'Indian interloper'. She reassured her father that his heritage was Pakistani, but to no avail. She pleaded that the current English cricket captain, Mr. Nassar Hussein, was of sub-continent extraction; he said that while her point was valid, it was undercut somewhat because Hussein was going through, 'the mother of all batting declines'. Mrs. Sterling (the wife), told him that if he didn't make it up with his daughter immediately, and give her his blessing, she was going to throttle him with a sturdy rolling pin. He hesitated, the 'heavy roller' came out, his bluff was called and things were quickly resolved. Warwick eventually got to know his son-in-law and they discovered their mutual love of cricket. They quickly became firm friends. Warwick trained Nitin in the art of the butchery, and duly adopted the *Sterling & Sons*' moniker in recognition of his beloved son-in-law.

Mrs. (Pamela) Sterling: Formidable.

Major Alexander Mortson: Is a retired Major of the British Army, the Head of the local Chamber of Commerce, Mayor and local businessman. He is also one of THE CONSPIRATORS. He still retains his formidable military bearing. People often acquiesce to his demands, without him even trying to be intimidating. His business interests include a 50% share in the profitable Barrowmere Abattoir, some local landholdings and a sizable army pension. He is someone used to getting his way, and has no problem crushing those who don't agree. He has a fierce intellect to boot.

Stephanie Lewis: Was a local schoolgirl (see THE MURDER). She was very friendly with Laura. The pair used to go into Bristol and watch touring bands play. She has a brother called Perry who is also investigating the disappearance (independently) – see extra characters. In the days leading up to her going missing, she seemed also serene (almost as if she had accepted her fate). This ties in with her being a local manifestation of the Goddess (like Thomas is of the Green Man). Part of her being knew of the events to come – hence the poem in her diary (dated Tuesday 21st October). Still, the ferocity of her demise shocked her into weeping upon the Goddesses Throne. It's one thing to know of your demise, its quite another to experience it first hand. Her diary is found in her room at the bottom of her side draw cavity space. Her diary tells of her affection for a musician named Alex Kapranos of a Scottish art-rock combo called *Franz Ferdinand* (i.e. 2003, before they were famous). There is a number present in her accompanying telephone book, if rung the man will relate they 'had a thing' with her, but he hasn't seen Stephanie for at least three months – a.k.a. red herring. If her mobile phone is rung it transfers to her message bank i.e. unable to connect to her dead phone.

Malcolm Lewis: Is a local factory foreman who doesn't suffer fools gladly. He finds it hard to express his emotions and considers such expressions to be ultimately unmanly, the working-class man disease. If he found out that his daughter was killed by Mortson (his boss) he would more than likely attempt to kill him in a rage.

Jane Lewis: Is the mother of Stephanie and the wife of Malcolm. She suffers terribly from depression (not likely to be helped by the death of her precious daughter). She will relate, if asked, that there appeared to be nothing out of the ordinary about her behavior before her disappearance. She will also relate that she may have been seeing someone, a Scottish singer (see above).

Adrienne Welsh: Is the late sister of Dervla Peckhurst and the auntie of both Laura and Ryan. The unmarried photographer spent most of her years in Manchester. She specialized in fashion photography, but never had the talent to make it to the more glamorous of fashion locations. She had a succession of boyfriends, mainly drawn to her because of her beauty and natural charm; she could never quite dispel the lingering doubt about whether they liked her for her natural charm or good looks. That's where the neurosis started to develop. Despite her boyfriend at the time being a rising Manchester United F.C star; she couldn't quite understand why anyone would like her. Wasn't she ugly? Didn't she embarrass herself at every turn at parties? Then, her life seemingly fell apart. She was diagnosed with breast cancer (the same as her late mother); within weeks, she was in a hospice. From dreaming dreams of parading down Carnaby Street, her life became one of *Coronation Street*. Daytime soaps became her only solace. In death, it vexes her just what is currently going on in *Eastenders*. Is there a moral angle to this tragic tale? Stay tuned next week.

Adrienne isn't as shallow as this, but it has all been one hell of a ride for her of late. Before she goes to the Otherworld, she would like to see her dear sister happy again. She would also like to take the opportunity to get to know her niece and nephew a little better: to hopefully feel something that a mother might feel – having had no kids of her own.

Harold Corbett: Is (was) a retired fireman and amateur magician, he was married to Margaret Corbett (Willets). He is an affable man famous for telling tall tales and jokes. His retirement years were probably the most active and joyful of his life, going from children's party to children's party, doing magic tricks; often for nothing more than the pleasure of seeing smiling children's faces. This character is loosely based on 'Little Ronnie' from the classic comedy series *The Two Ronnies*.

Todd Blakehurst: The legendary 1950s Blackburn striker is revered locally, being the only decent football player ever to come from the small village. In his day, he was regarded as a potential England prospect. He was also known for his forthrightness and his plain-speak. He spent the larger part of his youth in Newcastle, and has picked up a strong Geordie accent. He was never particularly graced with intelligence.

Thomas Roach: The one defining incident in Roach's life was seeing his father mangled in an industrial threshing machine. Always a sensitive country boy, he withdrew into himself and didn't speak to anyone for more than four years. He was left to take over from his father (the other siblings being too young at the time) and spent his days out in the field. His mother noticed that her son became increasingly insensitive in his treatment of his sheep flock – many bearing large weeping gashes after shearing. Down at the Black Swan Pub in 1990, he was barred (until new management took over) after an altercation with a barmaid (claims of sexual and verbal violence). He was finally, strongly linked to the murder and rape of a Swedish tourist in December 1991, although he was never charged.

Daisy Meadows: The ever jovial and gossiping reporter for the *Cotswold Times* rather enjoys her chosen occupation. From covering the local produce fairs, right up to and including the covering the odd local murder, she gives it her all. She considers herself something of an amateur detective, having seen all of the *Murder She Wrote* television episodes. She has built up an array of informers and friendly detective sergeants' at Scotland Yard, and hopes one day to make the big leap into regional television news reporting. The fame! The glory!

Mortimer Weekes: The browbeaten and ineffectual Mortimer Weekes is one of life's big losers. Never quite smart enough or handsome enough to get what he wants, he spends most of his time running around getting things that other people want, in the vain hope they will reciprocate. He is generally the last to know about events in THE CONSPIRACY.

Seamus O'Reilly: Is the teenage son of local farming parents George and Tilda. He is enjoying a leap year between finishing school and going on to Southampton University. He attended a well-regarded boarding school, and deeply misses his older friends from there. He is something of a novice around the farm, as his father has always shielded him from active participation, because his son was 'destined for higher things'. The 'higher things' in Seamus' mind at the moment seem to revolve around attending raves, taking drugs and dating blondes (although he is willing to compromise his principles on the latter). He is currently doing so with the married woman, Cherie Heltzflug, who is 20 years his senior. He calls her 'Mrs. Robinson'; her little in-joke, apparently.

Dirk Maggs: The elderly veterinarian has given over 50 years of service to the local community. Born and bred a Yorkshireman from the Dales, he learnt his craft from old (now deceased) 'Old' Jim Mackelson, despite this, amongst some of the more senior farmers he is still referred to as 'the younger'. He thought about giving up his profession five years ago after reaching 75 years old, too spend his time travelling the churches of the world (iconography being his other love), but decided if he stopped moving, he would be in a nursing home or dead in no time. He says those wintry 4 a.m. starts help to remind his heart to keep beating. He is a sprightly, even at eighty and brings cheer and good tidings to all.

Doctor Mary Burton: The serious-minded, Scottish born doctor used to be a top forensic pathologist in Glasgow. The high-flier quickly realized that her social life, social skills and sense of humor had evaporated following up murders 24 x 7, something would need to be done. Her doctor, several months later, gave her a proverbial 'yellow card', when he hinted that her irregular heartbeat was probably caused by her punishing work schedule and the fact that she was pretty much stressed, most of the time. The A-type personality would have to slow down, or invest in a solid pine veneer box. At 35, she concluded that her biological clock would soon be ticking, so if she retrained as a pediatrician, she would be ready to fit into her fluffy bunny slippers. Unfortunately, after her first job placement, her employer told her that perhaps she wasn't suited to dealing with new mothers, but especially the kids. She returned to her first love (forensic pathology) and within two weeks, she was in hospital receiving her 'red card', and nearly her death certificate to boot. A retreat was called for by her doctor, in a rare act of (determined) caprice (i.e. she forced her self to be spontaneous) she opened up an *A.A. Camping Guide to Britain* and let her destiny (and finger) fall where it may, it fell on Barrowmere. During her two-month retreat the local doctor left, she stayed. The plain-speaking country folk appreciated her calling a spade, or more to the point, a brat, a brat. She didn't have to contrive cutesy euphemistic phrases to describe morning sickness, she didn't have to coo when a mammogram showed the baby equivalent of a human-prune. Plus, she certainly didn't have to feign a bed-side manner for the wayward, drunken no-good fathers trying to wriggle out of yet another child support payment (by getting a DNA test). A medical miracle or sorts.

STORY TWO: THE WAR WITHIN

Thursday 25th December

Early Morning

Introduction: The ceremonial ending to yet another year brings little respite from the harshest of winters. Yuletide once again finds the inhabitants of Barrowmere gazing out upon the stark winter landscape from the relative comfort of their den windows, safe in the knowledge that the open-hearth fire will blaze merrily away throughout the festive period. The invigorating scents of pine, oak and ash spread lazily throughout the houses, returning like joyous friends from the halls of memory.

Outside, yet another tale unfolds, one of paucity.

Starlings scuttle noisily amongst the snowdrifts, hoping to uncover one of the few remaining earthworms. Despondently roaming the winter wastes, a lean fox hopes to keep hunger at bay for another day by catching out one of the weakened rodents. Squirrels nervously scamper around the hedgerow undergrowth hoping to rediscover that last remaining buried hazelnut. Yet, in a local field life springs Eternal, a farmer braces himself against the cascading winds and damp cold dark sky, to attend to a late winter's lamb. It's timorous cry of existence lost upon the silent landscape.

Through the bare silver trees that dot the white landscape, through a hedgerow over burdened with long elongated icicles, and through the double-glazed windows etched with wondrous icy crystal patterns. The darkened Frogmorston House is just starting to stir...

The Frogmorston House at Xmas is a place of excess, there is wrapping paper strewn from one end of the hallway to the other. The numerous Xmas presents given to Rodney would cause consternation in the mind of any well trained child psychologist, if not despair. It is not that Imogen isn't as well loved as her brother; it's just that Rodney tends to whine a hell of a lot more. Let the person playing Rodney have an opportunity to decide the details of how his presents lead to an impossibly dangerous situation, read rancorous state of affairs. Some suggestions include a water pistol, watercolors set mixed together and sprayed at Imogen's new expensive white outfit; rollerskates, Xmas tree, Xmas lights and a well placed balcony (falling into a well placed snowdrift) et al.

Down the windswept lane, past the ice-covered mini-minor, around the darting waxwing bird hungrily devouring the last sweet red bulbs of the cotton-easter bush, a man crunches his way along the path in the opposite direction. He staggers against the breeze and swings open a small garden gate, he stands before the austere dark brown surrounds of the local smithy.

This is Jack Riley coming home from an all night 'lock-ins' (illegal after-hours drinking) at the Black Swan Pub. Dennis Walters, deciding the best way to make some money out of the Pub is to attend to his regular customers' wishes. Jack Riley will present his son with a spittle-drenched harmonica (the Mabon's instrument). He is filled with a little Xmas spirit, but also an awful lot of Bailey's Irish Crème. Later in the morning, if Thomas dares to play it his new instrument, Jack will lose his temper and become violent, instead. Xmas spirit only going so far when you've also got the mother of all hangovers.

Further down the country lane, an eager-eyed pheasant scraps around for fallen seeds in the trodden snow, an even stealthier tabby cat jumps from a nearby brick wall and delights in the chase; Mrs. Henderson looks on horrified through her crinoline shears as her cat (Mrs. Tiddles) turns feral. Next door, Tony Peckhurst twitches his net curtains spying the disturbance, and admires the feline's singular determination to get a decent Xmas feed into him (Mrs. Tiddles being a male-tom cat to everyone except Mrs. Henderson old, who has cataracts).

Tony Peckhurst has been put on a diet because he is getting fat, cruelly just before Christmas. He has implored his children to go and buy him surreptitiously some traditional Xmas fare down at Arkwright's General Store – his so called loving wife putting him on the said 'concentration camp-like' diet. Tony is prone to exaggeration. He'll eventually try to cook a large turkey on the barbecue outback in the garden shed. The large frozen turkey will get well cooked on the outside, but remain a solid block of ice in the center. This isn't necessarily a problem, as he also manages to burn down the garden shed in the process, after wantonly helping along the flames with a little kerosene. He is on the diet because he has been offered the lead role in the live action version of *Bob the Burglar*, his wife says he is so fat that he looks like the 'Michelin Tyre Man' in those black and white striped shirts. She has also cruelly quipped that he is probably more suited to playing a *Teletubby* at the moment, without the padded fat suit.

Friday 3rd January 2004

Midday

THE SOCCER TOURNAMENT: Early in the New Year (Friday 3rd January 2004) the local soccer association hosts the Gloucestershire regional youth soccer competition. The tournament comprises of three preliminary rounds (4 pools with 4 teams each), two semi-finals and a final. Due to the fact that the Barrowmere team might end up playing five games on a single day, both Thomas and Rodney have been roped in by the local team youth coach, Benny Mandelson. They are there to basically fill in the numbers, whilst Ryan goes about scoring a bundle of goals up at the other end. Depending upon time restraints, you might like to let the players actively participate in the game by making Athletics rolls, place either Thomas or Rodney in goal and put Ryan up out front as their main striker. Both goalkeeper and striker should now make five successive (and alternating) Athletics skill checks (i.e. 5 chances to stop shots or score goals in each game). Both Laura and Imogen will be in attendance, Laura to admire the guys and Imogen at the behest of her over eager parents, who want to catch every second of Rodney glorious sporting debut, through a couple of super High-8 video cameras.

The local *Barrowmere Badgers* will make to a semi-final, mainly because of Ryan's striking skills. Towards the end of the match (hopefully when the Badgers need a goal desperately) Ryan will streak down the touch-line, nutmeg past three of the opposition's sprawling defenders and zero his sights on targeting the corner of the goal, shoot and then promptly disappear.

THE PORTAL: Ryan disappears into a vortex that can only be seen emerging by viewing it directly square on. You should make each person who attempts to investigate make a difficult Awareness check, or they will also disappear through it. Hopefully, this means that the majority of the teenagers will disappear through the vortex, before they even know what is exactly happening. The person who successfully makes their Awareness check will see that if they stand directly on to the portal, they can see the outline of an unstable portal flowing through onto a darkened landscape. Though the sun is riding high in the sky in 2004, they can see through to a full moon where the sun should be in 1944. Upon closer inspection, they might be able to adjust their field of vision accordingly (from light to dark) and see that Ryan is being held by someone in long, flowing gray robes. He is holding a gun directly to Ryan's head; the figure is ushering them forth to enter the portal. The Barrowmere 2003 adults will standby quite dumbfounded, or go off in a dither looking for their local constable. It is ultimately left up to the teenagers to rescue their captured companions. The major issue for the GM here is to convince all of the teenagers to enter the portal. If one player remains behind, allowances have been made (see TIME TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTING). A potential triggering event for the teenagers to hurry up and enter the portal is that the portal begins to become unstable and starts to shrink, they can jump through heroically just as it closes up.

THE SETUP: On the other side of the portal is 1944. Here Lord Walter Barrow (Thomas Crowley) – see PLAN I – is enacting PLAN II. He has opened up a portal to the future to do away with the teenagers once and for all, those teenagers who thwarted his plans before (see story one), but mainly later (see CODA story three).

Once the players find themselves in 1944, they will likely to be scattered by the fortuitous air raid that takes place as Lord Barrow finishes his SPEECH. The portal back will have vanished, so the players will need to uncover just how the men in the cowls created in the vortex they entered (see PLAN II). This will lead them to the discovery of the murders and abuses of the EVACUEES. If they go to the WWII TOWN for assistance, they will quite naturally be assumed to be lost evacuees, and the boys will be frog-marched up to the MANOR gates to be billeted there, whilst the girls' will likely to be taken to the Girl's Reform School, instead.

Tuesday 21st March 1944

THE SPEECH: Unbeknownst to Lord Barrow, the playing fields are populated with people and furthermore, one of the teenagers has managed to kick a soccer ball right through the portal, accidentally flying into one of his five companion's head, laying him out for the count. However, the cloaked villains also have an ace up their sleeves, loaded service revolvers.

It is important that all the players enter the vortex. Efforts should be made to prompt the recalcitrant, cautious ones to enter by the contrivance of the vortex becoming unstable and starting to perceptively shrink – or remind them they are inquisitive sleuthing teenagers. Although an alternative plot line is provided later (see TIME TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTING) for the events to take place in the present timeframe, there's more fun to be had in 1944. Another contrivance is for the vortex to suddenly expand and engulf all those standing there. Everyone who enters will have to scatter anyway because of the air raid, so the children will still be on their own.

Once all the teenagers have entered the vortex and have been flung into the darkened landscape of 1944. The five remaining conscious casters (standing around the magic circle) will train their guns upon the teenagers (including the others that couldn't be seen from 2003). Lord Walter Barrow (Crowley) will remove his cloak and make a short bad-guy style speech (sample provided).

“Well! I had intended to deal with you in the future, but there’s no time like the present!” -chuckle-

“You have *no* idea just how much trouble you have caused me in the future, and if my companions have anything to say about it, you’re not going to *have* a future!” -chuckle- -snigger-

“I must say, I do make quite an effective *bad* guy. But now I tire off it, I don’t intend for any of you to thwart my plans for a third time running”. -cold stare- “Now you must die.”

As the speech comes to a close, the sound of a plane can be heard in the sky. It gradually comes closer as he speaks, and an engine can be heard spluttering intermittently (a laptop with an appropriate .wav file playing would add immeasurably to the effect). The point is that when he rounds out his vainglorious, self-reverential speech, the sound of a doodlebug (bomb) gradually gets closer and closer, as well. It effects his COVEN morale badly, causing alarm; they eventually start freaking out and run away. An air-raid siren is heard going off in the distance, slowly revving up ominously. The bomb drops perilously close – close enough to temporarily damage someone’s hearing, but not close enough to injure. However, it does have the effect of scattering all and sundry, and provides an avenue of escape for the teenagers against the overwhelming odds of men with guns. Subsequently, a plane plows into the village green up towards to the Barrows (see THE PLANE).

The teenagers are likely to be separated because of the dimness of the landscape; however, a couple of the town’s spotlights will eventually be projected up into the night sky. Someone may be nearly run over on the country road by a car with no headlights on (the Area Nurse returning from a callout). There is a manned barricade placed at the entrance to the village on the northern side, staffed by one of the local ARP Warden, Harold Corbett.

THE PLANE: Off in the distance, the teenagers can see the location of the down plane; at first, they have better things to do than play amateur detective, but a description is provided for those curious. As the teenagers get closer they see that a German bomber has plowed a deep furrow the length of the village green and slammed into a spinney of nearby trees. The plane is on fire. As they get closer, they can see that the pilot has been thrown partially out of his cockpit, and hangs over its side face down. If the teenagers investigate to see if he is still alive, they turn him over, and see he is quite cut up and very much dead. The shocking aspect is he looks spookily like an older version of Thomas. This is a metaphorical signpost of Thomas’ pending fate if he doesn’t succeed in his task (see THE DELUSIONS).

WORLD TWO REALITIES: Once the players finally find their bearing and manage to evade recapture by the COVEN, they will probably head off towards the town (i.e. the spotlight’s source). A likely necessity given that the boys are dressed in flimsy soccer uniforms on a cold Autumn’s night.

In 1944, there were a quite a few concessions made to the war effort, and to general safety:

Blackout: By authority of British Government, every village had appointed an A.R.P. Warden (Air Raid Precaution). This individual’s job was to ensure that each and every house was ‘made invisible’ to German bombers. Any domestic - or industrial - light source (windows, open doors “etc”) was required by law to be blacked-out. Black felt cloth wasn’t rationed during the war expressly to aid this purpose. For safety reasons, windows were taped and sometimes bordered up with wood, this also stopped downed German pilots hiding in abandoned buildings. People could purchase Anderson Shelters (six-molded corrugated iron sheets bolted together) that were dug into the earth and covered with soil. The ARP Warden wore a tin helmet, and an arm-band (both with W and A.R.P. emblazoned respectively), and they also carried a torch to check for infractions to the black-out policy and to look for downed German pilots. Another important area of control was in the dimming of motor vehicle headlights – people were often forced to drive in near darkness to aid in the war effort. The ‘little blitz’ as it came to be known occurred in London in June 1944 (and other areas); this sustained (and ultimately futile) last gasped attack by the German caused a large exodus of children from major towns to the country. These events take place three months earlier, but there are still sporadic raids at this time.

Bombings: In major centers or sites of industry the Germans focussed their aerial attacks. However, occasionally German planes (and British) were hit during combat, or malfunctioned on route. Under such circumstances, they generally ditched their bombs wherever they happened to be at the time (see THE PLANE). The types of bombs varied, including incendiary bombs (designed to light up the target and/or start fires), large 120 pound bombs (designed to fragment and destroy, but also to help spread fires) and later, V1 Flying Bombs and V2 Rockets (collectively known as Doodlebugs). These latter types made a distinctive whooshing sound that stopped just before a bomb hit its target – a very ominous sign. In London, people often cowered in *Underground* train platforms and any other ready made bomb shelters. Rarely were these dedicated shelters constructed outside of decent sized towns, in Coventry they even resorted to hiding under train railway bridges. However, Barrowmere has a bomb shelter connecting the CHURCH and the MANOR HOUSE (see story one), but it hasn’t been used since being built (it was built during the ‘Phoney War’ hysteria at the start of the war).

Removal of Local Landmarks: Before the war broke out, the British government undertook the massive operation to remove all identifying signs from its rural landscape. Road signs, street signs, lamp lights and any other type of sign or identifying feature were removed to stop German spies from gathering intelligence information.

Rationing: This process became an integral part of British wartime policy. Each citizen was given a standard allowance of common foodstuffs, and was allowed to select from additional exotic items rationed by stamp issue. By this stage of the war, the allowance was barely enough for most to survive on. Each citizen was issued with ration books (food and clothing versions) and stamps. You had to have official papers to get these ration books and stamps, or otherwise you wouldn't be rendered Government assistance, and most probably be regarded with dire suspicion (a spy in WWII was colloquially known as a *quizzling* by the British people). Many public programs taught of the importance of *making do* with what you had, many in rural areas made sure that they supplemented their meager rations by growing their own vegetables. Another area of rationing was in the use of fuel; most domestic fuel consumption was considered an extravagance in wartime, and most domestic fuel use was either by the Home Guard, Area Nurses or Regular Army vehicles.

Home Guard: To defend their home soil whilst their mainline fighters fought in European theatres of war, the British Government established the Home Guard in May 1940 (originally called the Local Defence Volunteers). This voluntary army was comprised of men who were either too old or too young for the regular army, people who had injuries or deformities forbidding them from entering frontline service, or those who held reserved occupations (those professions that were felt vital to the continuing war effort). By this stage of the war (March 1944), most volunteers had been equipped with basic infantry army gear, although some still had to make do with whatever they could find (pitchforks, old vintage guns, sharpened broom handles). Basic functions included looking for downed German pilots, making sure vital local assets were secured from sabotage (water towers, gun batteries and bridges), attend to anti-aircraft guns, perform basic police functions and maintain barricades in and out of towns.

Evacuees: During the Second World War, nearly 3.5 million people (mainly children) were displaced in the United Kingdom due to the German bombing campaign. Around one million children were evacuated from large towns and cities, just before the outbreak of war in 1939. There were no bombing raids in the early months of the war (known colloquially as the *Phoney War*), and many children returned home. Heavy bombing raids started in autumn of 1940 (known as 'the Blitz' – the German word for *lightning*). However, the Germans really took it to unprecedented levels in June 1944, when V1 Flying bombs and V2 rockets created a firestorm across London (and other large cities). These children weren't forced to go, but many government posters of the time encouraged the process. The displacement experience varied greatly, some enjoyed the pastoral existence offered by their countryside retreats, whilst others became little more than unpaid labor for their unscrupulous hosts. The local children were often very cruel to their billets.

These children were sent to the country with labels attached to them (just like parcels), in case they forgot their names in the tumult. They also carried their standard issue gas masks. Many children found it extremely hard to adjust to being away from their parents, but also their brothers and sisters: rarely were large families of the 1940s billeted in the same location. In some cases, the children were sent from village to village and displayed to the locals, who then selected the child they wished to billet – further adding to the sense of alienation and rejection. The billetors were paid a token amount of money (10s 6d) to look after a child and there was little in the way of follow up reporting on their treatment.

