

Call of Cthulu – Epic

The adventure is set in modern-day England, and is intended for a group of 4-6 1st-level characters. The PCs are employees of Open Eye Investigations, a private detective agency based in London. Open Eye is owned and run by Michael Santiago, a businessman with several small businesses to his name.

The Open Eye offices afford access to a TV, net-enabled computer, telephone and fax machine. The PCs have access to the Volvo Estate owned by Open Eye, and can charge their petrol to a company account.

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive at Timsdown West housing estate. Open Eye has been contacted by Colin and Jenny Robinson, in connection with their son, who went missing along with a number of other people from the estate two weeks ago. The Robinsons are hiring the company but are confident that a number of other families will chip in to the final fee if their children can be found. The PCs know no more than this.

Timsdown West Housing Estate

Timsdown West is a run-down, crime-ridden estate. Most of the nearby shops have long since closed, driven out of business by vandalism. There is scarcely a wall without graffiti and there are burned-out cars and heaps of litter scattered about. The estate is mostly deserted.

The estate comprises half-a-dozen blocks of flats. The investigation begins at West House, which consists of about twenty 1960s flats. The interior is drab and in need of refurbishment. There is a pervading smell of urine and vomit.

Only five of the flats are occupied now since the disappearance of the youths. One of them, No. 17, belongs to Colin and Jenny Robinson, the couple who contacted Open Eye Investigations. Colin is a heavily muscled labourer with smudgy blue tattoos (Middlesborough football team – Spot DC15) and a shaven head. Jenny is short, with fat ankles, dyed hair and bad skin. Their flat is unkempt, containing a mix of hand-me-down furniture. It stinks of cigarettes. The couple know the following:

-Two weeks ago, everyone between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one disappeared from Timsdown West.

-They included their son, Lee Robinson, 17. Lee got in trouble for playing truant and underage drinking but he's not such a bad lad really. He was working in a fast food place.

-The police asked everyone a load of questions and then seem to have forgotten about the case.

-Jenny has overheard conversations in the supermarket queues suggesting everyone living nearby reckons the youths have all run away, and are living with some group of travellers. Jenny herself doesn't believe this – her Lee wouldn't just up and leave without telling them.

-Almost everyone has left the estate now, unable to stomach the atmosphere of gloom and grief. The council have been unable to sell any of the flats. Colin and Jenny have stayed because they can barely afford the advance for Open Eye, let alone move house.

-Timsdown has long been plagued by crime. Colin thinks it's these immigrants – Jenny blames drugs. There are rumours that there are kids living on the roofs and in the lift shafts, burgling and mugging.

If the Investigators walk around the estate after their conversation, they will spot someone on the roof of House West. If they go onto the roof of House West they will find Andrew Castlespite, who has been living there for three days under a blanket. Castlespite is one of the missing youths. He has tattoos covering his torso but is wearing old clothes he's salvaged – Investigators might spot the design on his wrist (DC17). He knows the following:

-He doesn't remember what happened two weeks ago. He had a dream about a battle, with swords and things – the next thing he knew he was locked in a pitch black room, hurting all over. He slipped in and out of consciousness until he woke up in the boot of a moving car. The car crashed and he found he was about two hours' walk from the estate. He walked back to the estate and found everyone missing – he decided to rough it on the roof until everyone returned or he found out what was happening.

-As far as he knows the crashed car is still there. He didn't see any other bodies. He found a knife in the car and is carrying it, but he is reluctant to reveal this to the investigators.

-He doesn't know where he was held.

-He is covered in tattoos, but he is unwilling to reveal this fact.

Castlespite suggests taking him to a police station, or back to the investigators' office. If they leave, he follows them. Whether they head back to the car or to the police station, they head through an alley towards the local high street (Map).

1: Car park. The cars are derelict or burned out. One of them has five dead cats in the boot, neatly arranged (San 0/1) – anyone within 10 feet can smell them.