THE TOWN 1944

In the light of the WORLD WAR TWO REALITIES, Barrowmere has instituted a number of restrictions upon its community and their activities. At either end of the main street (where the shops are located) are manned movable wooden barricades. These are designed to restrict the movement of heavy vehicles in case of invasion. At the Northern Church end, Harold Corbett (ARP Warden/Fireman) has been posted in the sentry box. At the Southern end, Corporal Timothy Jones is *supposed* to be present, but is called away by THE COVEN's nefarious activities. Also, the street lamps have been covered up with tarpaulin and ropes. The road signs have also been removed.

The houses and remaining businesses have either been blacked out with paint or cloth, or have been bordered up with wood. There are, of course, few cars travelling along the roads at night. The Home Guard and Area Nurse being the only ones who occasionally venture out at night. The Area Nurse is returning from delivering a baby at an outlying farm, whilst the Home Guard is likely to send out a vehicle presently, to look for the downed PLANE.

Looking over towards the MANOR Estate from the main road is possible in 1944, because shortly after the war a sizable portion of the Estate was sold off to help fight the charges brought against LORD BARROW. The charges resultant from this story (he was subsequently classed as being criminally insane, instead). The Estate is criss-crossed with bracken and vegetable patch plantings, there is also barbed wire scattered throughout and trenches dug to hinder strangers (Germans or investigators into the MANOR HOUSE) from getting too familiar with their surrounds. There are also garden beds present out front of the residential homes on the other side of the street – the people doing their ample best to 'make do' during wartime.

Clothing: The men present within the village wear old suits, worn overcoats, heavy work clothing (overalls), or old military uniforms – as per the ‘make do and mend’ wartime ethos. The women present wear simple patterned dresses, shortened skirts, trousers or dungarees. They also wear cotton blouses, knitted woolen jumpers, and square-shouldered jackets (similar in style and cut to men’s dress uniforms).

This ‘make do and mend style’ became known as ‘utility fashion’, these styles strictly adhered to the principles of items being easy to make and using a minimum of precious cloth. Heavy blankets were often converted into fashionable overcoats, and some women even converted their husband’s suits into fashionable ladies suits. Many officially sanctioned patterns were reproduced in Women’s magazines at the time, and it soon became quite fashionable to convert old clothing styles into new ones to show one’s true patriot spirit.

Many women often wore a scarf tied around their head during the war, to protect against their hair getting caught in machinery or farm equipment. Stockings were virtually impossible to obtain during this time (except through the black-market), some women resorted to using eyebrow pencils to draw a ‘seam’ down the back of their legs to make it appear as if they were wearing silk stockings. Flat-heeled shoes also became a practical option for women who spent countless hours working on farms and in factories.

The Hangman’s Pub is a quite basic wooden building. The actual bar top has been fashioned out of a single roughly planed piece of wood; the stools present have also been left in their unvarnished state, and they are quite uncomfortable to sit on i.e. splinters and no padding. At the heart of the oblong room are two long tables, similar to those found in German beer halls; to one side of one of the long tables, the seating is simply fashioned from one long wooden bench nailed to the wall, on the other side, roughly made wooden chairs suffice.

In the far end of the bar a large open wood burning fireplace stands, and at the front of the establishment a small skittles alley is to be found. The walls have been left in their exposed wood grain state. There is a series of painted panels laid out along the wall at the back of the bench seating. The paintings depict the flight of terrified bearded man from black cloaked horsemen, who are charging their steeds throughout the night. One panel of the painting depicts the fleeing man as wearing a nightcap, slippers and sleepwear, clutching a gas lantern in the darkness. The horse riders wear black cloaks that give them a truly demonic aura; the lead horseman clutches a hangman’s noose.

The story behind the image and the pub’s name are rooted in local folklore. Thomas Crowley, the legendary firebrand preacher, was rumored to have been killed at the hands of the Protestant Church’s own assassins (see handouts). The Hangman’s Pub is said to reside on the true location where the fleeing preacher was hung until dead, over the branch of an ancient oak tree. This tree was struck by lightning on the same date a year later, destroying it completely. This was thought to be a sign of God’s displeasure at the slaying. Despite these rumors, the preacher actually died mysteriously in his sleep, leading to wild speculation over the years.

Beer is stored here in an old fashioned barrels present on the back wall of the counter area. Andrew Staunton, the proprietor is presently away – tending to COVEN business – his very occasional barmaid, Alice Croft, is currently serving drinks to a few bemused locals, whilst she attends to her newborn infant son called Mabon.

Willet’s General Store isn’t that different from its 2003 equivalent. Although the modern packaged food is replaced with consumables stored in barrels, wooden freight boxes, glass jars and large tins; the same convivial atmosphere still is retained. To purchase goods at the store, the individual needs to produce their ration book and food stamps; obviously, the teenagers don’t have these, and they would need to report to General Arkwright with proper documentation (birth certificate) to acquire one.

Barrow’s Girls Reform School is a foreboding place, it is surrounded by a six-foot-high metal fence with spear-like poles, it is more about keeping the girls in than protecting them from harm from strangers. The reformatory is a two-storey affair that accommodates over a dozen young ladies, who either come from broken homes or who are orphans. The reformatory is basically a poor house in the true *Dickensian* sense, the girls present work to support themselves by mending clothing and hand washing apparel for local gentry. They are fed nothing more than bread, dripping, gruel and the odd vegetable. The reformatory is ruled over by the tyrannical Prudence Rattighan and her harried assistant, Emily Dickens – a former destitute pupil. She is always reminded of her misfortune and laxity of service. The girls spend upwards of nine hours a day in the washhouse and receive little in the way of basic education (a supposed stated aim of the establishment), other than tierce etiquette instruction. This is purportedly to aid them someday into going ‘into service’ at one of the larger country estates. The girls’ occupational choices presumably being limited to becoming housemaids, nannies or cooks.

THE EVACUEES: There were in total fourteen children billeted at THE MANOR. They arrived slowly during the course of November 1943 (up to the present date of the 21st of March 1944). There are only three of the children still left alive: Alice Smith (the budding sacrifice in PLAN I), William Riley (grandfather of Thomas) and Juliet Smith (Alice's older sibling). They are housed in one of the storerooms in the basement area of THE MANOR House. The storeroom is filthy, it has an old cooper's barrel present for waste (toiletry) purposes - it is never emptied. Upon the stone floor there is fettered straw (bed bugs abound) and metal serving plates lie strewn all over the floor. There are also bones present, these come from haunches of meat served to the prisoners – it maybe boiled human meat from other dead evacuees?

A thick bolted door with a wire viewing grill keeps the children firmly secured within their present location, a small metal barred window is set high on an outside wall, this is the only source of natural light in the room. The storeroom is a sunken basement with three wooden stairs leading up to the bolted door. Scattered amongst the fetid straw are a number of grubby name-tags attached to frayed string.

Alice Smith (aged 8): She has been sent with her bigger sister, Juliet from Coventry to stay at the Manor. Since her arrival, she has been systematically taken from the cell for the purpose of draining her blood (initially to be the 'victim' of in the revival ritual – PLAN I). Corporal Timothy Jones has taken advantage of this situation and has repeatedly raped her. In the ten weeks of abuse she has suffered in the godforsaken place, she was been led into one of the nearby storerooms and tied and gagged, and slowly bled (initially for the ritual sacrifice, but also now to aid in the general blood store). After the ritual went horribly awry (see PLAN I), the GODDESS sensed that a deception had taken place and intervened personally to revive the poor child. In the last two weeks, Alice hasn't spoken to anyone and has continuously rocked back and forth. Her mind has effectively gone.

Juliet Smith (aged 10): She also arrived with her sister 10 weeks ago from Coventry. She isn't particularly blessed with guile or wit, but she is desperate to escape and get her sister help. She is so fraught that she is incapable of rendering any decent assistance to William. She has seen four of the other children come and go (Mary Pollock, Jamie Pollock, Jane Beecham and Elizabeth Curley) – she wonders why she has been spared. Her pedophile uncle messed around with her when she was a baby and she doesn't remember.

William Riley (aged 10): William was the last child to arrive at the Manor, only three weeks ago. He is a cockney from the East-End of London (Peckham). He is quite resourceful, but lacks the necessary assistance to affect an escape from this dungeon-like existence. He has the fury of his son (Jack Riley), but his rage is tempered with the intelligence of his grandson (Thomas Riley).

These children exist in Thomas' Mind (see story three) as opportunities for redemption for his own perceived crimes i.e. the killing of his father. They also exist as substitutes for his own suffering; they have also been put in an inescapable, violent position. Thomas is essentially attempting to rescue himself from his father wrath (or symbolically, the OAK KING attempting to defeat the HOLLY KING). His grandfather is present here because in reality, he also went mad and spent the rest of his days in an asylum. In part, due in part to his own wartime experiences (he was raped repeatedly by his billetor) – this also links up with Alice's plight. Alice's rocking back and forth motion is also the very state Thomas was found in after killing his father, and Stephanie (see THE DELUSIONS).

LORD BARROW: The Lord of the Manor, Walter Barrow, has always been a rash, impetuous fellow. During his time at Oxford University his studies suffered immeasurably because of his devotion to wine, women and song. His cricket playing feats not withstanding, his academic career was always looked upon as a minority pursuit. His love of women and mystery led him into the arms of a gypsy woman called Rhiannon (1927). He spent many a long hot summer in the company of his beautiful temptress, idling through the canals of England in punts and learning about divination and the subtle art of deception – mainly to impress his beloved. Upon the death of the 18th Lord of Barrow (Frederick-Fortesque Barrow) in early 1942, the errant son had to return home and manage the family's affairs. He was forced to give up his beloved, as gypsies don't marry commoners, no matter Lords.

There really wasn't a lot to do at the seat of his ancestral lands. Whilst pursuing the bookshelves of the manor's library, he stumbled upon an ancient handwritten tome. It was a copy of a local *Book of Shadows* from the 19th century (Rupert Crowley). He discussed it with his personal gentleman, Albert Frogmortson (grandfather of the two teenagers). Albert became so consumed by the mysterious tome that he searched the manor library for other similar books that may render assistance in helping to decode the book. By early 1944, he had purchased similar ancient books (at the Lord's behest) and had begun to decipher some of the spells contained within (his handwritten notes are the yellowing loose foolscap sheets denoted in the handouts). He kept his curious master informed of his progress, and his master's mind sought to ponder the endless possibilities. His plan - PLAN I – needed the assistance of other people – enter THE COVEN. Those interested were Corporal Timothy Jones (newly arrived), Andrew Staunton, Constable Rodney Baldwin and Richard Roach (grandfather of Thomas Roach).

THE BOOK OF SHADOWS: The book of shadows was put together by Rupert Crowley, a descendant of the famed preacher, Thomas Crowley. He collected a number of religious and magical texts from throughout Christendom and regions of antiquity like Persia, Greece and Rome. His enthusiasm had managed to excite the then 13th Lord of Barrowmere, Henry Barrow. The Lord went willingly along with Rupert delusions, that he was in fact the reincarnation of his fabled relative: the preacher purportedly having children out of wedlock at the time. Rupert's lingering paranoia of the Protestant order finding out about his pagan research prompted him to put all of his communiqués and notes into code, it followed on that the collected *Book of Shadows* would also have the same level of security. Most of the spells within the book are beyond deciphering, as Albert Frogmorton found out when he attempted to do so. Rupert Crowley suffered from mental ailments that polluted his otherwise brilliant mind; he saw and felt things – similar to that of Joan of Arc – that lead him to believe the spirit of Thomas Crowley resided within him: a severe form of schizophrenia. At the time bad corn supplies would grow a type of fungus with LSD like affects, both Joan of Arc and Rupert are rumored to have suffered as a result.

The actual *Book of Shadows* was been copied many times since Rupert's death, and a small number of copies are still held by Barrowmere families, they are mainly looked upon as interesting family curios – as no one is eminently qualified or interested enough to decipher their encoded text.

THE PLAN (Mark I): The original plan was to attempt to use the *Cadaver Revivification* ritual to revive his dead father, this really never got off the ground because the late father refused to, 'wet-nurse his errant son any longer'. As the war seemed to be taking a serious turn for the worst, when V1 Flying Bombs started to reign down on London, thoughts naturally returned to the most famous local, Thomas Crowley. THE COVEN started to think seriously about the practicalities of performing the act: the ritual needed someone to kill an innocent victim. It was Richard Roach who first suggested the billeting of children at Barrow Manor (it had been previous vetoed by Walter because he couldn't stand screaming children). There was something akin to a falling-out over the issue of premeditated (or otherwise) murder. After some months, Roach talked them around by equally issuing threats of exposure, promises of wealth and power, and threats of personal harm to those who dared to betray THE COVEN.

The children were eventually welcomed, because of the size of the Manor, 14 children duly arrived in quick succession from November of 1943 onwards. Efforts were made by THE COVEN to maintain an outward visage of normality at THE MANOR; letters home to family members were forged, medical certificates were sent and ration books used up. Constable Rodney Baldwin took the concerns of some local women *seriously* - they hadn't seen the youngsters since their arrival and they were concerned. Baldwin made a show of storming up to the Manor's front gates, remonstrating with the Lord and walking back triumphantly; allying their fears by reporting concessions had been made. The plan was worked famously.

Once the ritual took place, however, things went seriously awry. Instead of the young schoolgirl, Alice Smith, becoming the host for the spirit of Thomas Crowley, Crowley entered to the body of the caster, Walter Barrow. The preacher sought to use the power and prestige of his benefactor, rather than being stuck in the body of an underage, molested commoner. The person known as Lord Walter Barrow was now an amalgam of the two individuals, seeking to wrest control of the body once and for all. However, the preacher was the stronger personality of the two (Walter being a callow and ineffectual man), and after an initial period of struggle, Crowley managed to take full control (although Walter still resides within his body).

Other members of the coven were horrified by the unexpected turn of events, and the preacher sensed that *pretending* to be Walter Barrow, who has access to the preacher's power and knowledge base, would be a less problematic solution. He makes a passable impression of the Lord, but when roused, he can be as bombastic and villainous as of days of old. He has a magnetic, persuasive personality that can push people into actions that they might otherwise never contemplate.

THE PLAN (Mark II): The preacher, now safely ensconced within the body of Lord Barrow now turned his attention to utilizing the *Chromatic Transference* ritual to move forward into the future. He had seen just how much technology had moved on since his own days, and now he was intent upon testing out whether the ritual firstly worked, and secondly, to go forward and find even greater technologies and knowledge. He intends ultimately to take this technology back to his own period and get his revenge upon his tormentors (i.e. the Protestant Church, the Royal Family and his assassins). This ritual was invoked on the flat surface of the village green, in the hope that with less scenery around, the less problematic the transference would be. However, things did go awry see THE PORTAL.

THE COVEN: The Coven consists of Lord Barrow (Thomas Crowley), Albert Frogmortson, Corporal Timothy Jones, Andrew Staunton, Constable Rodney Baldwin and Richard Roach. The major players of the Coven are Lord Barrow and Albert Frogmortson. Both Rodney Baldwin and Richard Roach have aided and abetted in the conspiracy of keeping the activities at the MANOR secret. Corporal Jones is an amoral man, who is simply keeping himself amused during his enforced spell from the front. Andrew Staunton is a rapacious man who has been lured in the coven because of promises of wealth and power. These men are extremely well organized. They are not fools like the members of THE CONSPIRACY. The repetition that takes place between stories one and two is a conscious decision. This time around, the children are *forced* to act, because the local authority figures present in 2003 are now under the direct control of the COVEN (the policeman). The only recourse available to the teenagers is to convince either the ARP Warden or the General (Home Guard) of the immediate danger. Only then, will the currently held children (and any future children) be safe from being sent to the MANOR.

THE PARADOX: A major problem in defeating THE COVEN and LORD BARROW is that Rodney and Imogen's grandfather is a member of the coven (Albert Frogmortson). As the theory of time travel goes, if you go back in time and kill your grandfather, paradox theory suggests you will no longer exist – killing your grandfather means that he cannot have the children that are your parents. If the teenagers do kill Albert, consult the later entry TIME TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTING. The other source of paradox is of course, Thomas' grandfather, if he isn't rescued he won't survive to have Jack Riley – a particular motivation for rescue.

THE MANOR: The Manor House is the largest building in the village of Barrowmere. In its wartime state, its rolling grounds are criss-crossed with barbed-wire, trenches and wooden stakes (temporary defenses against the threat of invasion). Other parts of the grounds have equally been given over to crops (to supplement the meager wartime rations available). Although, Walter Barrow could quite easily buy his own luxuries on the black market throughout the course of the war, it is excellent for keeping up the pretense that he is feeding a large household of billeted children. The harvested food can be found rotting away in the basement area.

The country house is, of course, sumptuously appointed; red velvet chairs and solid teak paneling a particular feature of many rooms. The upstairs section contains six bedrooms, two bathrooms and the Lord's Master Bedroom (see handout).

The EVACUEES can be found downstairs locked away in an abandon storeroom. Elsewhere in the basement area, there is another locked storeroom that houses dirty medical equipment. Through the grate in the door one can see a dentist chair fixed with restraints, a number of medical saws and grips, and large old-style needles (WWII era). There are a number of large glass jars present on shelves that contain red liquid inside (children's blood), with names written upon them include (James, Emily, Rupert, Louise et al). In this room THE COVEN systematically drain the blood of their victims. Elsewhere, in THE TUNNEL, the emaciated and fly blown corpses of the dead children are gathered disturbingly together. The tunnel is now in a state of disuse, as the Germans are known to be concentrating their bombing activities solely on major cities.

It is important to build up the tension before the discovery of the desiccated bodies. One should play up the tension by developing the sound of buzzing flies, playing up the pungency of the water, flies crawling all over the skin of the live teenagers and then, the discovery of the bodies. Hopefully, the teens will have discovered and explored the tunnel before i.e. story one, adding further to their sense of apprehension.

Once the evacuee children have been rescued, General Arkwright will be forced to concede that the teenagers may have a point and he will gather the local homeguard to his side and storm the Manor. They will stay temporarily with Zoe Nixon (Area Nurse), until such time as another billet can be found. They will ultimately be split up – further adding to the sense of alienation. Hopefully, in the few days they remain in Barrowmere they will have realized they need to perform the RITUAL.

THE RITUAL: The teenagers will hopefully get their hands on the *Book of Shadows* and the remaining filled glass jars (i.e. there is enough blood left to complete the ritual and get back to their own time). There are no problems performing the *Chromatic Transference* spell. There is, however, one big problem in that the spell was designed for adults, not children. It means that the rough guide provided in the notes to the spell overestimates the amount of blood required to be sipped and scattered – the upshot is that double the required amount will be used (i.e. the children only needed ½ the regular dosage). This propels the children farther into the future 2064 (see story three). This is of course, a narrative imperative.

If the teenagers do not perform the ritual (or even know about it), there are further notes to be found in TIME TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTING. A note exists that Laura sends to her future (younger) self. She can do this because subsequent news stories talk about the sensational revelations about sacrificial blood being stored by the coven and her research suggesting that the coven just might have used an old book of shadows. She was also present at the trial of the Lord as a witness.

THE LOCALS 1944

Ret. General Wilson Arkwright: The General is a veteran of the Bore War and the Great War. The local identity rose to the rank of General because he was known for his dash, swagger and strategic brilliance. Today, he is left to *marshal* a small, rag-tag collection of farmers and grocers in a zero strategic part of the country, against a notional German menace. Still, at least his wife (Joyce) and himself can see the humor in it all. In his autumn years, all of the pretence of life has fallen away from the retired army man; he enjoys the sun and his garden and occasionally ventures over to the church's vestry to attend to Home Guard affairs and lead them through military drills. These days, he tends to enjoy the infrequent visits from his grandchildren more than a regimented life.

Corp. Timothy Jones: The 'seconded' British Army infantrymen, phrase tends to belie the true reality of this Welshman's situation. During maneuvers in France, the sergeant was all but killed by a German mortar. His war was over before it had basically begun. Convalescing in a military hospital in Bristol for over three years, he had to learn to walk again, recover from shellshock and recover his fitness. He was still determined to show his valor upon the battlefield. Unfortunately, he also picked up an addiction to morphine during his convalescence. It warped his mind, add to this, the lack of care devoted to the psychological trauma of war at this time, meant he had become estranged and insular. He was also found to have an irregular heartbeat. This last medical issue caused his commission to be all but suspended. He was given one choice, to aid in the 'preparation of home defenses in the event of invasion'; he was sent to Barrowmere. In his first twelve months at Barrowmere, it became clear that the invasion wasn't going to come, the British had gradually started to take the upper hand in the war, with the Americans enjoining the fight. His anger turned inwards and it festered there, until Lord Barrow showed him some dastardly purpose.

Harold Corbett: The young local fireman was a natural choice for the post of village ARP warden. The friendly, virtuous young man delights in his role and applies himself to the task with alacrity. There are many young women in the village keen to assist him. This also makes him happy – sometimes, ecstatically so.

Father Eamon O-Shea: The Irish priest is decidedly eccentric. He often seems far happier fishing and hiking through the local hills, than giving his usual rambling sermon on Sundays. It's not that he is unhappy with the devotional life of a priest, in fact he enjoys it immensely, but there is so much else he also derives meaning from. His sermons often seem like they have been scratched together at the pulpit, but it's often the case that the dialogue in his head has progressed substantively since his contemplation on Friday. The sermons often incorporate running commentaries on local cake drives, popular matinee idols and popular music, and observations about the lives of the local badger population (he helps to build 'badger hedgerows' to aid their breeding every year). He also enjoys a good tippie down the Hangmen's Coaching Inn, his sunny disposition rubbing the funereal landlord up the wrong way.

Constable Rodney Baldwin: Sometimes the people sworn into trusted roles of local authority aren't the people you want installed, Constable Rodney Baldwin is a classic case in point. As a child, he was a first-class bully, petulant and vindictive. Only a thin veneer of civility has been overlaid with *maturity*. He is smart though, exceedingly so, and has particularly perfected playing the 'wronged-man'. He will make it hard for any teenager seeking to expose the horrors taking place in the 'house of the hill' (THE MANOR).

Mrs. Mavis Willets: The vivacious senior citizen runs the general store like a military operation, she is therefore much admired by the General, Wilson Arkwright (they will later marry when his present frail wife dies). Despite this being a time of rationing, she always has some lollies set aside for children in a state of distress (humbugs and boiled lollies). Her husband died early in the war (because he was elderly) and she eventually adopts a war orphan (Robert Arkwright) despite both parents advancing in years.

Andrew Staunton: The publican who missed his true calling as a funeral director. It is testament to his spiritual calling; there is no blasphemy, carousing or drunkenness allowed within the precinct of his drinking establishment. This is quite a challenge for some of some of the *earthier* local farmers. Some locals feel like the proverbial 'hanged-man' after a couple of hours in the Coaching Inn, but there is no where else to go. Someone so strident in their spiritual beliefs, nearly always has a darker side, so does Staunton. This manifests itself in his support for Lord Barrow's murderous activities. He has managed to compartmentalize it in his mind, so that he is firm in his belief that the children are safe after the token 'donation' of blood as payment for their upkeep. They are regularly bled, not killed – never killed.

Miss Zoe Nixon: The young nurse is somewhat lost in this small country town (being a Londoner). The Chelsea girl arrived three months ago after being posted. She is congenial company and quite bright, but finds it hard to deal with the plain-speaking locals. She has found something of an ally in the young stable boy, Dirk Maggs, but it only extends to friendship and a mutual love of horses. Much to Dirk's chagrin.

Mrs. Prudence Rattighan: They breed them tough in County Cork. But none are as tough as Prudence Rattighan. Irish nuns don't teach with a *rod of iron* per say, but they have no objections to using thick pieces of birch. The Devil, the obstreperous horned one, has nothing on the brimstone laid down by the haranguing habit wearers. 'Beat the devil out' was the Catholic creed in the mid-twentieth century, and no one sticks to the creed with as much zeal as Rattighan. Although she is a lay person, she runs the girl's orphanage with something approaching an inquisitorial zeal. The girls are forced to perform mending on behalf of the war effort, until their fingers are often raw and bleeding. It might not be equivalent to the violence happening over at the MANOR, but it's still brutal even for its time period.

Dirk Maggs: The Yorkshire youth has been unable to join the British Army (flat-feet) and now finds himself helping out with the horses over at the MANOR HOUSE. He is a shy lad, but an all round honest fellow. He hopes to one day work with animals on a daily basis. He has had nothing to do with the horrid activities going on at the manor house. He has heard intermittent screaming, of course, and has asked the Lord of the Manor all about it. He has been told that the children cry out at night because of 'night terrors' caused by being separated from their parents. Dirk has been concerned that the children don't get enough fresh air (he hasn't seen any of the children supposedly billeted at the Manor since their arrival). He has been told that the Lord is concerned that the children may either run off or get lost seeking out their parents (i.e. missing them), they may 'catch their deaths' in the winter/early spring air, or cause mischief during wartime. Maggs isn't completely convinced, but he isn't about to lose his job by being too forward with his concerns.

Miss Alice Croft: The wife of a local farmer is something of a local celebrity. Some call her a witch, but others are fascinated with her general concern and predictions for others. She has visions, and generally tries to live down any such witch affiliations. It somewhat scares her, especially the more gruesome visions. She has recently been disturbed by visions of unknown children crying out in pain at night. Alice does not know the source of these visions. She very occasionally helps out at the Hangman's Pub. She doesn't enjoy the inn's almost funereal air of despondency. She is also a member of the Women's Land Army (W.L.A.) that assists in wartime farming duties.

STORY THREE: ELECTRO-SHOCK BLUES

The previous stories episodes foreshadow the following realities and events. It's difficult to seed such a major plot twist without giving it away completely, but if it works, it should be worth the effort.

Thomas is actually dreaming up this entire reality. It is all inside his head. He is in an asylum in Bristol and he is in a virtually catatonic state. His doctors fear for his sanity and are preparing to give him *electro-shock therapy*. This is to help stimulate some kind of brain response.

THE TEENAGERS: The characters as presented in the story are not real human beings, they are merely projections in the mind of Thomas. The teenagers represent traits Thomas wishes he had, like Laura (dedication), Ryan (drive and determination), Rodney (guile) and Imogen (bravery). He also covets Laura (academic ability), Ryan (good looks and sporting ability), Rodney (rebelliousness and friends) and Imogen (love). There is a basic dichotomy present within the character sheets, initiated by the friction between the reality of Thomas' life and this fictional universe. In his fantasy life, he gets on famously with all the teenagers; in reality, they hardly know him. In this fantasy realm, he is actively trying to find the truth, but in reality he is actively avoiding the truth (see **THE MURDER**).

He has constructed this reality to deal with the emotional hurts and scars that he cannot fully deal with at present - it could take years of conventional therapy to untangle his unfortunate plight, if at all. By working through the issues as presented within each of these episodes, he is developing a plausible myth to hang his remaining life upon. To do otherwise would likely destroy him, or at least leave him in a catatonic for the rest of his days. Ultimately, it begs the question what is reality? It thus, requires a delicate balance between the teenagers recognizing his real life plight for what it is, and the necessity to maintain his healthy fantasy life. If the teenagers are successful in completing the fantasy story arch (continued through in story three and four), the real Thomas will believe he has actually saved humanity and therefore, redeemed himself. This occurs even if he hasn't actively acknowledged his real life actions leading up to this and his personal frailties i.e. **THE MURDER**.

THE MURDER: The real Thomas Riley *is* the son of a blacksmith and whose mother died when he was a baby. The father *was* an abusive father, who regularly beat him (at times painfully so with broken whiskey bottles). After many years of these systematic beatings, he has essentially disappeared within himself (into his fantasy world). This often involves incorporating beloved British television characters, elements from fantasy and science fiction novels and mythology into his fantasy realm.

In reality, Thomas got to know Stephanie Lewis. Stephanie, being a kind heart soul took pity on this odd little, bruised boy. She was concerned about how the adults in this small village did little in response to the rather obvious bruises that Thomas regularly bore. The locals preferring to avoid direct confrontation with the abusive blacksmith, as country life often stresses that each individual has the right to his or her own affairs (i.e. not getting child protection authorities involved in a rather obvious case of neglect).

Stephanie eventually invited herself around to the blacksmith's house to confront the abusive blacksmith, herself. Whilst she waited with Thomas in the kitchen for the blacksmith to return home from the pub; Thomas hastily cleaned up the remnants of alcoholism from around the house and then broke down. It is common for the relatives of alcoholics to often attempt to cover up the reality, and they in turn, become co-conspirators, after a fashion.

In that moment, whilst Stephanie tries to console the distraught boy, the father returns home via the backdoor. He sees Stephanie embracing his son; his malcontent nature swells up within him and he is infuriated that his son might be experiencing something approaching happiness that was denied him so many years ago (the death of the wife); he then strikes out at the girl. He then drags her in a furious rage and throws her down the passageway. Thomas screams and pleads for his father to let her go. Eventually, the father slaps the girl and throws her towards the door leading down to the basement area (the blacksmithy below), the door isn't completely closed. Stephanie tumbles down into the darkness of the staircase; Thomas looks on knowing the damage that may have been caused by such a fall, and is momentarily unable to speak or move – paralyzed with fear. The father eventually realizes what he has just done, and starts to hear the pained screams coming from downstairs.

After a couple of minutes have elapsed, the father descends the stairs with a look of cold determination on his face. In that second, Thomas fears (but ultimately *knows*) what his father is going to do. He harries into the kitchen area, and frantically looks for something heavy. He eventually clutches a frying pan and blindly runs towards the stairs. He stumbles awkwardly, and falls down the stairs to his knees at the base, blood streaming from his cut mouth. He can see his father looming up from over near the forge area, with a red flaming poker in his hand, and Thomas screams in unison with Stephanie.

He gathers himself to his knees and springs forth at his father with the fry pan; his father deflects his feeble blow with the poker, breaking Thomas' arm in the process. He looks up to see his father bring down the poker on Stephanie's head, there is a cry of exasperation. Thomas rallies and throws himself at his father, in the short struggle that follows, his frantic hand fumbles upon the fry-pan handle, and he paddles it at his father's head. He immediately stops moving.

After a short intake of breath, Thomas realizes his father is dead. He can still hear groaning coming from his left. He goes over to Stephanie and sees that her skull casing is open and hemorrhaging blood at an alarming rate. Stephanie looks up shocked and pleading. He brings the frying-pan down upon her.

Due to the nature of the blacksmith's prior behavior, no one dares to call the police to complain about the noise. It is not until three days later that real Eliza Ricketts (the school teacher) comes around to see if Thomas is O.K. He is discovered in at the bottom of the stairs, rocking back and forth and foaming at the mouth, next to the corpse of Stephanie and his father. He is taken away to an asylum in Bristol. And he is declared insane and therefore, not culpable for the murders 18 months later.

In Thomas' fantasy universe, the light-switch to the light-bulb at the bottom of the stairs doesn't work, and it cannot be made to work. Indeed, even the lights in the rest of the smithy area do not shine any light into this corner space; even opening the large wooden doors has no effect. There is always a black void at the bottom of the stairs. Thomas cannot bear to stand too long in this location, or he gets *extremely* agitated and he starts to hyperventilate, and must leave.

There are a number of other clues to the fabricated nature of the village including:

- ❑ The rest of the teenagers don't really know Thomas, but Thomas believes they know him well
- ❑ If the teenagers leave the village, say to Bristol, they don't get a real sense of having traveled anywhere, just a series of none-de-script trees and fields going repeatedly past the bus. Thomas doesn't know the route to Bristol, only having traveled to the city a couple of times. The same goes for visiting Barrowmere's outlying farms
- ❑ The series of events related to the electro-shock therapy (i.e. the ALIENS and the black voids subsequently created)
- ❑ The third story arch is set in 2064 (THE FUTURE), with dead characters revived, identities switched and unreal aliens.
- ❑ Rodney Smith's VAN & REVELATIONS

THE DELUSIONS: Those people familiar with British television will notice a number of familiar faces popping up as locals within the fictional Barrowmere community. This isn't simply for comic effect; they are part of Thomas Riley's personal delusions. Due to events that have taken place in his real life (see THE MURDER), he has unconsciously created this elaborated scenario (stories one to four) to help deal with his personal traumas and personal demons. Most of the locals as presented here are facsimiles of either popular television characters, or particular stereotypes played by familiar British actors. Some characters are directly taken from shows (Giles from *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* et al). If you are familiar with the mannerisms and voices of these actors (characters) have fun hamming it up – it will all add to the desired effect.

This British television *cast of the century* represents a safe ground that Thomas can retreat into when real life events cause him pain; this double life has been built up over time and has almost completely overwritten the real inhabitants of his Cotswold village – though traces remain. The other teenagers are notionally based on real life teenagers he knows, although their characteristics have been greatly exaggerated and simplified in Thomas' mind to bear out particular traits he feels he needs to return to reality (see THE TEENAGERS).

The basic town as portrayed in Thomas' fantasy universe is an amalgam of real life Cotswold villages, although the town of Barrowmere within the confines of this adventure is *Naunton* – the map is based on an aerial picture of Naunton. It becomes important to save this town from destruction in story three, because it represents the last remaining vestige of reality.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE: One metaphor explored earlier in the Goddess/Green Man theme was that of the environmental damage. If the Green Man was prevented from leaving for the Otherworld, damage would soon occur. The metaphor is invoked strongly again in the final two stories. The third story is set in 2064 where acid rain is an everyday reality for the locals. The farmlands around Barrowmere barely sustain animal life like it once did. This story is set in Autumn, these two factors help to illustrate that Thomas' mind is becoming sicker day by day. As discussed in THE FUTURE, Thomas' is losing touch with reality. THE ALIENS actions start to destroy some parts of his fictional world. Thomas, being a manifestation of the Green Man in the entire story arch, is the only one who can reverse the destruction (through his actions in story four). Smith the Prophet identifies Thomas as a manifestation of 'the Great Recycler' – this is meant to convey that Thomas has created this world out of his love of British television, but also to denote his place as the 'eco-warrior' who has been sent to save humanity. Thomas can sense that it's not just Autumn taking place here in 2064, but that the landscape is actually slowly decaying – the same is felt in the story four.

THE FUTURE: The teenagers are unfortunately thrown into the distant future – and not the present time – by the *chromatic transference* spell. Although Thomas has dealt with some issues besetting him, there are still many issues that remain hidden. The major one being his mother (see story four). In the meantime, there is a rapid decay in his sanity. The estrangement that is taking place is mirrored in the teenagers projection into the future – he is psychically and literally further away from the present reality, than even going back in time to the somewhat familiar World War Two. The future is a *confection* where his father is caring, devoted, powerful and rich. He also has a substitute caring mother. But even here problems still remain (see THE ALIENS and ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE).

The future Barrowmere still retains the same basic village lifestyle; however, a major new addition is Barrowmere SPACEPORT. Some of the local inhabitants have moved on, but bizarrely, many residents still remain – not even a day older. The teenagers return home to find their doting parents still waiting for them, as if nothing much has occurred. The reality represents slippage in Thomas’ mind. In some respects, he no longer recognizes the difference between his fantasy universe and logical consequence. In most respects, this future *is* the teenagers’ home i.e. they do have a place here (unlike 1942 where they clearly do not). They *are* registered as students at the local school, they *are* the sons and daughters of their parents and their friends *do* recognize them. The plot of story three is designed to *alienate* the teenagers, although THE ALIENS in movies are meant to be outsiders, the teenagers are the ultimate outsiders.

THE TOWN 2064

As outlined in THE FUTURE most of the inhabitants are basically similar to their 2003 counterparts; they haven’t changed in their features (they are not a day older) or in their habits either. Some have new professions, and some people have changed completely (some even coming back from the dead).

However, what we have is basically the same village with a number of minor and major modifications. The greatest change is the SPACEPORT, it has fast become the hub that most local business revolves around.

The other big change is the way in which education is delivered (see BARROMERE EDUCATIONAL HUB). Barrowmere Police Station has expanded somewhat, knocking through to the semi-detached cottage on its side. It is now decked out with banks of Commodore PET computers. This sight gag outlines that the farther into the future they go, the more antiquated the technology gets. There are also large spinning magnetic tapes on spindles logging data – the same antiquated machinery can be found in the SPACEPORT. The basic premise is they work, because less things can go wrong with them. This additional computing *power* is needed to assist in extra-territorial judicial issues related to crime and quarantine in space. There many goods and services that flow between Mars, the Moon and Barrowmere that need inspection and control. The spaceport is the largest provincial commercial rocket site in Britain, and carries the greatest volume of traffic.

Once the idea of crime rears its ugly head in discussions about the spaceport and electrical outages, Inspector William Shakespear tends to believe that the problems occurring at the Spaceport are in some way related to power outages taking place on Mars (see handouts). He will suspect that commercial espionage is being undertaken by *Japanese Frontier Force* agents to nullify the European Union’s comparative advantage in space launch payloads (an entirely false assumption).

Mandelson’s Used Hoppers in the future sells a different brand of car. These hopper vehicles rely upon advances in limited anti-gravity. These vehicles are basically flying cars (see advertisement in scenes 2064). They only fly 10 feet from the ground, and generally float along established road routes, some are even auto-pilot enabled (see handouts).

Arkwright’s General Store has changed little in the intervening years, except for the brands of household items on his shelves (some boxes even have holographic displays). However, change *has* affected its owner, he now wears a swish silver spacesuit that would probably look more at home on *Dan Dare* – it is an exo-suit. An exo-suit is designed for elderly people to continuously test their vital signs, tone their muscles and to provide added support for fragile, aging bones. It also helps regulate body temperature and calls for emergency assistance when the vital signs dip. His doctor, Amanda Braithwaite, *demande*d that he wear it, he acquiesced to her demands knowing how demanding she can truly be. With age, he knows when to pick and choose his fights.

The one new feature of the store these days, is M8TE (otherwise known as mate). Robots are still not commonplace in the future, except for the likes of simple automated domestic housecleaning bots. However, Arkwright has been given the latest in experimental robots technology by a keen wholesaler to help assist in customer purchases, and to take over all the back breaking shelving duties. The robot has been given an experimental *voco-cab* unit (vocabulary simulation unit) and personality. It appears to have been given the ‘English Northern Regional’ setting. It speaks in phrases like, ‘there’s none nowt as queer as a Londoner’. Somewhat out of place in the South of England, its patter is often almost indecipherable to anyone not born North of Leeds. Still, some Japanese tourists are glad that the English still retain their ‘heritage robots’. The robot actually has installed a fuzzy logic voice circuit; it has picked up its colorful language up North, by exposure to his former Nazi, skinhead boss. The theory behind the stochastic capabilities being that the robot would ultimately blend in with its surroundings.

The white unit has a small head fitted with rotating cameras for eyes, spindly multi-jointed servo arms and tank-style tracks at its base, which also has a rubber matted platform fitted that doubles as a forklift.

Barrowmere Fine Faire is trying too hard to be a rustic English style eatery. Although the food is indeed fine, the surroundings – more akin to the Spartan surrounds of the derelict Hangman’s Pub – often offend the eye of sophisticated European diners. Thankfully, Delia has taken on board some of the visitors suggestions and actually added a bit of comfort (cushions on seats), tablecloths and pleasant pictures of country scenes applied to the foreboding bare stone walls.

Other changes to living conditions in 2064 include the addition of 3-D television sets, most carry advanced multi-function P.D.As (the current fad is for funky green monochrome text displays).

SPACEPORT: The spaceport is an enterprise set up by the retired Captain, Adrienne Welsh. The medium sized rocket facility is a launch pad designed to primarily carry small resource payloads up into space. In 2064, the moon is used as the hub for space exploration. The European Space Agency (E.S.A) in 2036 established a large permanently manned base on the Moon (Blair One), a number of the supplies required at the base are launched from Barrowmere Spaceport. There is also a small population now living on Mars (5,000 people and counting). The Martian population is primary concerned with manning the large Oxidizer terraforming machines – these vast machines are steadily converting the thin atmosphere into breathable oxygen. However, most families still live under domed conditions. There are two main bases ‘Little Britain’ (European Union) and ‘Nippon II’ (Japanese).

Some equipment payloads are sent to Mars via the Barrowmere Spaceport. The Spaceport generally houses smaller rockets, so it doesn’t often carry payload-intensive human travelers. The spaceport was opened in 2060, and business is booming. Its favorable location has ensured that most dairy and wool requirements for space (Moon and Mars) have been launched from the site. Despite the spaceport’s continued success, pressure has been applied to the owners (Welsh and her investment partners) to meet the stiff loan repayments – poorly realized by merchant banker, Richard Frogmortson. The people working at the spaceport are currently extremely stressed.

The actual spaceport consists of the main operations deck, voluminous storage hangar, office area and five varied sized launch pads. There is also a sixth launch pad that has been reconfigured by Jack Riley.

Continuity Vignettes

Sunday 21st September

Sunday Night

Introduction: As you stumble out of the glowing portal, the cold wind swirls around you, raking leaves of brown, russet and copper before your eyes. The chill of the night air seeps beneath your light clothing. The howl of a barn owl, in recognition of your unexpected arrival, throws your heart into a flutter. The crunch of leaves under foot threatens to disorientate. A spinney of lime, beech and aspen trees not far off creak in the wind, ominously.

Across the valley, the lights of the town encourage the lost and lonely to return to the arms of their beloved. Yet, the familiar pattern of lights seems to have changed. Different, even if subtly so. The portal’s maw behind you yawns as it swallows in upon itself – the past has now literally past. The sounds of the woodland seem muted, still, even dead.

The wind howls along a familiar county lane (Britannia Lane), Mrs. Tiddles darts past Mrs. Henderson garbage bin, presumably looking for somewhere familiar to lay in wait for lost field mice. Mr. Douglas’ ancient mini-minor is nowhere to be seen. The dappled glow of lights in Peckhurst House welcomes it’s own into its bosom.

The children cannot open the door, the lock having been changed long ago. Instead, they are welcomed at the door by their auntie, their very late auntie. The auntie doesn’t seem phased though. She is busily talking on a mobile phone (PDA) to a client wanting urgent delivery of their goods. She is being as contrite as she can be, because solar flares are delaying the launch of the client’s payload.

There appears to be nothing wrong until the children enter the front parlor where Tony Peckhurst is trying desperately to remove a spacesuit and helmet – he has the leggings over his arms, and the sleeves above his shins. Dervla is attempting to stop him moving about, with no apparent success. He eventually smashes the much vaunted ‘Toby Mug’ (Tony Blair edition) that her late mother gave them both as a Wedding Present – he gets *that* look.

After some terse discussions, Dervla notices that Laura is present and then proceeds to ask her where on Earth has she been? She has missed the late bus, for the shuttle to the E.S.A (European Space Agency) Space Camp – the Space Camp reserved for only the brightest of physics academic achievers (only 20 teenagers a year from Britain are invited). A once in a lifetime opportunity that her mother has been informed, she has now defaulted upon. The six-week camp that is undertaken at the European Space Agency’s moon-base named *Blair One*. The opportunity that she apparently studied three straight months for to pass the requisite proficiency test.

Tony Peckhurst is busily getting ready for 2-month round trip to Mars. Tony is to be honored by the *Free Citizens of Mars* because of his positive portrayal of bio-tech engineers in his popular animated cartoon, *Bob the Bio-Engineer*. The tale of a once wanton Martian settler who seeks to change his unsustainable ways by reversing the environmental damage he has caused. Tony is afraid of flying, no matter getting into a spacecraft – especially with the news from the Japanese base. He will need reassurance by morning that everything will be O.K. His wild theory being that the B.B.C television executives are sending him to Mars, in the hope that something goes horribly wrong - so they don't have to pay him out of his exorbitant contract to replace him with a sound-a-like actor. The Free Citizen's of Mars reside at the Japanese base called Nippon II. The Japanese government in the future is a despotic North Korea-like dictatorship – hence the free citizens rhetoric.

Further along the country lane, the birch trees lining the thoroughfare radiate silver against the moonlight, the trunks naked against the temperamental sky. Brooding clouds stir above, waiting to cloudburst. The stark, bare enclosures of the smithy even welcome the odd time-traveler back home.

Thomas can gain access to the Smithy, even though his father has moved up to the Manor House: Jack having sold the smithy a couple of years ago when money became no option. The person currently renting the old place is Reginald Wilson, who will be less than impressed by the intrusion. He is sitting eating a television meal curry, in his boxer shorts, watching the football. He ultimately thinks the child is taking the piss, what with barging into his squalled digs. He will be determined to intimidate the youngster and impress that he will crush him and his father.

As the last of the weary travelers turn the bend into their ancestral home the elemental tension breaks, rain cascades down from up high. As the familial pair run for the cover of the rotting wooden entrance alcove, they flash past an odd looking red sportscar, more fins and bends than seems absolutely necessary. As they hammer on the ancient brass knocker of the heavy oak door, they start to itch, and scratch a little. Light and heat suddenly cascade forth from the opening door, to reveal a very concerned matriarch.

“Get those clothes off. Immediately!” she screams.

Juliette is almost out of her mind with apprehension trying to get the clothes off her son and daughter, even despite their apparent recalcitrance to do so. She even makes them take off their underwear much to their chagrin. She eventually babbles something about leaving them, ‘their suits behind’ this morning (i.e. bio-suits) despite the high-range forecast of acid rain. The children's clothes, although not scorched at all, do still bare evidence that long term exposure *might* have led to mild damage to their skins. Their father eventually stirs from his den and attempts to console them.

Later, the parents will sit the children down in the den and inform the children (yet again) that they cannot afford to have the holodeck repaired. The holodeck being an electronically controlled space that generates three-dimensional holograms that the humans are meant to interact with (i.e. the *Star Trek* version of Virtual Reality Suites). It has been infected with the virus by Rodney (all the virtual people are now naked). Richard tries to explain to the children that they just can't go running off like that, they have been missing for two days, every time they don't agree with one of their decisions. This cost cutting exercise is due to the father's rather tenuous employment prospects at present. It looks like Rodney will just have to ‘console’ himself with his slightly new *Playstation X* and the game *Mortal Combat 24: Extreme Combat*. The house is basically the same but is now full of discrete automated devices that clean and aid the human owner.

Later that night...

Braving the winds, yet again. A lonely, lost figure trudges up the hill towards an all too familiar mansion. Echoes of the past swirl around in the memory, as spectral figures seem to attempt to direct the pitiful soul away from this desolate place. Lights seem to glower rather than glow downstairs in the Manor, directing their disapproval at anyone daring to enter its estate boundaries.

Once Thomas knocks at the door, he will actually be welcomed heartily by a complete stranger, no less. This is his *new* father, the caring, sharing rich one. They both share the same life story; however, the newer one developed an experimental interest in rockets – after he realized that it was ‘the way of the future’.

His new step-mum is also present, after returning late last night from a Paris fashion show. She is desperate to get along with her new charge, and is willing to start their relationship all over again and get to really know Thomas. She apologizes profusely for seeming to be aloof and distant, but relates that she hasn't had any prior experience of being a mother, or an auntie.

The night ends uneventfully and tomorrow is another school day.

Monday 22nd September

Monday Morning#1

Thomas is woken up by Emiliana around 8.00am with a tender kiss, it's a bright autumnal morning and Thomas is served a continental breakfast in bed. She explains that she must immediately fly back to Paris to complete her fashion shoot (her cosmetics contract demands it), she kisses him tenderly on the cheek again and goes to walk out. She turns and informs him that if he likes, he can go with his father today to the spaceport, to see the test firing of his latest experimental rocket, but he had better get ready quickly!

His father greets him downstairs and gives him another hug. They head off to the Spaceport in his father's gleaming new Ford Matsumi Excelsior X-5 Hopper transport (see scenes 2064 ad). On the way to the spaceport, Thomas will notice that the surrounding fields are brown and unproductive (see ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE).

Upon their arrival at the Spaceport, they are greeted by Adrienne Welsh who is immaculately groomed and dressed in a beige business suit. Also present is chief engineer, Roddy Masters, who appears to have a hangover. He is currently hiding behind a pair of dark glasses. The rocket in question is only partially visible out of the mission-control-style operations viewport window. The rocket sits in a sunken silo and only the top half of the rocket protrudes.

If the teenager is curious about his father experimental rockets, Jack is happy to explain yet again, despite being slightly taken back that his son hasn't listened the last half-a-dozen times.

He will explain the idea behind the oxygen booster attachments to the rocket (as per handouts). He will then relate the following information.

“Many variant systems have been subsequently designed and tested to include limited anti-gravity technology, in an effort to further reduce the fuel consumption needed to launch a commercial payload. The theory being that if the rocket reduces its weight, it needs less fuel to launch. However, many have put the cart before the horse, as it were. They have all attempted to put the anti-gravity device *on* the rocket.”

“As you can see, our rocket here has a purpose built platform. Buried deep down underground is our own anti-gravity technology. We are attempting to generate a magnetic field *below* the rocket to aid in its launch. This way, any conventional rocket can be fired from our launch pad, and the rocket doesn't have to haul its cumbersome solenoids and spinning superconductors with it. If we can get it to work, the average cost saving generated over a standard scramjet rocket launch will be around 15%. Although it isn't a large cost saving, the installation of an A.G.L.P. (Anti-Gravity Launch Platform) pays for itself quickly.”