2: A tramp sits in the corner of the alleyway, surrounded by bin bags and cans of Special Brew. He calls out 'Spare some change for a cup of tea, guv?'. Whether the PCs give him anything or not, he sticks his tongue out at them.

His tongue is three feet long.

The tramp is a summoned attack creature. It has a long constricting tongue and its limbs are jointed the wrong way, so it can scuttle crablike along the floor and up the walls. It has been ordered to kill Castlespite and will attack him first. It will fight anyone who attacks it or tries to stop him getting to Castlespite, but it will only use its tongue constriction on Castlespite. Once Castlespite is dead or someone has the presence of mind to cut off its tongue, the creature flees up the alley wall and escapes.

3: Grass verge with two benches and a phone box. The phone is vandalised and doesn't work but anyone who lifts the receiver will hear a cacophony of sounds for a couple of seconds – a Listen check (DC15) suggests they are shouting voices and the clash of metal on metal, like a battle.

4: The police station. The door is locked and there's a sign reading 'CLOSED – RELOCATED'. The address below has been scratched off the sign.

5: Shop. This is a corner shop. It's closed, but it's the only one that doesn't have the front shuttered. The locks has been broken, presumably by burglars. Inside are shelves of food which is mostly past its sell-by-date and a rack of magazines. The magazines are mostly pornographic and the newest is two months old. The till has a barcode reader and once it's plugged in the PCs can use it to read Castlespite's tattoos.

If Castlespite survives, he goes with the PCs to the investigators' office where he will ask for a change of clothes – while he is changing one of the PCs spots his tattoos. If they ask him, he will lead them to the car crash site.

Getting to the car crash without Castlespite requires a Navigation check (DC14). The car went off a side road and rolled into a ditch. The car is a Ford Cortina, registration EV15 ER8 (this is a very unusual registration, which foxes anyone trying to find out which country or year it was registered in). Anyone searching the area might find (DC5) the body of one of the other passengers, thrown out of the car. The body is horribly broken (San 0/D4). The body is wearing jeans and a T-shirt, heavily sweat-stained (Search DC 12) and the hands are calloused, as if by manual labour (Search DC15). Anyone taking fingerprints and using them to find out the body's identity is unable to do so, no matter how cleverly they go about it. The boot of the car is stained with vomit – this is where Castlespite was held while being driven. In the glove compartment is a handgun. It is very ill-maintained and jams on a natural 1 or 2 to hit. There are four bullets loaded into it.

Andrew Castlespite's tattoos form a single long band which runs around his torso and arms. The band is made of short vertical lines of varying thickness, with a stream of numbers running alongside it. It may occur to the PCs that this looks a lot like a barcode. A barcode reader (like the one in the corner shop) will reveal the text of what is, in effect, a Mythos Tome. The numbers form a repeating sequence of seven. Research into what these numbers mean may reveal they are a map reference referring to up to three locations in the UK depending on which map is used.

DC 6 Whealdon House.

DC17 Kestrel Falls Early Warning Installation.

DC20 St. Cymbeline's Isle.

The text of the barcode is surreal and disturbing, and must be properly studied as a tome to make any sense of it.

BARCODE TEXT Sanity D3+D3, Mythos 1, 2 spells – *Divination & Call Epic*.
Study D4 days, DC18.

Whealdon House

It is misty and dank when the PCs arrive at Whealdon House. The house is a large neo-classical building of dirty white stone. It is three floors high and a balcony runs along the front of the house at the top floor level. The house appears deserted and there are no lights in the windows.

There are two ways in – the front doors and the large windows of the ballroom to the rear.

Two large mastiffs are tethered outside the front door. They look underfed and very hungry (Spot/Animal Empathy check, DC15). They will attack anything within 10 feet, which is the length of their leashes – this includes the area of the front doors so anyone entering will have to deal with them. The dogs can either be killed or pacified – PCs can pacify them with an Animal Empathy check (DC15) or by feeding them something (which will keep them docile until after the PCs emerge from the front doors again). Killing the dogs causes a Sanity check (0/D3).