“My confidence is matched by Miss Welsh here, who has allowed me at no charge to install this experimental platform. She is a canny businesswoman who knows a 15% cost saving on every launch helps give her the edge over her competitors!”

The adults busy themselves with pre-flight checks, test firings and everyday affairs of running a commercial rocket haulage business. At some stage, Thomas might be shuffled off to the office area where Christine Alexia Smythe is busying herself being sullen and unhelpful to clients, and resents having a twelve-year-old dumped in her charge. However, she may well attempt to probe Thomas for vital information about his father's rocket and current finances.

Monday Morning#2

The rest of the children are hauled to go off to school. They will spot the large looming spaceport as they walk to school, it looms over where the old abattoir used to be. The location of the school has changed; it is now housed in a large donut-shaped building behind the old one. The old building becoming a stand alone library, in part, but also the home to a permanent museum exhibition related to Adrienne Welsh's space exploits – she is mortified by it.

BARROWMERE EDUCATIONAL HUB: Sometime in the early 2050s, there was a dramatic overhaul of the British Educational system. Although each school would retain some level of autonomy over its administrative functions, the main educational component would be delivered electronically straight from London. The local teacher became known as a 'learning facilitator', basically someone to act as a glorified 3D holographic technician and occasional tutor. Libraries were also done away with, and all British Library books were converted to centrally stored data – librarians becoming known as 'data store administrators'. Educational standards fell dramatically, but costs also fell. There was picketing by the ex-teachers and librarians, but people in knitted sweaters are no match for fully trained combat police. They returned to their jobs disgruntled and undervalued, but in the long term this is the fate of all public servants.

Miss Ricketts really resents her daily task, she considers the changes to the so-called teaching profession to be a debasement of her core values in regards to education. As such, she usually finds some way of circumventing the 3D holographic display – generally with a carefully applied screwdriver, in a process that could euphemistically be called ‘circuit-venting’. She then has to resort to ‘relief teaching’, in her own homeroom. Although there are growing concerns about the high repair bill to the holographic display unit housed within her room, her classes’ outstanding success rate in exams more than makes up for the occasional high-tech hiccup.

The lessons, as laid down by the central school authority, have been dumbed-down considerably since 2003. Even young Rodney is ahead of most of the class, academically speaking. The lesson structure usually revolves around 30 minutes to an hour of theory delivered from London, followed by a series of exercises to be completed on one of the colorful designer made educational consoles (see scenes 2064). The student is continuously being tested by their inputted multiple-choice responses. Today’s test for the juniors is on ‘Late 20th Century History’. Around midday, just before lunch, the school temporarily loses power, it is subsequently discovered that all the morning data has been lost.

In the senior’s class, the morning lecture is related to ‘space engineering’. Despite Laura being the undisputed champion of the subject, she knows little about today’s subject so-called scramjet technologies. Without some quick revision (see handouts), she is likely to be embarrassed for the first time academically. A new feature of the educational system is that certificates are printed out for those achieving marks in the top five percent of all the UK. Laura generally gets one printed out as a matter of course; she rarely even collects them.

Monday Afternoon#1

Each Monday afternoon is sports-afternoon.

ZERO G FOOTBALL: The sport of football (soccer) got a dramatic overhaul in the early 2050s. After Todor Proborsky developed the *Proborsky Limited Anti-Grav System*, it became possible for all kinds of anti-gravity devices to be developed. One of the first devices was the anti-grav belt; people could now bounce up and down like they were on a trampoline or a pogo stick. The Australian Media Tycoon, Rove McManus, developed a new and exciting version of football where participants could now, “bounce up and down like excitable kangaroos in the mating season!” It took off and quickly spread worldwide, with ‘traditional football’ going the way of politicians with scruples and Socialism.

Benny Mandelson has been called in today to give a demonstration of the Zero G Football System. This consists of four large metallic spikes (man sized) with electrical conducting prongs thrust out at 90 degree angles. If these spiked contraptions are placed at the four-corners of the football pitch, they generate an electrical field that is needed to power the anti-grav belts remotely. Once the system is plugged into the local power grid, the players can push off the ground high into the sky with relative ease, they can do outrageous bicycle-kicks, or even head the ball whilst soaring six-meters off the pitch.

The problem for budding soccer-whizzes like Ryan is that the newfound freedom of movement offered by the system tends to disorientate, rather than aid natural football talent. Each of the teenagers should be made to roll their Intuition skill, to see how well they understand the basics of successful movement in limited anti gravity. Then they should be asked to roll their Athleticism skill (the total of Intuition being the maximum result they can achieve at the present time). This means Ryan is likely to be no more skillful at this variant of the game than the likes of Laura and Rodney.

Halfway through the demonstration game (2.00pm), the local power grid again falters. The airborne players instantly thud hard to the ground. Elsewhere, Miss Ricketts, now at home enjoying her early mark, has been zapped through her 3D holographic television (see ACCIDENTS).

Monday Afternoon#2

Back at the spaceport, at around 2 o’clock Roddy notices that the local power grid temporarily goes down. He doesn’t know why, but it does concern him. He has now had several cups of black coffee and is slightly too wired for his own good, he talks fast and stammers a little in places; he nearly spills his coffee over the console in the temporary darkness.

By 3 o’clock the rocket is ready for launch. The anti-gravity platform has successfully reduced the payload’s weight in preliminary testing by around 14.67% (duly meeting expectations). Essentially, they have achieved what they set out to do, but Roddy urges that they fire the rocket, anyway. This is to verify that the platform is wired correctly, so that they can use the platform immediately for commercial payloads, in an effort to help alleviate the critical financial pressures crippling spaceport operations. He is always thinking of his boss, albeit often more as his lover, but it’s the thought that counts.

The final checks are made, and with less than 5 seconds on the clock before the firing countdown, a massive power surge takes place localized around the rocket. The rocket explodes, destroying the valuable rocket and damaging the precious launch platform. All the adults stare out of the large plexi-screen window, completely dumbfounded and then aghast. Then Roddy frantically goes to press one of the buttons on the console, to disconnect the power grid, but his finger gets zapped with a bright blue spark of electricity. The multicolored lights and monitors of the operations deck slowly lose power, and eventually everyone stands or sits in near darkness.

Roddy begins to whimper: “It’s not my fault. It’s not my fault!”

Eventually, the power is restored by Roddy, and he assesses the dire situation. He relates that, yes, a power surge destroyed the rocket. But he is flummoxed just as to where this excess power present was generated from – it didn’t come down the power cabling to the rocket from the spaceport. It appears to have been generated actually on board the rocket. A minor squabble breaks out between Roddy and Jack, Jack saying that his assumption is entirely impossible. Adrienne eventually intercedes, saying she knows of at least one person who probably knows what happened – their nemesis – Reginald Wilson.

Later, the police turn up to make inquiries about the incident. Inspector William Shakespeare assesses the situation at great length and scribbles notes thoughtfully, and then makes the outrageous claim, “that a lovers-triangle (purportedly between Jack, Adrienne and Roddy if his contemptuous eyes say anything) is the source of problem. That working in cramped surrounds with ‘phallic shaped objects all day, can warp the mind and lead the body astray. That objects of great thrusting power are likely to compromise one’s moral integrity and lead to mayhem and infidelity, to say nothing of bitter, bitter incriminations”.

He will eventually be asked to be excused, so he can just go off and ring his ‘psychiatrist’. He does not return. He has apparently taken his pending divorce proceedings badly, but that’s what happens when your soon-to-be ex-wife runs off with a young virile space jock (pilot).

Monday Afternoon##3

In the main street, a number of old ladies are standing around and chattering. They are standing opposite the residence of one Eliza Ricketts. Outside the privet hedge, Constable Broadhurst is chatting with the dotty silver haired undertaker, Mr. Albert Wilt, who doesn’t look long for this world himself. His black hopper hearse has been pulled up outside, and his two young grandsons are carrying in an IKEA branded coffin. The pair eventually return outside without the coffin, they speak animatedly with their grandfather. The old man purses his lips in an effort to stop himself from breaking into laughter. The pair return inside and exit carrying an open coffin with the dead woman’s hand pointing out of it, up to the sky, with her two legs frozen in a squat position, resolutely out the sides of the casket (see THE ACCIDENTS). Upon closer inspection her hair stands on end like a demented troll doll and her pointing finger is slightly scorched.

Wednesday Night

Once a member of the Peckhurst or Frogmorton clan return home, one of their parents will inform them that poor old Margaret Corbett’s poodle was killed up near the village green (i.e. somewhere near the barrows). He apparently ran off into the woods and she found the poor poodle with all its hair standing on end, it looked more like a poof (footrest) – she suspects it was frightened to death (ghosts in the wood).

THE ALIENS: The aliens are manifestations of the electro-shock therapy, taking place in Thomas’ real life. They appear in his fantasy universe as black-bear-like shapes (black voids) with pulsing blue electricity flaring from their bodies (similar in construction to the original Space Invaders cabinet image, see handouts). The black represents the void that they leave behind when they attack parts of Thomas subconscious i.e. resultant damage to his brain. The electro-shock therapy is attempting to erase that part of his brain generating this fantasy universe: a direct threat to the existence of the teenagers. In this fantasy universe, their spaceship (an incorporeal classically domed spaceship made out of pale blue light (electricity), is located inside the ancient BARROW. The spaceship is significantly fainter than the aliens. It needs power, electrical power, *lots* of electrical power! The intelligent race of Aliens traverse the Universe by tapping into natural sources of electrical energy – the natural *ley-lines* of natural energy: the same energy purportedly used in magic.

Glastonbury has always been regarded as the primary place where mystical energy is found in the British Isles, over the centuries (at least for game purposes) the source has slightly moved latitude to its present location at Barrowmere. The fact is magnetic fields on Earth are slowly reversing, hence the movement in the ley-lines. Those teenagers with high Intuition rolls can see faint light blue striations slowly moving and arching above the horizon and dropping down and converging above the burial mound, as a demonstration of the ley-lines theory.

The aliens are not mortal as we might understand, and they can take their time and wait for the natural energy source to re-power their spaceship over 10,000 days and nights (roughly 27 years). That wouldn’t be such a problem if they were in an uninhabited area, but many locals use the village green nearby and many frequent the BARROWS as a local tourist attraction. And ACCIDENTS do occur.

The aliens are quite happy to leave Earth if the teenagers can provide them with an alternative power source (they have explored the possibility themselves to ill-effect, see ACCIDENTS). The local power sub-station doesn't draw enough power to refuel their ship entirely, even with it supplying the local Spaceport. They must be redirected to a larger city like Bristol, Oxford or London. If they go to London, a major power surge will occur, annihilating the Aliens and their ship but plunging London into a major infrastructure challenge: they will have blown up every local sub-station in the area. If they are sent to either Bristol or Oxford, a power outage will still occur, but it will only cause minor problems; whereas London will experience power outages that last for weeks, causing major economic loss and commuter chaos (perishable foods lost, major financial markets down and cancelled tourism).

If the players attempt to engage the aliens in conversation they will respond in kind, however, the aliens will not presume that humans speak. The aliens are not familiar with the words that humans speak, they will endeavor to send out a 'lasso' of electrical energy towards one of the nearest non-speakers, the electrical pulse will affix itself crudely to the humans head and cause all kinds of physical spasms to occur. Eventually, the human cipher will start to stammer a reply in a monotone voice. This, of course, isn't that healthy for the human 'mouthpiece' – especially the brain. Not one little bit. They'll apologize profusely, further aggravating the situation.

The Aliens are made of atoms, just like the humans they will protest, and may resent suggestions that they shouldn't really exist. Their religion revolves around *The Great Storm called Ohm*, who generated them and gave them life. They are quite affable and kind, their younger sparks (children) might have caused problems for the locals, but they really didn't mean it. There are *impulsive* by nature and full of *energy*.

The alien parent's names are Captain Power and Miss Sparkle; the children are called Flash Boy and Zaphina.

THE ACCIDENTS: The three accidents caused by the alien landing are just that, accidents. They have never encountered carbon-based entities before (or electronic equipment for that matter) and they do not know the harm that they cause them.

INCIDENT ONE: Margaret Corbett (Willets) whilst out walking her poodle, Lady around the village green, experiences a strange sensation walking near the BARROWS. Her body starts to tingle and the hairs on her arm stand to attention. At this moment, the dog tugs the leash out of her hands (out of the mutts own fear) and bolts off in the general direction of the woods (barrows) – its not the smartest of dogs. She goes to look for her and finds her paralyzed (dead) just outside of the barrows, with all its white poodle hair standing on end (just like a puff-ball). It has been inadvertently zapped by one of the startled senior aliens – going out to look for young, missing Zaphina.

INCIDENT TWO: Miss Eliza Ricketts (local school-teacher) is found by her friendly neighbor in the afternoon (Mrs. Jane Lewis) after hearing a scream and seeing a flash of blue light come from her neighbors front parlor, then all her lights in her house went out. Miss Ricketts is eventually found in a crouched position on her back, her finger pointing skywards, her eyebrows cinched and her hair comically standing straight in the air. One of the young aliens (Flash Boy) discovered the delights of *surfing* the local power-lines and ended up in Miss Rickett's 3D television set at the very same moment she was changing channels. The death was caused by a power surge i.e. Flash Boy. As describe earlier, Mr. Albert Wilt (Funeral Director) comes to collect the body, whilst some local busybodies look on.

INCIDENT THREE: The experimental rocket explodes at the Spaceport, after a strong power surge occurs. This is because one of the younger aliens (Zaphina) is investigating the unfamiliar spaceship (rocket) standing on the launch pad. The spaceport having access to vast amounts of electricity from its own personal sub-station, being another point of interest for the young impulsive alien. She investigates the electrical cable leading from the rocket to the sub-station; she ends up being destroyed by this current. This incident in turn causes a massive power surge on board the rocket. Roddy Masters (senior engineer) is distressed at events, as he has no clear indication why this should happen.

A number of clues can be ascertained as to the alien presence. The electric fence around the complex shorted out, shortly before the explosion (the alien entering the complex). A large power surge flows from the rocket back to the electricity sub-station (contrary to all known electrical theory). Also, on the television monitors that were set up to record the flight of the rocket, there appears to be a degree of electrical disturbance generated (as the alien passes by the unit), the image display seemingly appears to turn to blue. The alien has looked down the unfamiliar lens (or *power source* to her) and it then shorts it out, ending the footage.

INCIDENT FOUR: The three incidents above represent clues to uncovering the alien presence. Incident four represents time running out for Thomas in real life. After the third incident occurs, the power of the aliens is amplified story wise, and when similar incidence occur in the future, not only do people die, but parts of the village essentially become voided in the process. In these locations a great swirling black void will now exist. If the teenagers attempt to get close to one of these voids, their heartbeat will quicken and they'll increasingly become agitated and cold. They may also experience premonitions of their impending deaths. These incidents increase in frequency as time marches on (i.e. if the teenagers haven't found a viable solution to the ALIEN problem). Another aspect is that the voided places become an anathema to the other locals, they can't remember that the location ever existed.

THE BARROWS: There are a series of barrows (burial mounds) present in Barrowmere. They are from the dark ages and represent the tombs of local chieftains. One of the tombs has been excavated, that of *Eric of Wold* (the largest one). The interior has been opened up for the public to enter and fluorescent lighting installed. There is a plastic display dome over the large crudely chipped slate sarcophagi at the center of the small bare chamber. The walls have been constructed by the layering of slate chips one on top of each other. Outside, earth has been piled upon these walls to create a mound shape. There are pictures present on a display board showing the golden tributes that were found during the excavation of the body.

The display contains the following text: “The barrow of Eric of Wold was excavated in 1963, by the London Museum, it contained many familiar objects of power, denoting the prestige of this medieval chieftain (circa 1100-1150 B.C). The golden cockerel embellished staff denotes his place as an important spiritual power within his local community, and his helm mounted with stag horns shows his symbolic importance as a representative of the God of the Forest (the Green Man or the Horned God Herne). Local legend maintains that Eric of Wold rose to prominence to defeat his chieftain father in battle, after his father had slain his mother, after taking another bride. He ruled his people for many years and they prospered. A cult quickly arose around Eric’s memory, suggesting that he was the embodiment of the God of the Otherworld; furthermore, that he would return to renew the world. This seems to have been the inspiration for many similar local tales about fallen and slumbering heroes returning to save the area from peril – like Arthurian legends. The staff and the helm now reside in the London Museum”.

In story three, the tombs are home to THE ALIENS and their spacecraft. This is a light blue translucent oval-shaped UFO made entirely of electricity – it glows in the darkness of the tomb (i.e. the lights inside having been shorted out). As the teenagers get closer, Intuition checks should be made to see whether the teenagers notice that the hair on their arms and legs begin to prickle, their head of hair will eventually start to stand to attention, as they get closer (like the effect of a Van Der Graf Generator). The aliens present at the location are unaware that humans can speak, that is until the teenagers attempt to engage them in direct dialogue, if at all (see THE ALIENS).

The tomb also becomes an important story element in story four; it is the local fairy *sidhe* – the gateway to the Otherworld (see handouts). Thomas in the following story needs to enter the Otherworld to obtain a sapling of Yggdrasil (the Tree of Life) to renew the world before Ragnarok comes. To enter THE SEELIE COURT Thomas needs to lie down in the sarcophagi. He will be instantly transported the Otherworld. As detailed later, this act signifies and tacitly acknowledges Thomas’ plight (he is catatonic/asleep) and also symbolizes that Thomas understands he has been idling in his own dreamscape. It is later revealed by Dorian Gray, that this dreamscape is an attempt by the Fairy Queen (Mab) to block Thomas from entering the SEELIE COURT, he is deemed *profane*.

Another symbolic aspect of the BARROW is it represents the gateway between realities, as Eric of Wold has past on to the Otherworld, so Thomas needs to leave his own Otherworld, and go back to the real world. It marks the stage where he realizes that this is truly a false reality.

THE VAN: For the teenagers to return to their own time, they will need to defeat (or help) THE ALIENS and then visit the cult leader, Rodney Smith (see REVELATIONS OF SMITH).

If the teenagers are floundering after defeating the aliens, one of Smiths’ female followers will turn up in a gaily decorated Ice Cream van and offer the teenagers all the ice cream they can consume, only under the proviso they go along with her. The follower will take them to her spiritual guru, who is keen to meet them, and furthermore, has something important to tell them.

Fatima Hussein: Is the daughter of second generation Pakistani parents, she is a follower of Smith and is dressed in bright multi-colored knitted leggings, a home made chunky sweater and a tartan skirt. She looks every inch like she has indeed been dressed by the *Oxfam* charity organization. Smith stated that, “they should make do with what they could afford” when the followers first ascended bedraggled on to the farm. The followers translated this pat truism into an anti-materialism revelation by their master. Fatima’s hair is bunched into two matching dreadlocks pigtails, she wears a nose ring and has various tribal tattoos all over her body – evidence of her wayward days as a part-time fire dancer and full-time drug addict. She is one of the *fallen* who look towards the wise, but exceedingly mundane leader for their spiritual nourishment.

Rodney’s original V.W combi hotdog stand now lies rusting at the back of the hayloft, up on blocks, located out back of Ma Smiths’ farm. It is where Rodney Smith goes to get away from his overzealous followers. Rodney Smith will take the teenagers up here to assist them getting back home, but also to confide in them that he is virtually being held hostage by the ‘bunch of crazies’ i.e. his followers. He will detail the prophetic REVELATIONS OF SMITH here. The exterior of the white V.W is covered in atypical fast food menu options scrawl, but time has ensured that rust has riven along various sections urgently in need of pot riveting.

The interior has been hollowed out – removing the fat fryers, preparation bench, and storage pantries. It has been replaced with a small bed that is covered with dirty clothes. At the back of the van a small seating saloon that is inset around a small Formica orange dining table. The teenagers and Smith barely have enough room to move, no matter breathe.

After Smith relates the prophecies, he will confirm that he can help them return to their own time. He says that this humble hot-dog van is not what it seems. He has had plenty of time to think since the days of his apparent revelations, and has worked out that he was actually just kidnapped by aliens, the lightening strike being a type of communications transmission – just like in *Star Trek*, he adds. The white light that he was bathed in at the time of revelation actually came from an alien spacecraft looming overhead. The ALIENS read his mind and were amazed – at his apparent lack of knowledge and savvy. He believes that they then zapped his hotdog van, the purpose of which initially confounded him. He has only recently worked out their grand design. The aliens wanted him to explore the prehistory of his world, to go back in time and find out more about the origins of his race and culture. The van had now become a time travelling device. He found this out when he eventually got the reconditioned van back on the road.

He came to a stop near Barrowmere Spaceport when it was being constructed; hoping to sell his fried food wares to the starving, freezing construction workers. Smith got out of the driver's cabin, admired the progress to the spaceport and went into the back of the van. He switched on his radio and hastily prepared the food. He eventually opened up his customer service window; it opened up onto Barrowmere Abattoir – the one he had seen in his youth.

Such events occurred again and again, seemingly at random. Until one day Smith made the connection. The van's radio was the clue. He rarely switched it on whilst he drove. But on the days when he followed the local football team (*Barrowmere Badgers* now in the Conference League) to their away games - hoping to make a steady profit after the game, and proselytize – he switched on the radio to hear the latest football results.

The radio had gone a little bit haywire after the electrical storm, and the stations were seemingly out of place on the bandwidth. *BBC Radio's Five Live Football* station was now found at 2060 on the band, whereas his favorite All-Zydeco station (Hootenanny FM) was now at the bandwidth location, 2003. His favorite Premier division team is Halifax United. The also-rans of the top flight occasionally had their games broadcast. On even rarer occasions they won. However, on the days when they played a top team, they were usually solemnly trounced. On these occurrences Rodney Smith usually changed the station in disgust.

He found out later that spinning the radio's dial whilst the van was fully enclosed, led him to different time periods corresponding to the bandwidth. However, before 01/12/1991 there was nothing. This is Thomas' birth date. He traveled further into the future and there was just blackness. He traveled back in time between the periods of 2005 and 2063 – despite the fact he had a memory of living part of this time, there was nothing but darkness. After some research and serious contemplation, he surmised that someday someone would come along to explain. He speculated that he or she who would be around 12 years of age (i.e. the time periods).

He waited.

He believes that Thomas is a manifestation of *the Great Recycler*, not a 'Creator' because he has met the same locals who exist in both 2003 and 2064 and they haven't aged a day.

After telling the teenagers of THE VAN, Rodney will flick on the Zydeco station (2003) and excuse himself and solemnly say goodbye. Once the door slams, the teenagers are left alone in the interior of the vehicle. Nothing extraordinary happens to denote *whizzo* time traveling antics taking place. They open the van door and look out onto the farm; nothing has much changed at Ma Smith's. However, once they look around they cannot see the looming presence of the Spaceport off in the distance. The Van on the outside is now just a dull matt gray color (the undercoat), with no vendor signs attached. If the teenagers open the back slide door again, they will see the fat fryers, preparation bench, and storage pantries mentioned earlier present i.e. no longer a time travelling device.

Friday 3rd January 2004

Midday

THE CODA: After the teenagers return to their own time. They start heading back home, presumably; they have to walk back from the outlying farm, past the Church, and back down the main street. The road is festooned with garlands and streamers, there are quite a number of motor vehicles parked haphazardly all along the side of the road, tourists presumably. Near the small shopping precinct there are lines of cheering, adoring crowds. There are musicians in medieval costume wandering around playing woodwind instruments and ancient stringed instruments similar to lutes, they are playing madrigals and lively traditional folk tunes. A number of young women are dressed in long flowing white dresses, they wear crowns made from holly and forest flowers, they are waving adoringly at the crowds and they are handing out local delicacies from their wicker baskets (things like cakes, toffees and bottled conserves). But the main focus of the celebrations seems to be 'walking hay bales' that are being led around on heavy chains, saucily grabbing any vivacious girl they happen to find on route and planting a big dry straw kiss upon them

The ‘walking hay bales’ are known as *straw bears*. This is an ancient rural custom found in Britain and Germany, whereby itinerant farm hands were given various gifts before they left the service of the local lord for the year. It is essentially a day of thanksgiving to the lesser people of traditional country society. These workers traditionally remained around for quite a long period after the harvest was brought in, they remained at the landowner’s pleasure and expense during the long festive season. Then they left after Christmas, witness this festival.

The festival as it takes place now in Barrowmere is slightly different; the locals have been substituted for the nomadic farm hands, as they are few in numbers these days.

There are six strawbears present at the local festivities:

- ❑ One stumbles about, nearly falling upon the children, whilst swearing in a strong Irish brogue, he almost drops his precious bottle of brandy (Dylan Black)
- ❑ Another plants a long tender kiss on Dervla Peckhurst, Tony Peckhurst starts to get jealous, and momentarily a pushing match ensues (Father Stephen Laycock see THE EVENTS for further details)
- ❑ One prances around like the scarecrow from the *Wizard of Oz*, trying to pick up inappropriately young girls (Principal Gary Strang)
- ❑ One actively engages in banter with the mini-bears (small local children also dressed up as strawbears), leading them around like a doting mother hen (Nitin Ramesh)
- ❑ One rather rotund bear stumbles around blindly knocking into small children who come running up (Richard Frogmortson). He is able to wear his glasses under the costume.
- ❑ One is slowly following in the direction of young Thomas (LORD BARROW)

Present at the festivities is Juliette Frogmortson who is video taping her husband’s bumbling performance, she will insist that Rodney and Imogen get pictures with their *unbearably* itchy father.

Dervla and Tony Peckhurst are present; Tony will in private counsel his teenagers to track down the identity of the rogue strawbear who dared to ‘snog’ his beautiful wife.

This leaves Thomas potentially alone for LORD BARROW (Thomas Crowley) and his time travelling cohorts to kidnap Thomas. Crowley will jovially attempt to convince young Thomas to get upon his shoulders, playing it up for the crowd. The crowd will urge him to do so, duly in response. Off in the distance, Gary Strang will drop a poor unfortunate child he has hauled upon his shoulders. At this time the strawbear (Crowley) and his jailor (Andrew Staunton) will attempt to silence Thomas’ desperate screams by pushing a ball of straw into his mouth and muffle his screams further by burying his head deep in the straw lining of the costume. They will then attempt to carry Thomas quickly away rugby-style through to the back of a neighboring house.

If this successfully occurs, Crowley will gloat conceitedly saying,

“Once you have seen the future, you can avert the error of your ways. Despite time travel, I’m not a reconstructed 21st century man, so I’m about to avert *your* errors, forever”.

He then draws a large ceremonial style curved blade from under his straw bound girth. Hopefully, by this time the other teenagers have arrived with the other locals; Constable Broadhurst will lead away the errant ranting cleric for good, presumably back to Bristol Asylum. This is final *beat* for the bad guy – story wise.

Back at the *Festival of the Straw Bear*, Dylan Black the bear has managed to pour brandy all over himself, and further compounded his error by lighting up a cigarette in compensation. Dylan is soon a walking flambéd fool of a bear. He runs off into the middle-distance and thanks his lucky stars when he finds a heritage horse trough still present in the village.

THE LOCALS 2064

Rodney Smith: The local dull-witted handyman is not blessed with much in the way of charisma, looks or intelligence. However, that hasn't stopped him from fast becoming the guru of choice to all those deluded lost souls in need of direction. The hapless man was busy one day putting fairy lights on his newly acquired hotdog van (another failed venture) when it started to rain. Lightning struck him twice and he soon became convinced of his mission to guide the locals to what he termed their, "ultimate destiny". Despite locals thinking him crazy down the local pub, word soon got around when he ventured out across the countryside in his new hotdog van/travelling pulpit V.W combi-combo. He preached after football matches, outside existing churches and even outside pubs after closing time. After returning and thinking nothing more about his seemingly failed spiritual mission, he soon had to deal with flocks of people turning up at his mother's farm. They wanted to venerate him as a prophet. He duly converted the hayloft into accommodation for 'The Chosen' – their wording - and for the want of anything else better to do, he started to train them up in the art of serving hotdogs and kebabs. "To serve others is way to spiritual enlightenment", they denoted. The chosen sought fit to throw money at their venerated leader, being a practical man, he bought a couple more combi vans. Some of the chosen took it upon themselves to go forth with the Eucharist (now composed of hotdog as the body of Christ, and tomato sauce as his blood) and preach from the 'Book of Smith'. This hastily bound book contains his various ramblings and country home-spun truisms edited into a coherent form by an ex-Oxford scholar (see REVELATIONS OF SMITH). Unfortunately for Rodney, he has been unable to truly turn into the debauched, egotistical maniac that is virtually demanded of any worthwhile cult leader. He was just brought up too well to take advantage of the gullible.

REVELATIONS OF SMITH: Smith, at least in the written form, seems to prophesize the end of the world. The Great Creator will forsake them and 'get his own life, instead of worrying about others'. He will heal the world and make it anew in his own new image. A conjunction of sorts will then take place when five suns (misinterpretation of sons) will become one – commentators suggest all religions will meld into one (subtext: the real Thomas will find his inner strength to possess all the traits borne by the other teenagers).

The Earth Mother will aid the Great Creator in his quest, despite her initial reluctance. Commentators suggest that this detail is related to the pagan relationship between the God and Goddess – in story four's context, it relates to Mab: the Queen of the Fairies giving Thomas a sapling of Yggdrasil (the tree of life). It also connotes the *real* Imogen and her quest to aid Thomas.

Smith himself is rather abashed about his prophetic words - he only half believes what he says most of the time. Unfortunately, everyone else around him *wants* to believe, and some of the younger women *are* rather attractive. He wouldn't want to see the light of hope flicker out in their beautiful, yet hopeful eyes.

If the teenagers go to meet with quasi-cult leader, they will each receive their own personal prophesy. Thomas will be identified as the embodiment of 'the Great Recycler' (i.e. the creator of this amalgamated world, but also the environmental protector of the world a.k.a. manifestation of the Green Man). Smith will also identify the TRAITS of each of the other teenager and tell them that their time is short. He will also identify that THE ALIENS (or the seemingly random events) are caused by Thomas' presence.

TRAITS:

Laura: "Your dedication to the care others and the future inspire others, but your time will be short."

Ryan: "Your drive to see others succeed at difficult tasks will be remembered, but you will be forever forfeit".

Imogen: "Your bravery in the face of great danger lights the candle of hope in others, they will succeed even though you will pass into memory".

Rodney: "Your time is short, but the manner of your death will be crucial to all those who remain".

Geraldine 'Ma' Smith: Rodney's venerable Welsh mother doesn't believe a word of it. She thinks her son is 'daft in the head', she is substantively right. She lives in the main farmhouse a good distance away from the converted barn. She is just glad her son has made some new friends, but strongly suspects they are all high on drugs (she is absolutely right). Still, they all seem to be falling all over themselves to help her around the farm, so she tolerates their nonsense, and nose rings.

The Chosen: Some of the members of the cult truly believe in Smith, some of the others are cynical manipulators. Quite a few people present are gypsies who have hit upon a novel scheme to get permanent tenancy rights. They have registered the 'Smith Family' as a religion. As such, they do not have to pay tax, being a non-profit entity. Most of them are on the dole, they also pay no rent and subsequently, they can indulge in an almost permanent drug holiday. They have even managed to convince Ma Smith that the growing marijuana is *Canadian Parsley*. All they need to do every now and then is reinterpret Smith's ramblings into a cod-religious dialogue – something particularly easy when you're stoned. They were dubbed the *Oxfam Mafia* by BBC *Newsnight* in a recent exposure, they are otherwise known as the *Smith Family*.

Tony Peckhurst: Although essentially the same character as in 2003, he is now the voice of the children's animated cartoon *Bob the Bio-Engineer*. The runaway hit that has keyed into the public's current fascination with all things Martian. The show is the story of a plucky bio-engineer who always manages to save the day. The star of the show is scheduled to make a *flying* visit to Mars under the aegis of promoting the show. This basically involves a 10-second photo opportunity of him standing on the Martian red earth that could just as easily have been mocked up in the confines of a small television studio. Tony hates flying in aircraft, no matter a 2-month round space flight to Mars!

Dervla Peckhurst: The future version of Dervla isn't as introspective as her 2003 version, her sister is still well and truly alive! Although she is still relatively calm and reserved, she is occasionally given to telling the odd sly joke.

Jack Riley: The future Jack looks different, and for all intensive purposes is different. He is no longer employed as a blacksmith, he is now a pioneering aeronautical engineer. He is also quite rich thanks to the selling of his patent for the Riley Scramjet Propulsion System (R.S.P.S standard) to *Boeing Aeronautics Universal* (see handouts). He is kind and generous to his son, in stark contrast to his former incarnation. He recently married a stunning blonde, his Swedish wife (and model) is called Emiliana. The Riley family live in the local Manor House, having moved from the Blacksmiths two years ago. Jack is currently working on the A.G.L.P. (Anti-Gravity Launch Platform) that will revolutionize the space industry: fuel load requirements could be reduced by up to 15%. He has set up his own small enterprise this time around to research and market his new project, the business is called *Afterburn Rockets Incorporated*. (see THE FUTURE for further analysis of changes to Jack's character).

Emiliana Eriksson-Riley: The new wife (as of three-months ago) of Jack Riley is a high profile model who met the rather reclusive millionaire in the Green Room of a BBC television studio (he bumbled his way into the wrong one green room; the fashion show one, rather than the hard science one). The Swedish model is actually quite smart and admires Jack single-mindedness and kindness. She is famously quoted as wryly saying she, "doesn't get out of bed for anything less than 10,000,000 Lira a day". She still has some problem speaking English – despite knowing Italian, Spanish and Japanese fluently (English being hinted at strongly here as merely being a minority language in 2064).

Richard Frogmortson: The future Frogmortson finds himself in a bit of a pickle. In an inter-office reshuffle, Richard found himself detailed to take up the reigns of *merchant bank advisor in charge of inter-planetary investment*. No one quite knew just what the new title was supposed to mean, with inter-planetary investments currently only encompassing some 5,000 people detailed to terraform Mars on behalf of the *Japanese Frontier Force* (a government expeditionary group) and the European Union. He has instead settled upon buying up large tracts of Venusian soil. Unfortunately, it has only just dawned on him why the Russians were so willing to offload it (poisonous deadly atmosphere/crushing high gravity).

He is currently concerned with cutting his families exorbitant expenditure, knowing that his job is seriously under threat. He has found inner reserves of steel to properly deal with his errant and demanding son. He also has the additional stressor of the strained professional relationship between himself and Adrienne Welsh. He did his ample best to get her a fair investment deal for her Spaceport through Lloyds Merchant Bank, but the account is now under the control of one of his less scrupulous colleagues. He didn't consider that the account would someday become someone else's concern.

Juliette Frogmortson: The 2064 version of Juliette is a little more serious minded than her 2003 counterpart. She is concerned about her husband's job prospects and has been seriously thinking about going back to work for quite some time. Recently, she has accepted the Public Relations duties for the Barrowmere Spaceport. This employment is likely to cause ongoing tensions given the current fractious relationship between her husband and Adrienne.

Ret. Captain Adrienne Welsh: The sister of Dervla Peckhurst and the auntie of Ryan and Laura, is a national hero. In 2058, she was the Commander of the first manned mission to Mars by the European Space Agency. She charmed the British nation with firstly, her good looks, and then with her bravery, by rescuing fellow crew-members from a rapidly decompressing faulty habitation module. Images of her rescue space walk were quickly beamed back across Earth. The high achieving go-getter is in stark contrast to her 2003 equivalent. She retired shortly after her return and used her fame to form a partnership with various investors to establish a spaceport in Barrowmere. She saw an opportunity in helping to service the burgeoning E.S.A base on the Moon (Blair One). Despite the success of the spaceport, additional capital was needed and obtained from Lloyds Merchant Bank (obtained again through Richard Frogmortson). The steep repayments required to service the debt have led her to question her own business acumen, but also the good faith of Mr. Frogmortson. She is currently deciding whether or not this isn't a good time to sell off her capital shares at a veritable fire sale price to the domineering and thugish Reginald Wilson. The cracks that destroyed her life in 2003 are beginning to show again.

Roddy Masters: This young Australian aerospace engineer has been an absolute boon to Adrienne Welsh. Despite Adrienne being an experienced pilot and space explorer, she has had little to do with the technical aspects of the process. Roddy is an affable, hard-working Australian who likes his beer cold, as much as he likes his blondes cool, just like his boss. He works tirelessly for her at all hours, hoping familiarity with breed contentment, not contempt. Although Adrienne likes him as well, both never quite manage to pluck up the courage to break the formal restraints of the boss and employee relationship – sometimes their coquettish looks and timid flirting becomes excruciating for others to bare.

Christine Alexia Smythe: The proverbial fly in the ointment of true love, this pint sized rich girl is slumming it in her current employ, or at least, she thinks so. She actually took the job at the behest of her father, Reginald Wilson. The Cambridge educated daughter (Arts Psychology) is doing so in an attempt to gather inside information on the company and to possibly bring it down from the inside. She is perversely doing this unconsciously through her own neglect. The covert nature of her deception soon paled, and she spends most of her quality time trying to steal the affections of Roddy Masters. Despite the obvious chemistry between her employer and the chief engineer, she has delighted in seeding misunderstandings and complications to keep them apart. Unfortunately, she has been unable to convince Roddy of her own skin-deep charms.

Detective Inspector William Shakespeare: The bumbling Detective Inspector has been reassigned to the Gloucestershire area after a number of high profile cases went horribly wrong in London. He was formerly a Murder Investigations Team Commander. Personally shooting the wrong man earned the Inspector the unfortunate moniker of ‘trigger’. The wrong man in this case being the Assistant Commissioner of the Force, who was walking his dog, incidentally outside the raid on the wrong house, in the wrong street, but somewhat fortuitously not the wrong suburb. He didn’t get along with his superior before, not matter after! Another thing that doesn’t help is his name; his mother had high hopes when she named her only son William (after the well-known playwright). Unfortunately, all it gave him was open derision at school, leading inexorably to his ineffectual, and uncertain demeanor. He also bears a slight stutter from the days of schoolyard bullying. His wife also left him recently; this has seriously affected his otherwise insubstantial detective acumen. She claimed he was no good in bed, witness his outburst at the Spaceport. This character is modeled after the character Trigger in *Only Fools and Horses*.

Benny Mandelson: The entrepreneur never missed a beat, in 2055 he changed from selling dodgy second-hand automobiles to dodgy second-hand hopper vehicles. These hopper vehicles look similar to 1950s style fender-bender cars (all curves and spoilers) but with limited anti-gravity capabilities – his hoppers are even more limited in their gravity defying qualities (being nearly burnt out). The 2064 version of Benny now coaches the local Zero-G football team (see ZERO-G FOOTBALL segment)

Dylan Black: Not much has changed in the world of the drunken Irishmen, but he has managed to rename his store as Black-Hole Books, mainly in a misguided hope of generating extra tourist dollars from the fame and celebrity of local space pioneer, Adrienne Welsh (and her Spaceport enterprise). He has also taken a shine to the Irish lilt in the voice of one Dervla Peckhurst, despite her being happily married.

Martina Moon: The daughter of Cecily has taken charge of the shop in 2064. Her mother has gone off and established a hippy commune in the freezing Welsh countryside; a return to youth, a mid-life crisis or sea-change, either way, it’s not going well. Her daughter knows absolutely nothing about the *Craft*. Where the mother was ditsy but informative, her daughter is just plain ditsy and haughty. She is not adverse either to making preposterous statements up to cover up her palpable lack of knowledge. She is a 3rd generation white witch after all!

Delia Rose Bunbury: The former television celebrity chef has opened up her own restaurant in Barrowmere called *Barrowmere Fine Faire*. The beloved kitchen matriarch is *the* chef most Britons turned to, to understand traditional English cuisine, the restaurant is a natural extension of this fame. The English never quite working out that they have no worthwhile traditional cuisine. She is serious minded and takes no nonsense in the kitchen. Delia is somewhat modeled after British celebrity chef, *Delia Smith*.

Nitin Ramesh: After the death of his father-in-law, Nitin was bequeathed the ownership of Sterling & Sons. He now has two young children (Sachin and Megan) by his adoring wife, Rachel. Quite obviously, he doesn’t get a lot of sleep these days, a problem given he handles heavy industrial cutting equipment on a daily basis. He has, however, found time to become the local President of the *British Heritage Society*. Graham Sutherland bet him whilst down the local Pub that he wouldn’t run for the post with his sub-continent heritage. He did, and the rest as they say is history. Despite doing it originally to win the joking bet, he soon realized that he loved his slice of the English countryside. He was in fact British, rather than just being the son of an Asian immigrant. There was some consternation expressed at the time by some of the older local farmers, but his patience and willingness to discuss their grievances in person soon won them over. It also helped to defuse his own race issues with boorish tourists, who continue to this day to question his appropriateness for running the English heritage butcher’s shop. He even now has an ironic sign in his shop window. “Keep Britain for Britons!”

Doctor Amanda Braithwaite: The strident new local doctor works to a tight time frame. Between surgery hours, she can be seen having power lunches with members of medical association, answering mobile calls in relations to her other business interests, and performing mayoral functions on behalf of the local council. She always looks fabulous, cool, calm and collected; traits guaranteed to draw a great deal of flack from some of the more jealous locals – women mainly. The local men love her. She has unfairly become known as a ball-breaker, the inextricable fate of any spirited woman with drive and determination.

Reginald Wilson: The Cockney ex-gangster approaches his new profession of legitimate businessman, with the same discipline and determination he applied to his old one. He has long hounded Jack Riley to give up his aeronautics patents for a mere pittance, sometimes threateningly so. The same pressure has been applied to Adrienne Welsh, both have yet to give into his demands, but both appreciate the threat the man poses. Reginald’s company known as *Space Leisure Industries* ‘acquires’ existing aeronautics businesses at fire sale prices and breaks them up into their various components for quick and easy sale. It’s a healthy, wealthy business plan in the current climate of expensive space start-up companies. His daughter this time around is aiding his efforts to acquire Barrowmere Spaceport.

STORY FOUR: TEARS OF THE MOTHER

INTRODUCTORY VIGNETTES:

An ungainly bumblebee buzzes contently, in the light summer breeze, from garden to garden in fair Barrowmere. The seasonal winters lull in activity has been replaced by a veritable hive of activity in the meadows, gardens and hedgerows. The smell of sweet lilac and honeysuckle drifts from the floral borders of private gardens and civic landmarks alike. Hedgerows are alive with the sound of contented thrushes, darting to and fro, feeding their newly born chicks. Squirrels scamper from border to border, seeking out the rich bounty of hazelnuts, gooseberries and brambles.

The sound of a babbling stream welcomes clucking moorhens and their ungainly young to their very first swimming lesson. Dragonflies swoop and skim over the water's surface, delighting in their short precious hours of life supreme. Hawthorn blossoms swirl and fall into the water, nature's rich melody made complete.

The locals too are making haste whilst the sun shines, venerable veterinarian Mister Maggs is busy up in Ma Smith's upper field, attending to a lame young lamb, the others lambs flock adoringly around him, hoping for the same special care and attention. Callow young Seamus O'Reilly ineffectually commands his father's orchard, directing his young workforce to pick the bounty of apples, oranges and plums.

Saturday 2nd May

Morning#1

Elsewhere, Tony Peckhurst is slowly ascending a rickety old wood ladder to the roof of his agreeable country cottage. Below, his wife looks up concerned, as the ladder she grapples buckles disconcertingly under her husband's burgeoning girth.

Tony Peckhurst, despite having ample money in the bank to get a professional *thatcher* in, has decided to thatch his roof all by himself (with a little help of his wife and hopefully, teenager son and daughter). The water reeds, used in the thatching process, were delivered earlier this morning, and Tony considers there is no time like the present to start! In expectation of knocking it all off quickly, barley water and watercress sandwiches lie on a plate, on a side garden table in readiness for a languid lunch. His wife is concerned about his safety, but has long since realized anything she says falls on deaf ears – his childlike enthusiasm easily a match for the 'nagging wife' routine. He, of course, hasn't actually done any of the necessary research to ensure he doesn't make an absolute pigs-ear of the job. The teenagers will need to intercede to stop their father falling off the ladder, and/or creating the roof equivalent of a colander.

Morning#2

Over at the Frogmorton household, there are half-deflated balloons hanging from the patio, streamers lying sodden in the pool and a row of gaily-colored tents all pitched along the side of the carport. Imogen, having achieved straight A+ in her school report, was last night allowed to celebrate her success by having all her young female friends over to stay the night. Hi-jinx were had by all, copious quantities of red lemonade were consumed and everyone was packed off to bed early at 11p.m, just as mother had strenuously insisted.

Rodney has been in hiding ever since *that* prank was played last night on him. Rodney *will* have his revenge.

The particular prank played on him last night is left up to who ever is playing Imogen. Suggestions include, a toy spy camera in the bathroom when he was showering, girls taking his used underwear from the clothes basket in the laundry and parading it up and down the pool area, or getting one of the girls to ask him if he would help them out with kissing practice.

In response, the individual playing Rodney is at liberty to get his revenge on the sleeping girls. Suggestions include super-gluing the zips of the tents together and watching as some of the tents tumble into the pool, releasing a large black spider into one of the tents while they slumber, or telling one of the partygoers his sister's deeper, dark secret.

Over at the Smithy, Thomas is making haste whilst the proverbial sun is still shining. Thomas is busying himself doing some housework. He is humming to himself merrily; his father is current away, visiting relatives in Scotland. The sun filters into the sparsely appointed bathroom. With the fear of his father's wrath safely at bay, Thomas is giving the place a thorough going over. His attention presently turns to sorting out the crowd of bottles of bleaching agents and cleaning products housed under the bathroom sink. A glass bottle slides from his clutching grasp, due to its greasy film, and smashes into one of the tiles at the back of the cupboard recess.

A pink and purple regency style perfume tin is clearly seen through the crack in the tiles.

He retrieves this feminine oddity, in this house of masculine toil.

He opens it and is instantly overcome by the smell of jasmine and lavender. Inside the tin is a plain black 1991/1992 18-month travel diary. Upon opening of the diary an assortment of dried flowers and oak leaves fall out, plus a solitary peacock feather drifts slowly to the floor, upon closer inspection, it appears to have been used as a quill.

THE FAIRY MOTHER: Thomas' mother is a fairy. The diary (see handouts) describes the courting and subsequent hatred and abandonment of her by Jack Riley. Heather was ordered to travel to the mortal realm to deliver a *changeling* baby (fairy baby) into the cradle of a local woodsman. The fairy race, undertake this kind of deception to extend their sphere of influence into the mortal realm. The fairies, at least in this story's context, are essentially dead souls from the Otherworld.

The fairies are immortal beings, whose imaginations know no boundaries, yet they cannot make anything concrete or tangible - real. They do not exist in the harsh mortal realm, but instead live in a realm of pure fantasy and *glamour*. The only influence they have on the waking world is through the minds of mortals. In that sense, they rely upon humans to give them succor and life. It's a kind of parasitic half-life they lead.

Heather unconsciously realized this reality on the night of the 'Summer Smile' rave held in the early nineties near Barrowmere (30th April 1991, this equates to The Hosts of the Sidhe ride out). She saw the barbarism of life in the gyrating bodies of rave goers, including Jack Riley. Despite the grinding realities of life she saw, she considered the humans to be more alive than the fairies ever were. The physicality of the dance, long beloved by fairies but rarely practiced, intoxicated her – a series of Ecstasy tablets also helped.

The real problems arose when she fell in love. In fairy lore, there is the oft' told tale of *Wild Edric*, who took a fairy bride and subsequently lost her because he remonstrated with her despite making a strict vow not to. Mab, Queen of the Fairies, has long expected that her midwives remain virtuous and true in their duties. The excessive and often perplexing demands placed upon those who dare to marry across the fairy/mortal divide by Mab, is to ensure that such unions don't happen too often. Once it occurs, it is often difficult for the fairy to return to the Seelie Court/Otherworld (until they die a mortal death). They are essentially frozen out of high fairy society.

THE END OF THE WORLD (RAGNAROK): The Norse term of Ragnarok is used here as the most obvious example of a cataclysm, but also because of the musical play on words used in the Raga 'n' Rock rave that happens at O'Reilly's farm (see EVENTS). The end of the world, as prophesized by Heather Riley and Rodney Smith, is the point where Thomas' DELUSION collapses under its own internal logic. Thomas has unconsciously used this fantastic realm to explore the issues of his life and actions, once this realm comes to an end, he needs to have come to a better understanding of him self and his actions. It doesn't need to be an accurate portrayal, but it needs to be *viable*.

The portrait as presented in story four is that of a young man who grows to heal and love himself, by metaphorically healing the fantastic world of his psyche. He becomes the Green Man of his own psyche and travels to the Otherworld (Seelie Court) to obtain a sapling of tree of life. In his dream existence, this act renews the world from its impending environmental disaster. If no other living soul believes his mission it doesn't actually matter; just as long as *he* believes it everything will be O.K.

For Thomas to fully believe that he has endured this rite of passage, he needs to avert the six events that lead up to the end of the world (as outlined in Heather's diary, see handouts).