Anyone searching the gardens will find a large tract of land, shaded with mist and overgrown with dark green trees and shrubs. There is a round, roofed summer house some distance from the back of the house. It is made of white-painted wood. The floor is of wooden floorboards, some of which have had the nails levered out (Spot check, DC 19). Under the floorboards is a musical instrument case containing, wrapped in a blanket, a double-barreled sporting shotgun and a box of six cartridges.

GROUND FLOOR

1 Corridor running the length of the building, leading to a cluster of offices to the north and a couple of meeting rooms to the south, with sets of stairs leading up at both ends. Large double doors opposite the entrance lead into the ballroom. PCs heading for either end might notice one of the two storerooms that flank the ballroom.

The corridor is wood-paneled and has a deep carpet ruined by damp. There are pale marks on the walls where pictures once hung.

2 The ballroom. A huge room with french windows leading out into the overhung area at the rear of the house.

This room has had its paneling stripped out, leaving the walls bare crumbling brick and plaster. The wooden floor is littered with scraps of wood and flaked paint. The only furniture is a piano standing forlornly in one corner. Anyone trying to play it finds the keys are horribly out of tune. The room has an unpleasant sickly smell – it won't take too much for the PCs to work out this comes from the body.

There is a body in the centre of the room. The skin is taut and blackened with decay. It is clothed in cargo pants and a T-shirt, so stained by decomposition that the colours can only be guessed at. Anyone getting close to the body sees the skin of the face drawn back from the teeth in a horrid rictus and the dried pits where the eyes once were (Sanity check 0/D4). Anyone who fails the initial Sanity check loses 1 point of Sanity per round until they get away from the body. Searching the body reveals it has no hands. There is a sign written on a piece of cardboard hung around its neck with string. The sign reads 'SLOVENLY'.

Anyone looking up notices the wiry remnants of a chandelier hanging from the ceiling, and the two shrivelled hands tied to it with electrical cable (Sanity 0/D2).

This body is that of one of the missing youths recruited into Nathaniel Glass' army, punished for laziness.

3 Storeroom. There are a couple of shelves but they have been cleared of supplies. The room smells of urine.

4 Storeroom. There are several mouldering cardboard boxes piled up at the end of this room. A search (DC8) can find a chainsaw underneath everything. If they find it they make a Reflex save (DC10) – if they fail they cut their hand for 1 damage. The chainsaw is a dangerous weapon both to opponent and owner. However, it is petrol powered and won't work unless the PCs can fill it with petrol (such as by

siphoning it from their own car). Turning it on is a move-equivalent action and everyone in the area is aware of it owing to the noise it makes.

D8 damage, 17-20 critical, slashing damage, 5 lb. On a natural 1 or 2 to hit, the wielder damages himself.

5 Office. These four rooms are fitted out as offices. This one is empty, containing a couple of desks. There were once computers here but now there are just severed power cables running from the walls. There is a deck of cards on the desk.

6 Office. There is a desk and two chairs. There is a computer on the desk, which once plugged in can be switched on. It contains the accounts for a registered charity, AidCom. A Computer Use check (DC12) reveals that the house is owned by AidCom and that there has been no activity in AidCom's accounts for eighteen months. DC 15 – AidCom's assets include a Ford Cortina registration EV15 ER8, and a small boat currently stored at the marina in the Scottish town of Dunmuir.

7 Office. There are several dead rats on the floor.

8 Office. There is no furniture and the floor is stained with blood. Searching reveals scratch marks all over the walls – DC 12 these are marks from a knife or sword.