THE EVENTS: The following six events need to be averted in order to help save Thomas' mind. They all symbolize an aspect of his psyche that is failing. There are specific consequences to failing some of the following events (that modify the ending), but overall the teenagers need to avert at least three of the incidences, or the real Thomas feels deep down that he has failed his overall mission. Under these circumstances, he quickly begins to doubt his own sanity, and voluntarily returns to the Asylum, spending the rest of his days in his fictional Barrowmere.

Saturday 2nd May

Afternoon 2.13pm

Along the main street of Barrowmere, a silver Porsche squeals its wheels outside Arkwright's General Store. The car is out of control, the driver is foolishly talking on his mobile phone; the car ploughs directly into a middle-age woman, Doctor Mary Burton. The public relations expert, Martin Kerr, gets out of his flashy sports-car; apologizing and pleading for a doctor to render assistance. There is only one doctor in Barrowmere, and she is presently lying in an expanding pool of her own blood.

This situation represents the death of Thomas' ability to heal him self, or heal further harm that may be caused by others, basically his inward ability to nurture his self.

The situation can be averted any number of ways. By identifying the 'midwife' successfully and keeping her from going near the main street. By successfully pushing her out of the way at the time of the incident, but this risks someone else being run over in her stead. By stopping the traffic from flowing through the main street completely.

If the accident isn't stopped, Martin Kerr will start to rant and rave after the initial shock, about how inconsiderate it is to have to stop for an accident, and how she is fully to blame for stepping out onto the road in the first place! He is generally more concerned about the dent in his beautiful, new car – despite it already having similar dents.

The cost of not successfully stopping this accident is that Thomas in THE END will be unable to recover from the hurt caused to him by others, isolating him from ones that he loves. Although there are many happy days with Imogen initially, she has to work very hard to overcome his abandonment issues. Thomas never really gets to embrace and accept the richness of his own existence.

Late Afternoon 5.45pm

Father Stephen Laycock has spent all afternoon contemplating his life and purpose. The dwindling numbers at the church – no wait, the Cathedral – have caused him anguish for many months. He is busily packing the rest of his belongings in his well-worn suitcase. He sits sullen and alone in his rented room at the Black Swan Pub, waiting for the last bus to London.

He believes in what he does, making the priest particularly prone to feelings of despondency and despair about his calling. If the other villagers no longer believe in God, perhaps there is something missing in his own particular brand of faith that is putting them off? Perhaps God really *is* dead as a famous, curmudgeonly philosopher once denoted.

Another source of vexation is his original motive for moving to Barrowmere. The priest had expressly applied/appealed to take up the vacant posting, after hearing venerable Father Eamon O'Shea had passed away. After spending many happy days as the local priest in *Ballykissangel* (a fictional town in Ireland and a BBC television series), he saw his heart's desire, Dervla Peckhurst, move back to her hometown. He had planned to elope with her and make a new life somewhere away from the scandal; then she left. She pleaded that she should not let her own selfish feelings dissuade him from his true calling in the ministry. Both still have deep feelings for each other, although Dervla is relatively happy with her lot in life with Tony Peckhurst.

The situation can be averted any number of ways. The teenagers could attempt to convince the priest that their own faith is solely down to the despondent priest. However, for a better chance of success, some kind of demonstration of the town's faith would work better. Either, the teenager's convince the priest to stay around one more day (i.e. around for his sermon on Sunday Morning) and rally the locals to attend in numbers. Another avenue is to get some of the locals to stage an impromptu party at the pub in honor of their beloved priest. Alternately, the teenagers might be able to convince the grateful Dr. Mary Burton to award the priest a civic honor on behalf of the local grateful community, and getting her to write out a letter to this affect immediately to present.

The cost of not successfully stopping this departure is that Thomas is no longer in touch with his spirituality. This means that even if he goes through with the tree planting ceremony and kills the cockerel, he later, starts to doubt the symbolism of THE EVENTS. He believes he must have been crazy at the time. In this event, although initially he gets along fine with Imogen (see THE END), he eventually starts to self-destruct. He is committed to hospital. Imogen doesn't give up on him though and takes his young children to see their father every weekend. After nine-months of love from his young family, his faith is restored in the greater good. He leaves the hospital and he struggles his way back to a normal, but fulfilling life.

Sunday 3rd May

Early Morning 2.12am

In the early hours of Sunday morning, the local veterinarian pulls up to his hobby farm after a long night tending sick cows over at O'Reilly's farm. He glimpses torchlight coming from inside his cold, dark house. He fatally grabs a crowbar from his Landrover and enters. Three people steal away into the night bearing a priceless treasure of antiquity.

Dirk Maggs has long collected religious iconography; he has seen many a country church close its doors in recent years and laments the loss of the precious symbols of British religious observance. This little hobby soon took over his life; his converted barn now is home to all kinds of religious paintings, reliefs, painted screens and altar brackets. Despite having many significant and beautiful pieces, one treasure stands out as his pride and joy. His most precious piece, was in fact his first acquisition (see THE CODEX). He had long been unable to identify the codex (book) and eventually took it along with him to an *Antiques Roadshow* television program taping in Bristol. Although the experts on the program were unable to identify the piece (being a job for historians, rather antique general dealers), he was eventually contacted by *Guus Van Gogh*, a prominent Dutch academic in the field of biblical texts. It wasn't worth millions though; it was priceless! The Dutchman believed it to be a 5th century Greek bible. Despite substantial offers for the piece, Dirk decided to keep it. Just what would an eighty-year-old do with millions, anyway?

However, one unscrupulous antique valuator from London, named Elliot Havers had other ideas. Along with his criminal team of Miss Nadine Stewart and Clarence Collins, he was going to get the codex by hook or by crook – but many by crook. The plan was for the party to arrive in Barrowmere, take up separate rooms at the local pub and never formally acknowledge each other. Elliot would call upon the elderly gentlemen as someone in the field, who valued Dirk's preservation efforts, "to aid in the mission to maintain the valuable store of precious British religious antiquity and iconography for future generations". Hopefully, he could convince Dirk to hand over the item, or at least bequeath the item to a bogus front-organization called the "Religious Restoration Fund". Dirk declined on both counts, as he hadn't heard of this *new* organization. He maybe elderly, but he has got the internet!

Although the valuator was disgruntled that his famous charm offensive hadn't worked, Elliot still had the common sense to look around the layout of the house (looking for security equipment, mainly). If push came to shove, he thought he could narrow down the general location of the safe where the item is stored.

At this stage of proceedings his two associates came into play. Nadine Stewart called the elderly gentlemen under the guise of being an insurance clerk. Her company, *Icarus Insurance PLC* had an elderly homeowner insurance policy too good to refuse! The catch being, a qualified security technician would have to give the premises the good old once over. He accepted and Clarence was promptly sent out. Now the team knew exactly where the safe was hidden.

The team staked out the residence and early on Saturday night, they saw the veterinarian leave the house with his veterinarian's black bag. Nadine followed him in her car, under the pretext that she would use her mobile phone to contact the others in the event of his early return home. The other two promptly disabled the external security system, and entered the house.

After three hours, Nadine fell asleep – literally behind the wheel of her car. Thankfully, it was parked on the ridge overlooking the O'Reilly farm. She failed to notice Dirk pat Seamus reassuringly on the back (his parents currently in Bristol) and leave for home. However, Clarence hears the car pull up and waits behind the front door. He bashes the elderly gentlemen over the head with a crowbar when he enters.

This situation represents a loss of faith in others.

This situation can be averted in any number of ways. The children can convince the veterinarian that someone is after the CODEX (if they know of it) and they will stop at absolutely nothing, and that he must leave his house immediately. The teenagers could scare off the intruders themselves. They could also seek to phone in a break-in to the police as the team enters the building.

The cost of not successfully averting the murder is that Thomas will be unable to trust other people. Imogen's actions in gaining his release in THE END are interpreted as pity, not love. It will take a long time for him to see the error of his ways, and he then finds out that Imogen has married someone else in the interim. A decade passes and Thomas falls in and out of short-term relations. One day, he runs into Imogen as she gets off a bus to Barrowmere, she is black and blue and her kids cower under her skirt. She has returned home to live with her mother and get away from 'Darren'. They eventually meet regularly for coffee on Thursday afternoons down the local tearoom – strictly as friends. He eventually has three glorious stepchildren.

Sunday Night 11.34p.m

The Raga 'n' Rock rave is just starting to kick into glorious life. Despite only 150 tickets being pre-sold, over 350 other people roam the fields. The minimal security organized by Dwight is more interested in standing over the rave-goers looking to score some free methyl amphetamine, than actually keeping the teens from destroying the surrounds. Despite the fruit pickers only managing to complete half the orchard, the trees are now completely striped bare of produce by the buzzing rave-goers. In the main barn, a small stage has been set up, D.J. Dizz-E Devil is busily mixing his amphetamine drenched heart out, that's when he isn't trying to convince the bright young things in hot-pants to hand over their telephone numbers.

Outside the main barn, laser lights bounce around the courtyard and up into the cloudy sky. So much for Seamus' own idea of quite, discreet get together. He is petrified that the rave-goers might disturb the bottom field where the cattle are grazing, they won't lay milk for days! He would be even more agitated if he knew what was going on down in the bottom field, have you ever seen a *loaded* cow? If a cow could giggle, it would be giggling as hard as the youths are after their schoolboy prank.

Seamus should be more worried about the rave-goers breaking into his house; the giggling teens are ravenous reefer smokers in need of munchies. The dozens upon dozens of bottles of plum jam in the larder ought to suffice for now.

Over at the main barn, *the Setting Sons* (Chemical Brothers Tribute Duo) are steadily building the tempo. The great thing about being a dance duo tribute band, is that their sound and look are almost indistinguishable from the originators.

At precisely 11.34pm, a number of lads present loaded up on G.B.H decide that torching the hay bales, stored under green tarpaulins, around the perimeter of the farm, would be a good idea.

This scene is symbolic of the fires that engulf the Earth when the Apocalypse comes.

The situation can be averted in a number of ways. The easiest way is probably by shouting out that the Chemical Brothers (or one of the other dance alumni) are mixing in the barnyard! Other ways revolve around shouting that the cops are about to raid the place, or that there is a better rave event taking place just over in the next field. Under no circumstances should the teenagers attempt to assault anyone taking G.B.H.

The cost of not stopping this event from occurring is symbolic, although it adds up psychically.

Monday 4th May

Early Morning 12.15am

In a small shed to the side of the main house, a swollen-bellied ewe mournfully cries out into the night air. Her pain is nearly at an end. With her last gasp of air, a bloody mess falls to the floor in tandem with her lifeless body. An ominous sight of a lamb with two-deformed heads greets the world.

The lamb incident doesn't have any particular psychological cost, similar to that of the burning bales. However, it does add up towards the overall result. It is designed mainly as a moral quandary for the teenagers to agonize over. Should they or shouldn't they? Either way, symbolically, Thomas has taken the first steps towards responsibility for the world around him. This is important for his mental well being (as he is currently the apotheosis of responsibility, being catatonic). Additionally, story wise, he has become a man and rebuked his fairy heritage – a fairy would not take responsibility for the care for others (lamb nor humanity).

THE CODEX: Once the murder of Dirk Maggs has been averted, he will invite the teenagers in for a cup of hot chocolate. He has some important news for them, but especially Thomas. He will start a blazing fire in the den and go and make some hot drinks, he brings then back with some Belgium shortbread biscuits that he usually saves for special occasions.

He lays down the serving tray and goes off and retrieves the codex, and a nightstand lamp that has an ultraviolet light bulb attached. He relates the following tale...

“Many, *many* years ago, during the last war, in fact, I used to work over at the Manor House. I don't know if your parents ever told you, but the father of Lord Barrow went insane and cruelly murdered many evacuee children. He was put in an asylum and basically written out of local history. At this time, I was working as a stable boy at the Manor. I was as shocked as the locals were, when the awful events came to light.

A short time before the Lord was judged to be 'criminally insane', and many of his willing cohorts were given long sentences, his personal secretary came to me and told me to burn a series of journals and papers.

I took them downstairs to the basement area and substituted them for old issues of *King and Country*, a patriotic wartime magazine. I then went outside and incinerated the magazines with a handful of the papers, purposefully in plain view of the private secretary's window.

Not long after, I left the disgraced Lord's retinue and started training to be an apprentice vet.

The papers were mostly in code, and I couldn't make head nor tale of them. I eventually passed the bulk on to the police, to supposedly help them with their inquires, as it were.

However, I kept the most impressive leather bound one. It was written in a foreign language, written on vellum and it looked very, very old – and perhaps, I thought - very, very valuable. I made a special journey to Bristol one day, to store it safely away in a bank vault, and there it remained for many years.

To cut a long story short, very recently I discovered it to be Greek Bible from the 5th century. There are four similar Bibles in existence: they are all valued as priceless. Trust me, I took mine on *Antiques Roadshow* when it visited Bristol! <laughs> I'd proclaimed to every professional thief in the country its present owner and location! If it hadn't of been for your timely intervention, those thieves would have it and possibly my life, as well.

That brings me to you, Thomas. My copy of the Greek bible not only contains the four standard gospels, but it also included the gospel according to Saint Thomas. A heretical bible if ever there was one, and possibly unique.

Another interesting detail is that the document is also a *palimpsest*. A palimpsest is a codex (a book) that has been reused again and again by scholars; they either clean the vellum (or parchment) or scrape away the top layer. It wasn't until the invention of ultra-violet light photography that many of the hidden details could be plausibly discerned.

Since realizing the importance of the bible, I've spent many of my spare hours scanning over the gospel according to Saint Thomas – a natural point of interest. Apart from discovering the vellum also contains information about tax collecting and aqueduct measurements, I discovered something that truly shocked me – I could feel heart palpitations coming on! Amongst the scrawl, there was a message in plain modern-day English”.

* He hands Thomas a magnifying glass *

“Dear Mabon, you must seek out the Hollow Hills once the lamb is born, my beloved. ” (issue the handout)

“I knew your mother, Thomas. I used to live next door to the Smithy in those days. That was the name she *wanted* to give you, but your father refused. Others might say otherwise around these parts, but she was a lovely kindhearted woman, Thomas. I little lost maybe, but not as she has been portrayed”.

The quick message was penned in Athens in the early 4th century. This is the only way Heather can get in contract with her son (apart from the mysterious internet entry). Her mid-wife duties have been heavily scrutinized since her wayward acts. Fairies, being immortal beings, are not bound by the laws of time and space, and are free to go to any time in history (at least, game wise). Heather has been detailed to deliver changeling babies to foreign places and times, to avoid any contact with her mortal son – a strict stipulation of her return to ordered fairy society.

THE SEELIE COURT: Thomas needs to go to the Seelie Court to receive a sapling of great Yggdrasil, the tree of life. He needs this sapling to renew the world before its destruction. He needs to plant it when he gets back to reality (i.e. Naunton) to avoid further ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE taking place.

Particular themes to note in the Seelie Court are time and space. As the Seelie Court exists in the Otherworld, time does not pass there. What humans perceive in this foreign reality is that the people present are both young and old at once, youthful *and* decrepit. Another facet is that the lack of time messes around with spatial dimensions. Distances between one point and another are only notional constructs, because it takes no time at all to get there, this manifests in Thomas' mind as inconsistencies in the perception of distance, objects often appear close and then change their dimensions relative in space to be far away. Both of these issues prove unsettling to living humans at first. These realities also feed into this adventures notion about fairies. They aren't really living, they live this half life of infinite possibilities, but no realities. They pride themselves on their potential artistic abilities and extravagances, but never get around to actually doing them.

The *Hollow Hills* as specified in THE CODEX message from Thomas' mother are THE BARROWS. The barrows are the gateway to the Otherworld (as per fairy law, see handout). Inside the barrow is a solitary stone sarcophagi. Thomas needs to remove the plastic dome covering it and lay down inside its empty stone base. Once this occurs, he will fall into a deep sleep...

“You notice an icy chill cause its way up your spine, probably from laying on the exposed stone for some time, you begin to feel slightly silly about lying prostrate in an abandoned sarcophagi. Suddenly, the hard stone appears to melt away with the consistency of warm butter, your body then slides soundlessly into nothingness. Within an instance, you start to feel the sensation of falling, and rapidly so. As sheer blind terror starts to take hold, you slap hard deep into, dark hypothermic water. Precious seconds elapse as you twist and jackknife about, desperate for both oxygen and direction. Which way is up, which way is down?”

The teenagers above see Thomas slowly fall into peaceful slumber. Suddenly, his eyes bolt open as pain distorts his features. His mouth slowly juts opens and a swirling vortex of air engulfs the entirety of the chamber. Suddenly, you see the atoms of the skin of one of your colleagues hive off their mortal frame, and then the others. You look down in time to see the tiny bones in your hand poking out of your own skin, and soon the room is engulfed in a gray swirling mass. You start to feel lighter than air. As all of your atoms mingle and coalesce roughly in the center of the barrow, your agitation rises to a crescendo. At once, you all descend into the now open mouth of Thomas.

Thomas awakes from his bad dream, gasping piteously for air whilst attempt to also splutter. Momentarily, the most you can accomplish is to stare into the middle-distance, at a chandelier looming overhead; you feel the coolness of perspiration drip off your prostrate body. After a few minutes, your senses adjust themselves to the new surrounds and you imbibe the distinctly pungent smell of lavender that infuses the air. The impulse to rise to a seated position is met with momentary pain and discomfort, as your muscles feel decidedly weak. Eventually, you manage the seemingly simple task.

You find yourself in a large bedroom decorated with striped pink and purple wallpaper. You lie on a comfortable bed, resplendent with gold fittings, pink silk sheets and an eiderdown or crushed purple velvet.

Various gold framed pictures hang from the walls bearing images of nymph-like beings wearing Regency styled clothes, bejeweled accessories and flaunting ostentatious wigs and hats. The room is similarly decorated with plush Regency and Rococo era furniture. A highly-stylized white dresser stands ahead, various dress wigs, potted creams and lotions are lavished upon it. Also present are grooming utensils that gleam with the luster of silver. A nearby hat stand and dresser are strewn with personal effects like top hats, bonnets, ladies lace undergarments and velvet gloves.

There are no windows in the room, but a solitary door leads out.

Thomas’ trouble in getting to his feet is muscular wastage caused by being asleep for far too long.

The room opens out into a long hallway. On the opposite side of the thoroughfare, a man resplendent in a lime green and gold striped frock coat, breeches and top hat, slouches awkwardly on a chaise-lounge. He is fitfully snoozing. The man is handsome and but also exceedingly gaunt. Its hard to put an age on the man, his pinched face looks like that of a sprightly man in its mid-thirties, but his tumbling locks look ghostly white.

The hallway stretches out in both directions; there are many similar doors along its length. Strangely, when you peer into the middle-distance either way, there not only appears to be no end in sight, but the actual dimensions seem to stretch and twist around. The number of the room you have just left catches your eye, either you were just in *room 8* with the brass number in need of running repairs, or you were just in room infinity.

The man is the legendary lead character *Dorian Gray* from Oscar Wilde’s celebrated novel. He famously wished his features in a portrait to fade, whilst his own would remain undiminished. Mab (Queen of the Fairies) has demanded he keep an eye on the sleeping figure of Thomas. If he awakes, he has been directed to take him immediately to see the Queen at Court. He is also a friend to Heather, and he will take it upon himself to give him guidance as to his mission and etiquette in the fairy domain. He is a mortal, and tires of the Seelie Court, and therefore, does not fear Mab’s retribution (further discussion about Dorian and his advice is found later in the Court description).

The hallway has two directions – left and right – to the left it leads to the *Otherworld* and to the right it leads to the Court. The hallway to the Otherworld slowly starts to descend and the wallpapered walls start to fray and turn to bare stone. The temperature of the hallway starts to intensify. Eventually, the hallway will finish abruptly, the very end of the passageway leading out into mid-air. The passageway is suspended a thousand feet above a darkened landscape that is being constantly pelted with rain, the tree canopy below is occasionally interrupted by a series of ruins. Huddled amongst the trees below soaked people mill around despondently. The scope of this adventure doesn’t explore this enigmatic scene.

TO THE RIGHT

A trumpeter heralds your arrival at Court. Around the deceptively large sunken chamber, faded silk tapestries hang from the walls depicting scenes of wild frenetic dancing, drinking and carousing. A number of immaculately dressed individuals are seated around candle-lit tables encircling the room, some are also seated in the plush saloons that hug either side of the chamber. The immaculately dressed guests fitfully pick away at their meals that look fit for royalty; they look rather crestfallen and dejected.

The men present are dressed in cutaway double-breasted black velvet coats, white silk double-breasted vests and black corduroy knee-length breeches. The women wear simple white silk evening dresses, drawn at the waist with a simple red ribbon; some women have flowers woven into plaits in their hair.

As you step forward into the dull yellow light cast by the nearest chandelier, some of the guests eye you contemptuously, whilst others cast a jaundice, but quizzical eye over you [and your companion].

The room is quite dark, many shadows lay across the velvety green carpet created from the intrusion of lattice-like wooden beams overhead. The carpeted area, leads to an empty iron throne at the far end of the chamber. There appears to be alcoves present on either side of the throne region.

On closer inspection, the throne is made of roughly fashioned iron; it has been cast with an oak leaf motif. To either side of the throne are two darkened alcoves, each containing a full-length dress mirror. After a moment of confusion, you realize that the image projected back is actually the one you would see in the *opposite* mirror. A woman stands behind you in that reflection. You turn to see a tall, slender woman of imposing bearing, standing mere inches away from you. Up close her face looks serene and beautiful. But the longer you stare; she now seems rather gaunt, weathered and plain. She is dressed in simple green robes and wears a plain crown of iron. Her long hair is braided with leather ribbons and is drawn up behind her.

“All is not as to find it here”, she whispers conspiratorially.

A slender man dressed in a plush yellow Rococo style frock coat ushers you away from the Queen’s throne and seats you on a simple wooden chair, drawn up midway between the throne area and the outer doors of Court. The diners present, instantly lose interest in their own whispered speculations, and stare accusingly at you.

The woman delicately pulls her long flowing emerald robes behind her, and sits herself down meekly upon the throne.

An uncomfortable moment passes.

She speaks, “Thomas *Mabon* Riley. Bastard child, murder and deceiver! You are not welcome in this Court. You do not show proper respect for our rules and etiquette. You demand of our patience, our time and especially, our respect. Be off with you child!”

Dorian Gray will seek to counsel young Thomas with great haste, if he hasn’t had the opportunity to counsel him already. He will remind Thomas of the rules of the Seelie Court:

- Half-fairies are never allowed to address the Court, being termed profane
- Underage fairies (or under-age humans) are never allowed to speak at Court
- Mortals need a sponsor before they are allowed to address the Court

Dorian Gray knows Heather well, and has taken it upon himself to look after his new ward. He has been detailed to remind Thomas that his original purpose in coming to the Seelie Court was to obtain a sapling of the fated Yggdrasil tree, in an effort to renew ‘the waking world’. Thomas has attempted to reach the Court through his own dreamscape – the same dreamscape that comprises the world of Barrowmere. Unfortunately, he has fallen prey to his own personal frailties along the way, and it has sidetracked him to a great extent. This process has also been aided and abetted by fairy complicity, in an effort to keep the profane child away from the Court. The fact is he is of age, and has a right to be there – even if he isn’t at liberty to speak. Although, he can ask for special dispensation to speak given he has a vital mission to complete.

Mab: The Queen of the Fairies sits upon the throne. She doesn’t suffer fools gladly, but will aid those who show enough spirit and determination to get what they truly desire. Mab like all fairies, drinks deeply from the pool of vitality that mortals conjure. If Thomas is prepared to stand his ground at Court, and demand her aid, he will get what he requires – the sapling. She secretly has admiration for the Thomas because of the trials he has undergone to get here, despite her actions signaling to the contrary.

If all goes well, Thomas will be handed a small oak tree sapling and momentarily wake up in THE ASYLUM. Thomas could, in theory, go back to his fantasy landscape, as well.

The one thing that Thomas will not get under any circumstances is to see his mother. He has no memory of her, and therefore, he cannot conjure her up in his unconscious landscape.

Monday 4th May

Early Morning 1.23am

THE ASYLUM: Thomas wakes up in a white padded-cell. He is clutching an unremarkable small oak sapling that is wrapped in wet cloth at the base. He is lying on his side on the ground of the padded cell; he isn't in a straight jacket (no real need with him being catatonic). There is spittle all down his white clothes.

Outside the cell, a couple of voices can be overheard coming down the hallway; they are busily opening and closing doors with keys.

Voice One: What about Sleeping Beauty?

Voice Two: What that fucking retard? You would have better chance of waking Sleepy!

The Asylum (see map) isn't particularly well staffed or secure. One of the male nurses will eventually enter the secured room and attempt to give the catatonic patient his medication by intravenous needle. Thomas has the element of surprise, as the attendant isn't expecting any form of response from *sleepy*, no matter retaliation from his charge. Thomas can quickly change into the unconscious nurse's uniform. The disguise won't get him totally out of the secured location, he will need to first find the locker room and purloin some items of casual clothing. If he is lucky, he may pick up a jacket containing a wallet with enough cash to get a taxi back to Naunton (Barrowmere), or he may find some car keys that present something of a dilemma, given that Thomas has never driven before. If Thomas looks for a mirror, he will see his gaunt adult face (nineteen-years-old), covered in a light beard. It has been several years since THE MURDER. He has been locked up in Bristol Asylum since being committed; he was found incapable of committing manslaughter because of his age at the time and the abuse he had undergone.

THE HOMECOMING: A number of things need to occur in quick succession for Thomas to stop the golden cockerel from crying out at sunrise. He needs to urgently find some way of getting to Naunton (Barrowmere) - travel time 20 minutes by car - he also needs to locate where the real O'Reilly's farm is (it is called Regan's Farm in reality). The dimensions of both farms are the same - Regan's farm being the only commercial scale fruit orchard in the region. The rooster is easy enough to find loitering inside the barn. It will crow at 6.03am precisely. Farmer, Alan Regan may investigate the barn region carrying a shotgun, if Thomas isn't quick in killing off the poor old rooster.

The other activity in need of completion is the planting of the small oak tree sapling. The planting is simple affair; there are no supernatural signs to denote this momentous occasion. Both these later actions are purely symbolic, but have a *profound* effect upon Thomas' psyche. If he fails to stop the golden cockerel from crying out to announce dawn, in the following months his sanity will slowly decay. He will rebuff Imogen's advances and slowly become a radical environmental campaigner, who is sadly shot a year later after trying to break into Downing Street, in an attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister.

The town layout is basically the same as Barrowmere, but the homes and businesses are all different. Although Thomas recognizes some parts of Naunton (aerial wise/layout wise it is the same town).

THE END

Please Note: If the teenagers have failed to stop certain EVENTS, there are modifications to this ending.

With the final act done, you wander fatigued back along the main street of *Naunton*. The village looks familiar; yet strangely alien at a turn. The blazing sun beats down upon your weary shoulders; your torn shirt offers little relief to your pallid skin against sunburn. Out of the heat haze of a country lane, a memory wanders lazily back into vision. A tall, gangly youth looks up from her contemplation. A beautiful face, a beautiful angelic face, no longer composed of dimples and chubby cheeks, but now of fine lustrous skin, a woman in the full bloom of her youth.

Imogen smiles a friendly country greeting, and then stops dead.

She looks towards you, gasping involuntarily for breath, she barely conceals her horror; her lips tightly press against her white teeth in a *grotesque* of a smile.

If the players feel compelled to take the lead in events here, let them! They can decide Thomas' reaction (and subsequent actions) by committee.

An awkward moment passes, and then another, as Imogen's face becomes a flailing barometer for the conflicted emotions that ripple throughout her trembling lithe body.

Eventually, a tear wells up in her eye, then a stream, as she charges forward to embrace you.

"I'm so sorry, I'm *so* sorry!" she pleads.

In that moment, the pain goes away. That thudding dullness of pain, not the staccato rhythms of momentary discomfort: the pain of living.

As Imogen finally begins to relax her sobbing frame, she looks you directly in the eye.

"We all knew. We *all* knew, everyone in town, that is. How you suffered. I wish, I wish I had had the spirit of Stephanie to stand up like that to him, but I was too young, too scared! My parents dissuaded me from getting involved. I'm sorry, I'm *so* sorry". She starts to sob again.

LATER

As the days pass, word gets around about your return home. Many fear your return, while others decry your sense of reason. *Department of Mental Health* representatives eventually catch up with you, and return you to the Asylum.

The months pass and the seasons come and go. One day you are led to the visiting room. Imogen sits smiling sweetly in a floral dress, clutching a piece of official-looking paper.

She says, "Thomas Mabon Riley, you are free man!"

She explains, whilst driving you back home to Naunton, that she has been fighting for your release since they came to collect you. That because you are no longer a 'ward of the state' i.e. an adult. You have the right to release yourself, considering there has been no relapse in your condition for six-months (catatonic).

OTHER COMPLICATIONS MAY TAKE PLACE IN HERE IF 'THE EVENTS' HAVEN'T BEEN AVERTED

As the years pass, you grow inseparable. Marriage strengthen, not diminishes, the bonds of love. Soon, the blessed union bears fruit. Five kids rapidly grow into adults, bringing merriment and heartache in equal measure. Years later, a small country garden flourishes at the back of the Smithy. Its centerpiece a mighty oak planted by your own hands, some 30 years before. As you stand embracing Imogen, admiring your newly born grandson beneath the shade of the mighty oak, you stop wishing for the return of those long since gone. *And start to live.*

THE LOCALS 2004

Elliot Havers: The silky smooth patter of this London antiques valuator could let him cherry-pick an plumb role in the world of public relations if he so desired, but even criminals, who are rotten to the proverbial apple core, have some standards. He is the head of a gang of three confidence tricksters, who aren't above a little break and enter, when the situation requires (see THE EVENTS). They have come to Barrowmere to steal THE CODEX. Mr. Havers likes to consider himself the mastermind of the operation, despite relying heavily upon his companion's considerable talents. He is arrogant and ultimately self-serving.

Nadine Stewart Insurance Industry Secretary: The talent children's book writer, still bitter that her manuscript about a boy wizard attending a school of wizardry, failed to cast a spell over British public like another talented Scottish female writer's did – injunction! Instead, she had to go back to her day job in the insurance industry, whilst the other hack writer went on and on, and bought a real life castle. A flipping castle! It was as if every subsequent success was a frontal assault on her fragile writer's soul. Then, she was roundly duped by a smooth talking confidence man and lost her job. She sensed glamour, excitement and substantial remuneration. She eventually tracked down the cad, quite a feat with Fraud Squad in several county police authorities after him, and they combined their wits and knowledge, they even shared the occasional bed. She aided and abetted in some truly outstanding scams, but the big payday has alluded them, or that's at least what her partner in crime says.

She only wants to make enough money to be able to properly sue the derrière of that literary lightweight.

Clarence Collins: The security technician completes this trio-of-trickery. Clarence is not a man blessed with extravagance or wit. He gets on with the task of breaking into places, and leaves all the *chicanery* to the dastardly duo. Clarence has yet to see the ‘avalanche of money’, as Nadine called it, when he signed up for a little ‘night work’. Still, Nadine is beautiful. It’s an old sting, but Clarence is well and truly stung. By the time the profits filter down from Elliot to Nadine, and then on to Clarence; he is well and truly doing it for the love.

Dwight Ferdinand: The close friend of Seamus O’Reilly is an amateur dance promoter in Southampton when he isn’t doing his Creative Arts degree in stage production at Southampton University. Although pub club nights are fine, Seamus’ idea for a benefit rave in the countryside is his big chance to make a splash! He has spent many months putting together a gigantic light display for the night, and has tended to avoid the more pressing issues of security and insurance for Seamus’ parent’s farm. Dwight is smart and caring, and is mortified when events go disastrously wrong on the night.

Rebecca Hamilton-Smith: The daughter to Surrey gentry and heiress to a sizable baked-beans fortune, spends most of her time serving food down at a small café in Camden Town (London). The type of gal lampooned in Pulp’s *Common People* song, Rebecca is desperate, absolutely desperate to be one of the so-called common people. She lives in the mortal fear that her secret pecuniary shame will destroy her image as *M.C. Boot-E-licious*, the wannabe urban hip-hop Goddess of groove and even funkier phat black beats. What’s good for Missy Elliot is apparently good enough for Missy Moneybags. Thankfully, most of the London hangers-on and newspaper hacks humor her, knowing that she is always good for a *tenner* on most slow weeks. This despite Rebecca only working for minimum wage, plus tips down at *Denny’s Greasy Nosh Pit*.

Raif Barrow: The son of the local Lord is currently studying politics at Manchester University. His mother, a former exotic dancer in Soho, has managed to blackmail *El Thicko* out of a substantial amount of money over the years. So much in fact that it has helped her move to an up-market flat in Pimlico, and put her son through a public school education (name for private education in Britain). ‘Miss Kitty’ is proud of her clever son; he is beginning to learn the ways of hard *graft* – definitely *not* the working class variety. He hopes one day to move to Barrowmere and take over his father’s businesses - even if his father isn’t keen. Despite his familial training, he does eventually promise to cover poor old Seamus’ embarrassment by offering to pay for any damage done to the farm, by offering to personally blackmail his father for the money.

Imogen Fox: The cadet journalist for *Time Out Magazine* (London eating out/entertainment guide) is originally from the Cotswolds region (bizarrely *Naunton*). She is feisty and to the point with her questions to the rave-goers, asking direct questions about drug abuse and sexual experiences; she even asks the mortified and embarrassed drug dealers about their activities. She takes a shine to young Ryan during the night. This character is a representation of Imogen in *Naunton* in Story Four i.e. this is what she looks like, point to the picture (see THE END).

Wally Stubbs D.J. Dizz-E Devil: A minor player in the new raga-rock crossover, musical genre, Wally Stubbs a.k.a. D.J. Dizz-E Devil days are numbered through poor management (playing a country rave for zilch) and a general dearth of any real talent. The ragga-rock crossover enjoys popularity because it combines the blissed-out chill of modern reggae and the thrilling thumping back-beat of rock, instead Dizz-E Devil raga-remix of Kylie Minogue’s *Better the Devil U Know* is at best mildly diverting, at worst, grounds for divorce. Still, he *did* make an appearance on *Top of the Pops* (coming in at number thirteen). His methyl amphetamine-laced vocabulary seems to consist only of ‘wicked’, ‘banging’ or ‘whatever’. He sniffs constantly like he has a permanent cold. Despite only a brief affair with fame, he has generally nailed the art of being obnoxious. He wears glowing red devil’s horns as part of his stage act. On stage he has one mixing desk strategically placed at crotch level, he vulgarly intones that its time for his ‘infamous 12-inch mix’ – his mother would be proud.

Martin Kerr: Martin Kerr is a public relations consultant. Pity him. He is self-assured (for all the wrong reasons), he is intelligent (in a vague buzz-word token kind of way) and he is savvy (in that location specific Soho media/marketing champagne liggering-type way). Still, his London-stick has managed to impress the local council into paying him inordinate sums for his marketing know-how. He hates the countryside with a passion; he hates country people even more, and don’t get him started on cows.

PSYCHOANALYTIC BREAKDOWN OF THEMES

The world of Barrowmere is a DELUSION within Thomas' mind.

It exists to help him come to terms with the physical and psychological abuse his father has inflicted upon him over many years since the death of his mother from cancer. It exists because Thomas has killed his father in an effort to protect Stephanie, and it exists because Thomas has also killed Stephanie, even if the latter act was to stop her pain.

He bears the guilt of most abused children that they are not worthy of love, and that in some way they deserve the abuse. He bears the guilt of killing his father. He also bears the guilt about killing Stephanie, he doubts whether or not she was actually going to die.

He feels the loss of his mother. He feels the loss of Stephanie, and also feels the loss of his grandfather.

All of this has led him to completely disappear within himself, into a catatonic state. He is unable to effectively deal with so much pain and guilt.

The landscape of Barrowmere reflects this pain. Despite the idyllic scenes and people present in Barrowmere, things keep going wrong. The fantasy of Barrowmere is ultimately doomed because the issues still permeate his unconscious mind.

The four episodes can briefly be described as:

1. Denial – Someone else killed Stephanie
2. Estrangement – No longer in the present to receive abuse, but it follows him there
3. Fantasy – The future bears no real relation to reality, it presents the illusion of safety
4. Responsibility – Taking responsibility for his own situation through his fantasy existence

The story arch follows Thomas' mind as it gradually comes to terms with the reality of his situation. From denying his own hand in events, through to seeking to remove himself from the painful situation only to be confronted with more, through too completely avoiding reality, but reality finding him. Finally, he takes metaphorical steps to take responsibility for his own situation.

THEMES

There are a number of themes that return again and again throughout the storytelling. The plot is heavily saturated with mythological elements; the repetition seeks to bring some clarity to the complex mesh of metaphors. I've also used these common mythological themes as supposed thematic bedrock, the theory being that if you embed a story with classic themes and ideas, most of the work then goes on inside the mind of the receiver i.e. the collective unconscious.

GREEN MAN: The major theme is that Thomas is an aspect of the Green Man. As the events take place in Thomas' mind it naturally follows that he is the God (The Creator) of the place. In terms of storytelling, Thomas' decisions generally have a greater bearing upon events – he is the one who must descend into the Otherworld. This role is manifest in his love of nature and his ability to see THE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE taking place in Barrowmere.

MABON: Thomas is also the Mabon. He is born on the right birth-date (see character sheet), he is given an instrument for Xmas (harmonica), and his middle name is finally revealed to be 'Mabon'. This theme reoccurs to show that Thomas is on the path towards reincarnation (going back to the real or 'other' world). The Mabon also grows up to become the God (Green Man).

OAK KING: Thomas is the Oak King. One aspect of the Oak King is that he represents the conscious mind, as opposed to the Holly King who represents the unconscious mind. Thomas Crowley represents the Holly King. This opposition represents the battle raging in Thomas' mind, the battle to see if Thomas can slay his metaphorical dragons and return to the real world. Crowley is what Thomas *could* become, an embittered, callous soul. Thomas is born on the same day as the Oak King and finally defeats the Holly King on the Twelfth Day, as per the pagan calendar. We even goes back in time to Spring when the Holly King is born (revived).

Therefore, between the Mabon, Green Man and Oak King story arcs, we have the full life cycle of the Godhead represented. The Green Man in story one is trying to get to the Otherworld, Eric of Wold is in the Otherworld, but Thomas is in the Otherworld and needs to take the reverse path – he is the Sleeping Lord.

THOMAS: The name of Thomas reoccurs in the story. There is Thomas Riley, Thomas Crowley and Thomas Roach. They are all killers, they all go mad and they all suffer for their sins. Thomas Crowley is a part of Thomas; he is the part of his character he might become if he doesn't reconnect with his humanity, the same goes for Thomas Roach. They are *potentialities*. Although Thomas has been badly hurt and abused, he must not give into pragmatism or dare lose his humanity.

GREAT MOTHER: The Goddess and his late Mother are the same entity. As any woman is a manifestation of the Great Mother, so is Heather Riley. Without exploring his relationship with his dead mother, Thomas cannot move on. He was too young to effectively deal with his mother's death at the time, consequently, it has been substantively denied. He must deal with it on some level before he can move on to care for Imogen. His emotions have effectively been switched off since the murder.

REINCARNATION: Thomas is inexorably heading towards reincarnation. Just as the Aunt has been reincarnated in his dreamscape, Thomas eventually leaves his dreamscape and wakes up to his reality. The various themes presented help him to build up a worthwhile myth, to help him make the difficult transition.

END OF THE WORLD: The End of the World motif is related to the reincarnation theme, it is the end of world of dreams. If Thomas has been successful, he has managed to build an effective mythology to ease him back into reality. Just as reincarnation isn't intrinsically a bad process in pagan lore, so the end of his (dream) world isn't either. It's just necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION: Represents the gradual decay in Thomas' state of mind. Whether this be in the form of acid rain, brown drying foliage or alien damage, Thomas' needs to urgently address his issues. The longer he stays in his delusional world the less he remembers of his old one. The image of the 'Great Recycler' brought up by Rodney Smith represents that in the end, Thomas will run out of external ideas to furnish his fantasy universe (truly losing his mind). It also represents hope that he can reconnect with the world at large by revitalizing his mind (mental landscape).

TIME TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTING

Invariably, something always goes wrong when you mess around with time travel in roleplay adventures. Go on, try running the time travelling RPG known as *Continuum* without ending up loopier than our friend Thomas!

I've come up with a few tips and alternate events to help GMs get the adventure back on track, time-travelling wise, plus some additional advice on game dynamics.

QUICK REVEALS: An important aspect of running mystery-style adventures is that occasionally one of the players invariably goes off alone and investigates, tripping directly over a big, juicy plot point - the quite often dangerous plot point. If they escape the clutches of the bad guy, they then go back and give away most of the plot to the others, before the rest of the party have had an opportunity to discover it themselves. Whilst running story one, I found one teenager wanted to sit outside the church alone at night, whilst Roach and Weekes disappear into the Cathedral, and down into the crypt region (to recover the body). The character then crept inside to get a closer look; he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and he was caught. I could have manufactured an escape, but it meant that the player could legitimately give away substantial amounts of the plot. In the end, I played out a torture scene at Roach Farm for the player, but it meant the player had little to do for over an hour of game time. To remedy this kind of situation occurring again, I've included here additional characters for all the eras (i.e. 1944, 2003 and 2064)

The theory here being that if the teenager is caught, our friend Perry Lewis is also on the case, and just manages to bump into the other teenagers. The story could then progress as normal, and if warranted, the GM can take the player outside for five-minute spells, and continue with the torture scene, if warranted.

The other spare characters can be easily inserted into the action. Given the false reality scenario presented in the form of THE DELUSIONS, the player can opt to continue with the spare character, or go back to their original one, after the current story finishes. However, Thomas needs to be kept present within the story, for the overall concept to truly work.

A suggestion to avoid this kind of early plot exposure issue is to remind players that characters in this kind of children's television show, usually investigate in pairs.

SLOW REVEALS: Another issue of concern is a lack of inquisitive teenagers. Although, I've amended the action 'portal-wise' in story two from the original concept, there are probably some players who won't want to go through the portal under any circumstances - feeling that it maybe against their interpretation of the character. One rather clumsy way to effect change is to remind the players that they are inquisitive sleuthing teenagers by nature.

I would suggest that if allusions to the portal quickly closing don't motivate players, that you simply hand the remaining recalcitrant player the 1944 character - it's not worth the time and expenditure of energy to railroad them. There should be enough motivation inherent in this spare character, anyway, to want her aiding them quickly in their endeavors.

If the teenagers are not being inquisitive enough, or seem to be avoiding the more obvious plot points; there are plenty of *cipher* characters present within the village of Barrowmere to assist them with motivational help or clues. If all else fails, there are plenty of gossiping old biddies around the village to overhear even the most whispered of conversations. The point here is that you shouldn't leave your players floundering for a clue. They are playing for fun, not strictly for the sheer mental challenge.

SQUEAMISH TIME TRAVELLERS: One issue that did arise during playtesting was the reluctance of a group to use the blood found at the Manor to affect the *transference* spell. Additionally, I had one group who didn't grasp that they actually needed i.e. *the Book of Shadows* to cast the spell to get them back home, so they just remained in 1944. I can also perceive a real possibility that the teenagers could miss seeing the handy jars of blood in the Manor House, and quite rightly, balk at wanting to kill an additional ten people!

A solution to the first situation is to simply impress upon players, what other plans do they presently have in mind? It should quickly force the issue. Another way, I've developed especially for handling such issues is to simply *rewind* the adventure to the start. Laura finds a yellowing envelope addressed to her upon the mailbox mat. The note says that it's herself writing to her future, younger self (see handouts). The older Laura has had many years to ponder her stranding in 1944, and she tells her future (younger) self that when she goes back in time, she needs to collect the blood and the *Book of Shadows* from the Manor. If she doesn't she will live out her life (as she has done) in the wake of the Second World War.

BACK TO THE PAST: I predict some teenagers might also get stumped attempting to get back home, or fail to realize that they *need* to get home in Story Three. Of course, the Aliens make it virtually inhospitable to stay long term in the future, but it still takes some time for this reality to seep into the player's minds. THE VAN scenario should be driven straight into view when the Aliens have been defeated.

PARADOX: If the Frogmorton siblings lose their grandfather, they should instantly vanish! By this stage of the plot, they should be inside Barrow Manor. At this point the plot is effectively known, so one player can play the 1944 extra character (Emma), and the other player can either be William Riley or Juliet Smith (but they keep the same character stats, as per their character sheet). It certainly shocked the players in the playtest when I let *that* happen! At the end of story two, the other teenagers go forward to 2064 - the Frogmorton players can resume their old characters (if they wish). This can happen gamewise because dead people like Adrienne have already effectively been reincarnated - although they haven't died. This uncertainty about their death status actually feeds into the main plot line of the third story. It helps to expose the reality as a fantasy construct.

FUTURE PROOFING: All the characters in the future seem not to have aged a single day. This phenomenon is quite likely to lead to questions. Basically, the time in between 2003 and 2064 has effectively been compressed. So in 2064, they don't consider it odd that Laura has been in school for over 70 years, or that Mr. Arkwright is 122 years old! It's a given. They accept their false reality, and the teenagers are forced to fit into with their sense of reason or be ostracized for it. This also helps in establishing that they are definitely *not* experiencing reality, as per THE DELUSIONS theme. As a rough guide every passing year in the interim seems to have past like a single week - sixty weeks have elapsed.

MISSION MARS

One issue that may come up in play is that with all the talk about Mars and rockets in Story Three, the players may believe that investigating the disturbance at *Nippon II* essentially falls to them. This isn't the case, the disturbance is meant to run in parallel to the events occurring back in Barrowmere, but there isn't any particular problem in setting the third adventure on Mars. I've provided here further background material, and you will find some handouts presented later pertaining especially to this plot line.

GETTING TO MARS: The rocket that is to take Tony Peckhurst to Mars at the last minute has vacancies, five seats have been vacated by the family of the new *British High Commissioner to Mars*. There is a political scandal engulfing the British Labor Party about *quangos* (highly paid governmental postings) given to former cabinet ministers. Geoffrey Bentley, the new British High Commissioner to Mars, has had to vacate his post, not because of this scandal, but because he has also been involved with another ongoing scandal, the one involving him sleeping with his secretary. The British disease strikes yet again.

Eurospace Industries have generously offered the Peckhurst family the opportunity to venture into space with their famous father. The problem is that Dervla is adamant that she keeps her own feet firmly on the ground, but she wouldn't stand in the way of her teenagers, if they wished to go. The Frogmorton family is divided on the subject of their children taking up the extra seats, Juliette is totally against the plan, but Richard thinks it would be an unbelievable experience – it might even be the springboard into understanding Martian investment opportunities! Jack Riley (as presented in Story Three) would be delighted for his son to experience the wonders of space travel, given his total obsession with rockets.

Wednesday 24th September

The flight is scheduled for takeoff Wednesday 24th September, from the *Benny Hill Flight Centre* at Heathrow. Tony Peckhurst is scheduled to attend a press briefing on Tuesday, and this is why he is leaving presently for London. They are detailed to stay at *Claridges*, one of the premier hotels in London. The teenagers will be at their leisure in London on Tuesday. They will find that the landscape of the large metropolis is quite limited. Around every corner they turn, they will find a familiar famous landmark (Nelson's Column, the Thames, Houses of Parliament, Piccadilly Circus et al) – similar in concept to a day trip into Bristol (see *THE DELUSIONS*).

Early Wednesday morning at 3.30am they are woken up by Tony saying their flight will leave far earlier than expected, to avoid approaching acid-rain thunderstorms (as per *ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE* theme). This makes him agitated. The heat shields could be affected if acid rain beats down on the rocket. They were scheduled to take off at 4.00pm in the afternoon; they now leave at 10.00am. They are bundled into a waiting black taxi hopper and driven out of London into the dying yellow English county side, they eventually arrive at the spaceport.

They are prodded and pulled into their space suits and ushered urgently to the waiting *Chirac One* (see handouts) model spacecraft that is fitted with large Space Shuttle-type booster rockets. A launch takes place without incident, apart from Tony Peckhurst vomiting everywhere.

Once the rocket breaks out of the Earth's atmosphere and the daylight disappears, the teenagers are plunged into starlight. The teenagers gradually see the Earth shrink away on the horizon and its only then that they start to feel really nervous.

ON BOARD INCIDENT: The crew are happy to tell the teenagers about their own particular in-flight disciplines – it often gets boring during the month long flight. Life on board the ship is rather monotonous, especially as the space allocated to the passengers is rather limited.

The Habitation Module on take off is fitted with the passenger launch seats that are eventually deconstructed and taken out of the module and put into storage – they are refitted before landing occurs. A couple of tables are fitted in, in their stead. A couple of seats are retained and installed facing computer monitors. There are televisions present in the module. The interior is mainly white (like most of the ship) and there are airlocks present between sections for safety.

The Exercise/Sanitation Module is fitted with various forms of exercise equipment (exercise bikes, weights, stretching devices and a running treadmill); all passengers and crew are actively encouraged to keep to a detailed fitness schedule – to avoid muscle wastage upon arrival. A gravity toilet present provides some measure of luxury, but it feels like the unit is also designed to suck one's intestines out.

The Sleeping Quarters is comprised of nothing more than a series cargo netting sacks that keep the zero gravity sleeper from floating off around the room – they essentially just keep the sleeper in a holding pattern. The quality of sleep achieved on board is quite poor, mainly due to the fact that the travelers are not acclimatized to sleeping this bizarre zero gravity way.

The food situation is quite dire; most food is heated up in plastic satchels that generally doesn't include solids. Although the taste is *O.K* it certainly isn't a substitute for freshly prepared meals. The passengers aren't allowed to eat what they like, either, every passenger is allocated a strict diet plan. Tony Peckhurst starts to whine about the lack of food after only four days. He doesn't stop, either.

The entertainment options on board consist of video playback, computer games and on-line educational options. There are limits to how much computer time even young Rodney can stand. The children are supposed to complete their ongoing educational requirements (distance not being a problem for their virtual teachers). Once a week Commander Herriot hacks the central computers to get a live feed of the Saturday night zero-G football game, and drinks his half-a-lager allowance.

The other option is to help assist the crew in their daily activities, they don't mind the intrusion as they generally have a great deal of spare time. Those coupled with Sally or Olga will learn quite a deal about their particular fields (science/agriculture and engineering respectively). This may come in handy later on when attempting to work out the source of the disturbances on Mars and/or help power up the derelict Japanese base, Nippon II. The teenager coupled with Douglas is quite likely to learn a great deal about computer systems and the hacking of them. The teenager coupled with Wasim will be able to pilot a hopper jet or vehicle by the end of the flight (get the players to log these skills under *talents* on the character sheet). This way, the players can be a little more proactive in their investigations on Mars. You can aid this process by reassuring them that if they remember something happening in a sci-fi film, it is quite likely to maintain some prescience here i.e. this is their DELUSION after all.

Thursday 23rd October

At around 2.34am the ship suddenly loses power, and all systems fail. In the darkness, a blue flash is just seen out of the starboard side viewport, the spacecraft floats along agonizingly for another three minutes. Finally, the power is restored as the emergency solar cells gradually restart the emergency power back-ups. The ship is designed to fall back upon its emergency power supplies – immediately. It appears they have failed. In reality, an ALIEN spacecraft flying at astronomical speeds to investigate the loss of their scout ship (the one stranded in Barrowmere), flew through the side of *Chirac One*, dragging its power supplies with it. The Alien captain, being just as perplexed to the origins of the disturbance. One of the teenagers will manage to spot a blue streaking blur out of one of the port viewers. There is no image of the spacecraft captured on computer, because all systems were down at the time. Although there was still plenty of oxygen in the hold, it did feel as if in those moments there wasn't! Tony Peckhurst implores the teenagers not to mention it in emails back home, whilst hyperventilating into a *full* sick bag.

Tuesday 28th October

The flight crew receive a message from Little Britain (the European Mars Base) that all communications have been lost with Nippon II for quite some time, and grave fears are held for their safety. The Europeans strongly suggest making for their base instead of landing at the Japanese one. The crew can't decide what course of action to take, and they are open to counsel from the teenagers and Tony. Either way, the craft is scheduled to rendezvous with the planet early on Sunday Morning (E.T.A. 3pm).

Wednesday 29th October

The craft either lands near the small settlement of *Nippon II* or the larger settlement of *Little Britain*.

The *Nippon II* settlement is buried deep into the red dusts of the surface. It is basically the hold of a ship split in two, buried under the Martian soil to help insulate it from the intermittent strong winds, freezing cold temperatures and deadly ultra violet radiation that permeates the thin atmosphere. No individual can survive long term without a source of heat outside, although the air is quite breathable, at least in short bursts. This settlement is eerily dark and no lights illuminate the immediate surrounds. Various oxidizer units are still pumping up and down. The large turbines of the main power generators lie idle. Upon closer inspection, the inflatable plastic greenhouses dotting the surrounds look half deflated and the interiors are tinged with browning vegetable matter.

To gain entrance to the base, the teenagers (or crew) will need to deploy large mechanical pincers to open up the airlock doors, or restart the generators by restoring the electrical systems. This proves problematic because the fuses and trips installed on the generators are all melted. Inside the main base there are a number of dead bodies present, they apparently died of frostbite, not asphyxiation. If portable power cells are used to restore the computer network, the teenagers will see footage and explanations of the events that took place here at the base (see handouts).

The ALIEN reconnaissance team, have sought to locate their missing scout ship, the one currently located at Barrowmere. They came across the Japanese settlement, and didn't know that the electrical systems present were supporting life. Once they started to drain the 'power source' i.e. the generators and solar cells, the *Japanese Frontier Force* started attacking them with pulse rifles. The burst of energy effectively disrupted the aliens on contact; they took this action as an act of war. Some of the soldier bodies lying around the generator have been electrocuted, rather than dying of cold.

The aliens soon realized these carbon-based, life-forms were no match for them and they descended upon the main generators on mass like proverbial vultures. A communiqué was sent to the Everlasting Leader and Committee. A message was sent back by Nakata Kee Song (the Everlasting Leader) telling them: "We will fight to every last man, woman and child for the glory of the Free People of Japan and Mars". They did so, even avoiding the 'disgrace' of getting in European assistance - the story of European assistance being rendered is false EU propaganda.

The European base known as *Little Britain* is a far bigger affair. Its centrally located geodesic dome is a kilometer across in construction. Below it a mini city thrives. There is a large central white domed building known as ‘Administration 1’ where the Martian officials overlook subordinates’ daily work schedules. ‘Dormitory 1’ is where most of the newly arrived recruits reside, until new smaller domed houses can be constructed and allocated. ‘Dormitory 2’ is reserved solely for larger families, including Tony Peckhurst and the teenagers. The rooms here are Spartan, only housing bunk beds and the families are forced to share their toilet facilities. ‘Central Catering’ is the centralized eating facility at the base, rationing is still in operation and so, most food intake is strictly regulated at the base. The meals served here are almost exclusively vegetarian (much to Tony’s chargin), as the surface doesn’t yet support animal life. Other food can be obtained through commercial space traders around the base at vastly inflated prices –considering they have to be transported all the way from Earth. Tony buys beef jerky at caviar-style prices.

Around the main base there are several smaller domes. Greenhouses also dot the alien landscape, providing much needed fresh produce. A number of beacons also straddle out across the landscape, they regularly send information back to Earth from their differing alignments. There are also a number of sensors placed around the perimeter of the settlement, mainly to give fair warning of a potential *Pearl Harbor II* by the Japanese. A number of industrial and enclosed hopper transporters move on auto-pilot between the main settlement and the outlying greenhouses and domes. There is also a small dome inset in a nearby ridge, drilling is currently being undertaken there by men wearing mechanically powered spacesuits. The European presence on Mars numbers around 4,500, compared to the Japanese that was around 500.

There are a number of outlying mini outposts dotted around the main base including Camp Daffyd, Military Outpost Churchill, ‘the Farm’ (G-2) and Eden II.

Camp Daffyd is a small multicolored geodesic dome set aside for ‘alternative lifestyle’ people. There has been a rapid influx of homosexuals and lesbians moving to Mars, hoping for a more tolerant Utopian society to be established. They were wrong, the Utopian ideal soon founded when they realized they were now put in close proximity with gruff mechanical engineers, macho space marines and intolerant miners.

Military Outpost Churchill’s operations are veiled in a shroud of diplomatic secrecy. Captain Declan Mackay is detailed to keep all information out of the public domain. He has the authority to lock up anyone who gets in the way of operations. There is still a great deal of diplomatic tension between the Japanese and the Europeans after the signing of the *Mars Protocol*. The Europeans are testing an experimental laser cannon at the base, capable of knocking out an entire planet like the famed *Death-Star* from the movie *Star Wars*.

The outpost known colloquially as ‘the Farm’ is officially known as G-2 (or Garden 2); it is a small dome surrounded by dozens of inflatable plastic greenhouses. The outpost is where most of the food supplies are processed; the food is then carted off in transports back to the main base. These inflatable greenhouses are used because they are light to carry around and require very little in the way payload space to bring them to Mars. They are connected to G-2 by lengths of air-conditioning internal cavity-style piping. This piping is used to pump oxygen and water requirements into the tents.

Eden II is a small recreational space that is designed for communal swimming, golf putting practice and lawn bowls. On the inside, it has been set up to look like a small Brazilian rainforest (half a kilometer still exists back on Earth!). Fake birdcalls and the sound of ocean waves crashing all help to convince the visitor that they are, indeed, back on Earth. They found that most settlers soon went crazy on Mars without at least some attempt to replicate their home life.

RECENT PROBLEMS

Little Britain has experienced some minor power outages in the last six-weeks caused by the ALIEN incursion. The aliens have finished destroying the Japanese presence.

Saturday 5th October: Beacon X-43, one of the outlying beacons, was destroyed in an electrical fire. Mr. Sharma considers it suspicious considering the low voltages required to power these remote sensors.

Tuesday 14th October: Beacons X-42, X-41, X-39 destroyed in the same manner as the previous incident. The beacons are also located near the mining dome.

Wednesday 15th October: Robin Tripp, an electrician, was electrocuted during repairs to the hopper transport system, near the military outpost. He was a careful man by all accounts. There was also a strong electrical surge reportedly experienced at the military outposts – the civil engineering report has been classified. This is merely a precaution on Declan’s part to stop any unwarranted information being leaked about the outposts electrical requirements.

Saturday 18th October: One of the plastic greenhouse units developed a large puncture and the small fan attached to help disperse the air has been burnt out. The plastic around the puncture is burnt, blackened and melted away.

Monday 20th October: Unspecified reports suggest that Rosie Carbunkle, a cross-dressing prostitute/exotic dancer, died whilst engaged in solitary sexual congress with a faulty vibrator at Camp Daffyd.

Sunday 26th October: The power cabling from the settlement to the mines is destroyed by a power surge. The military outpost is also attacked by Aliens, a couple of soldiers die defending the base. Declan refuses to give up any information, because he wants to take all the glory of defeating the alien menace, himself. He doesn't know he is in way too deep.

These events suggest that the ALIENS have scouted out the European settlement, but they have spent most of their time investigating the Japanese one, and subsequently directed their forces into attacking the Japanese. These attacks will increase now that the Japanese base is lost. However, if the teenagers and crew of the *Chirac One* get Nippon II operational again, they will experience similar problems. It is hinted that the aliens close to Little Britain have hidden their own spaceships deep within a cave of the rocky outcrop that is home to the mining dome. If the teenagers discover and follow the aliens back to their cave, they will see the awesome sight of dozens of glowing blue spaceships housed in the near darkness of a large cavern. The frequency of attacks will increase. Please note: when the aliens attack again, they will leave the voids similar to those found in story three, to denote that *electro-shock therapy* is erasing parts of Thomas' mental landscape.

MARS LOCALS

Indira Bramley-Singh: Is the first official Governor of Mars. The former flight engineer flew on the first manned mission to Mars in 2058 (with Commander Adrienne Welsh) and has remained there ever since. She has seen the settlement grow from just three linked modules to the large, thriving multiplex it is today. She is strong willed and determined, and she has started to ignore the dictates from Brussels (European Union Headquarters). She doesn't suffer fools gladly, a problem considering her close working relationship with the new Assistant Governor. Another complication is that she has of late started to grow 'clucky' (wanting a baby). Unfortunately, the career woman has little in the way of suitable partners in this armpit of a small engineering community; the situation is exacerbated by the almost exponential rise in gay males arriving at the settlement. Besides, the gossip would undermine her lofty position. Still, she would only have to sleep with a male once. Perhaps Tony Peckhurst would suffice? Or perhaps even someone younger?

Robert Creevey: The former *Eurospace Industries* structural engineer has been on Mars since 2060. Once he arrived, he resigned his commission with the commercial firm and took up the role of Lead Architect at *Little Britain*; he was a natural considering his expertise in designing habitation modules. The actual design work needed was minimal, yet another geodesic dome. They are structurally sound and the base only ever gets sent geodesic dome components, anyway. However, his ability to follow orders from Brussels, coupled with his high profile job on Mars, ensured he was soon offered the *new* lead role of Assistant Governor of Mars, this despite strong objections from Indira. Robert soon tired of the demands of the role and Indira basically gets away with whatever she wants, but every now and then, he gets cajoled into action by Brussels. The middle-aged gentleman has also found time to explore his feminine side at Camp Daffyd, by becoming a woman. On Wednesdays and Fridays he becomes the brassy blonde known as *Big Doris*, he sometimes comes into work *transgender* much to Indira's chagrin. He always makes a point of people referring to him as a *lady*, despite his false breasts being lopsided or his five o'clock shadow being closer to a quarter to midnight.

John Hodge: The former mining engineer arrived for a *tour of duty* on Mars two years ago. He found that there was a surfeit of miners, but recently the head bio-culture expert had died. Despite not so much as ever growing a runner bean, he was off and running in this new plumb-growing role. The new Head of Agriculture honestly thought someone would see straight through his rather inept deception: "Yes, I am a fully qualified whats-er-me-call-it?" No one actually cared whether he actually *had* the qualifications for the role, just as long as he was willing to suspend his disbelief and play along with their little fantasy of having filled yet another problematic vacancy. Besides, this job paid double! You would think after two years in the role he would have picked up the basics of agriculture, not a chance. The one true skill he has picked up, however, is in asking his subordinates what *they* would do in his new *Armani* loafers (shoes being for common workers). The employees feel valued, the crops *are* abundant and John is happy to lap up the continuing praise. Something that the rather inept and uncertain fellow has seen little of thus far in his professional career. However, he still feels a little nervous that he may well one day be found out. This character is somewhat modeled after the barman John in *Men Behaving Badly*.

Officer Daffyd Jones: Daffyd wanted to get away from his hometown of *Llandewi Breffi* in Wales. He refused to put up with attacks upon his character by the homophobic locals any longer, branded 'the only gay in the village'. This is in stark contrast to official British Government figures that suggest Llandewi Breffi is possibly the most rampantly gay place in the whole of the United Kingdom. Daffyd soon found out that Mars was also full of displaced people, confused about their sexuality. At first he got depressed, Daffyd really liked the outlaw appeal of his bold lifestyle choice, but then he perked up as it were, when he realized that he could start a campaign for Mars 'bender rights'. This was later changed to 'alternate lifestyle choice' after consultation with committees. Soon he became the poster boy for the queer campaign, the campaign that quickly got away from him, and it was dubbed a complete success. In 2062, it was announced that *Camp Daffyd* would be constructed. Once built, the dome became home to all manner of alternate lifestyle choices and sexual proclivities, nothing was no longer sacred! Daffyd immediately joined the *European Space Police Corps* in an effort to personally regulate the rampant behavior going on at the Martian base. It was getting so that he couldn't look anyone *straight* in the eyes.

Officer Astrid Houllier: The sexy young sophisticate French policewoman set pulses racing amongst the local male fraternity when she arrived six-months ago. Then she sent many a lonely male heart into cardiac arrest when she announced she was a lesbian. The tight black leather jumpsuit favored by the European Space Police Corp rather distracts most men in discussions with the petite brunette – straight men always find a hint of lesbianism to be a real turn on and a challenge. Astrid is serious minded and takes her role seriously. Although, she does occasionally let loose in the cloistered surrounds of Camp David with her engineer girlfriend, Naomi.

Pamela Merryfield: The newly arrived public relations *expert* is bubbly and vivacious, unfortunately, all the chutzpas in the world can't make up for the fact that she is awful at her professional. One needs to have a talent for lying; one needs to have oodles of guile, wit and even a modicum of intelligence in public relations. Unfortunately, what Pamela has in spades is a catalog of glib homespun platitudes, scatological thought processes and daisy-chain hippy-dippy over earnest honesty. At her former PR agency, she was known as *Miss Fluffy Bunny* – the person they'd send in when they needed someone to unwittingly lie their pants off to their clients, she was just gullible enough to pull it off! The clients could sense palpable sincerity in her doe-like expression, something that is akin to liquid gold in the viper's nest known as public relations. In her new role, there have been many gaffs. She hasn't got the killer instinct to destroy the careers, nay, the lives of her fellow *foot soldiers* of spin. She has the awful affliction of wanting to always tell the truth.

Yuki Seo: The Japanese geologist is the only known survivor of the *Nippon II* base. Despite the constant brainwashing that the *Japanese Frontier Force* is subjected to, she started to doubt the constant reassurances that their base was safe. She eventually commandeered one of the old NASA rover Mars vehicles used for geological surveys and made her way slowly across the vast expanses of the Martian surface. It has taken her the best part of six-weeks to reach *Little Britain*. She left shortly after the fatal electrical problems occurred at Nippon II (i.e. the ones mentioned in the handouts).

Kapil Sharma: The Head of Engineering is fiercely proud of his years of service to the European Space Agency. He spent many years designing various engineering solutions for space travel to Mars and decided rather than retire to a boring retirement village on Earth, he would migrate to Mars. Without his dedication to fine detail, the base known as *Little Britain* may well have been lost on more than a couple of occasions. He can often be seen late at night, out with his fellow engineers, fixing outlying beacons. He believes in the old maxim of 'the more hands on board the better'. He is reveling in his new position, having to deal with all manner of people and personality types. This is in stark contrast to his former life of designing shuttle-craft parts, sitting alone in his spacious air-conditioned office, sketching away at his leisure.

Annette Higginbottom: The Head of Catering is the unofficial mother of all the lost and lonely at Little Britain. The friendly but slightly skittish senior chef likes nothing more than descending upon the newer arrivals and offering advice and companionship. The woman moved to the base in her early forties, after breaking up with her adulterous husband; she wanted to get as far away from her cheating, lying husband as possible; this is what is currently possible.

Declan Mackay: The former Captain in the British Army and a long term British spy for MI5 was sent against his will to the Martian colony. Unfortunately, in the spy game there is always the problem of uncovering the *wrong* information, not misleading information, just wrong. The wrong information he had in particular uncovered related to vast kickbacks being paid by merchant bankers to several senior members of the government. Despite years of sterling service to the realm, his bags were duly packed for him upon his arrival at home, he was asked to step inside a bulletproof Mercedes hopper and driven off to the nearest rocket launch pad to Mars. In the last twelve months, he has busied himself becoming intimate with all the technologies being developed at Military Outpost Churchill. He hopes one day to eventually sell all the information off to the Japanese and becoming the *next* Jap Governor. Declan is a serious minded fellow who is determined to get his revenge upon his British masters.

Douglas Herriot: The Commander of the *Chirac One* has had a long and distinguished career in space travel. Unfortunately, the fame has tended to allude this quite man (always being selected in the *second* shuttle team to a new destination). Although, at the time he was happy with his lot, he felt just a tad disappointed. Douglas has recently started making plans for a life outside of the space game. This is his last jaunt out into the solar system before returning to Earth, to settle down and help his wife run her florist business. He isn't entirely sure why this fills him with trepidation and dread, but it nonetheless does. The Newcastle native is a kind man who tries to do his best by other people. His favorite pastime is watching Zero-G football – his team is the Newcastle Zeros. Their recent form ensures that they live up to that moniker. He can often be found spending his spare hours on board flicking through the latest zero-G results and hacking into the computers to watch live feeds of games.

Wasim Hafeez: The Pakistani (Lahore) native is a driven man. He is the first of his poor family to make it into Astro University and intends to command a shuttle by the time he is thirty. His nervous disposition, with all its attendant fidgeting and facial ticks, sometimes makes people uncomfortable when they realize that he is the pilot. They needn't be concerned; he is a first rate aeronaut. He can often be found studying flight manuals and space tech textbooks in his spare time. He is a reserved man who is devoted to his chosen religion of Islam and his young growing family.

Sally Churchill: ‘Miss Congeniality’ as she was once voted at high school is one of those people that people gravitate towards in a room. She is always smiling and genuinely concerned about others. She had many male admirers at the European Space Academy in Brussels. The London native finds such long jaunts difficult, especially as the rest of the crew is comparatively standoffish. She will quickly see a lot of herself in young Laura and take her under her wing. She enjoys the application of science and is looking forward to finally touching down on Mars for the first time.

Olga Markovski: The Polish native comes from a rich stock market family. She has a rather haughty disposition, despite consciously choosing her current occupation. Olga likes getting grease all over her self assembling and disassembling complex machinery. She spends most of her time down in the bowels of the shuttle-craft, she tends to prefer her own company to others.

THE GAME SYSTEM

The game system used in Barrowmere is a *World of Darkness* variant; of course, you are free to use your own. The system uses d10 dice. Each of the players will need access to five ten-sided dice, given that the highest skill rating available to them is five.

The player rolls the equivalent in dice to their skill rating.

If Laura needs to make a Brains roll, because she is attempting to remember the basics of electrical theory, she rolls five dice, as per her Brain skill rating of 5. The World of Darkness system ranks these results into successes.

Dice roll result: 1=minus success 2-6=no success 7-9=one success 10=two successes

These results are all added together and a total result is found that is measured in successes.

The person playing Laura rolls five dice, the rolls and (results) are as follows 1 (-1) 3 (0) 10 (2) 9 (1) 7 (1) = +3 successes. This means that she quite the authority on the subject.

In this variation of the W.O.T system, getting one success should be enough to successfully perform (easy to moderate) tasks, two successes is enough to perform (harder and hard) tasks, three successes achieves (difficult to extremely difficult) tasks.

A roll of five successes or more, denotes that the teenager has become extremely proficient at that particular task. If Ryan was to roll five successes in playing football, the player is now at liberty to add a new *Talent* to his character sheet – in this case the player would add ‘football’. If the character needs to use that particular talent again during play, they can re-roll one d10 dice in recognition of their skill.

DESCRIPTION OF SKILLS

Athleticism: This skill is utilized to play football, fighting and all manner of other physical pursuits.

Awareness: This skill is utilized to notice clues, notice people following and spotting odd details.

Beauty: This skill denotes the general level of physical beauty the character has, this can be played upon to ‘look innocent’ to gain favor from adults i.e. like Puss-In-Boots doe-eyed look in *Shrek 2*

Brains: This skill determines the level of education and knowledge the teenager has.

Computer Usage: This skill determines the teenager’s ability to use computers, the internet and hardware.

Constitution: This skill is a rating of the teenager’s body to withstand physical shocks and blows.

Conversation: This skill is a rating of the teenager’s ability to talk to others and convince them of things.

Intuition: This skill is utilized primarily to either perform magic rituals or to notice supernatural events.

Luck: This skill is used as ‘the skill of last resort’ when a teen finds himself in seemingly inescapable danger, it also determines whether a handy implement is to be found at hand when needed i.e. a metal poker in the Manor’s Library. This skill attempts to legitimize the tropes found in standard children’s television and literature.

Lying: This skill denotes the character’s ability to flat out lie to others, or the ability to tell *selective* truths.

Mechanical Apt: This skill rank rates the teenager’s ability to manipulate simple machinery like picking locks, starting cars or performing simple mechanical repairs.

Sneaking: This skill is utilized to evade capture, sneak around unobserved and to hide effectively.

Strength: The skill determines a teenager’s durability* and ability to climb, or lift heavy things.

Willpower: This skill denotes the teenager’s ability to withstand torture or suggestion.

BOTCHING

Every now and then a teenager will botch a skill roll. Depending upon how badly they do it, they will experience a poor result that may be detrimental to their cause. An example of such is if a teenager attempts to act as lookout, whilst the others sneak into a barn. The villain (assuming he passed his own awareness roll) is at liberty to do something like sneaking up behind the teenager (after a successful sneak roll) and hit the poor distracted teen over the head with a sturdy shovel.

Each of the teenagers is specifically designed to be better at some tasks than others. However, make efforts to stop them metagaming.

OPPOSED CHECKS

Occasionally, the actions of a Non Player Character affect the teenager. If say, a teenager is trying to run away from one of the Roach siblings, they both make Athleticism checks. The higher result usually obtains some kind of advantage (he catches him, or gets closer). Alternatively, a teenager could be attempting to hide in the basement of the Manor (sneaking roll) and one of the conspirators is trying to find her in the darkness (opposed awareness roll).

The teenagers may have to fight back against the adults from time to time; unfortunately, the teenagers are at a slight disadvantage. The adults cause one wound every time they successfully hit a teenager, potentially more if they have a heavy implement handy. The teenagers only cause a $\frac{1}{2}$ * a wound, because they are slightly smaller and have less developed muscles. One should also factor in this disparity into strength rolls.

SANITY LOSS & WOUNDS

Sanity loss occurs when a teenager witnesses something of supernatural origin or something that is excessively violent. At such times, they should be told to make an Intuition check. If they botch their roll, they lose a point of sanity. As the individual loses sanity, they may develop a related phobia to the type of incident i.e. seeing bloody, dismembered corpses might lead into a phobia about seeing blood, handling raw meat or blood products, or even syringes.

Each time a teenager is hit by an adult they lose one wound point. If they reach zero wounds, they require urgent medical attention or die (within the next six-hours).