9 Stairs up to 1st Floor.

10 Stairs up to 1st Floor.

11 This room has been converted into some sort of first aid station. Two large trestle tables stand in the centre of the room, heavily stained. There are two cupboards mounted on the walls. One contains rolls of bandages and dressings. The other is locked but it can be forced (Str. DC6) or picked (DC10). It contains painkillers - they can negate D6 points of subdual damage but a Knowledge (Medicine) or Heal check (DC6) is required or the subject suffers D3 Con and Wis damage from an overdose.

12 A meeting room. There is a whiteboard on one wall and a telephone on the floor – it can be plugged in to a nearby phone socket but the listener hears strange sounds for a second or so and then the line goes dead (as in the Timsdown phone box above).

There are three sleeping bags piled up in one corner. They stink of sweat. Searching them reveals two pornographic magazines and a flickknife.

13 The third floor extends over this area, so it is permanently overhung and in shadow. The grass is dark blue-green and the ground muddy.

FIRST FLOOR

This floor is in darkness. The windows are boarded up. Investigators suffer -4 to shooting, search and spot checks, and +4 to hide. These circumstances are removed if they have the sense to turn the lights on.

14 Stairs down to Ground Floor and up to 2nd Floor. The corridor leads to the south past two doors into the auditorium, towards another stairs. To the east is a cluster of rooms.

Once the investigators reach this area they might hear something moving above them (Listen, DC 12). Those who pass the check are not surprised when three zombies drop down from the 2nd floor landing. They absolutely reek of dead flesh and attack the PCs with bare hands.

These are not zombies. They have the same stats as zombies because they are malnourished and sick - but they are actually missing youths. A character with Sixth Sense will know there is something wrong here, that these are not what they seem – a Spot check (DC14, -4 if there is a combat going on) will show that the zombies' skin flickers between healthy and pallid dead flesh.

If the PCs stop fighting for a couple of rounds or the Sixth Sense character convinces them to stop, the spell will be broken and the three kids will be revealed (two boys and a girl). They are dishevelled and thin, eyes sunken with sickness. They can be subdued and tied up pretty easily, maybe sent to hospital or to the police. The PCs will be unable to find out their identity for now.

After five rounds of fighting the zombies/kids will become exhausted and will only attack those who come near them. In another three rounds they become catatonic and can be easily subdued or restrained.

Any zombie killed will be immediately revealed as a dead kid. The PC who killed them will suffer D6/D10 sanity loss. That's what you get for going in guns blazing.

These kids are members of Glass' army judged too ill or weak for the journey to St. Cymbeline's Isle.

15 Stairs up to the 2nd Floor and down to the Ground Floor. To the east is a narrow corridor with doors leading off from one side.

16 Auditorium. This is a large room, almost as big as the ballroom downstairs. At the north end is a large projector screen, with rows of seats facing it. There is a salvaged cinema projector at the back. It needs Electronics (DC 12) to get it working. It projects a film onto the screen – the credit sequence rolls and it is shown that the film is 'A Bridge Too Far'. There are two other canisters of film under the projector – one is 'Spartacus', the other is 'Saving Private Ryan'. Players who know their films will be aware these are all war movies.

A search of the auditorium reveals litter of chocolate bar wrappers and soft drink cans.

17 Men's toilets. This is an evil-smelling place that hasn't been cleaned in a long time. Anyone brave enough to search the toilets themselves might find (DC14) 3 doses of amphetamines in a plastic bag in the cistern. Anyone under the influence of these gains the Improved Initiative feat for D6 turns, but takes D3 Wis and Int damage when the dose wears off. They require a Knowledge (Law, Medicine or Streetwise), DC12, to identify – otherwise they're just small white pills (which might be mistaken for aspirin).

18 Ladies' toilets. This room isn't quite as horrible as the men's, but it's still not pleasant. A tampon dispenser has been ripped off the wall and smashed open on the floor. It is now empty.

19 Guest room. This room is a tip. Stacks of paper cover the floor. There is a bed with a bare mattress and a ragged blanket, a chair, and a desk covered in papers. There are two shelves on the walls packed with books. The walls are covered in scrawlings – those who saw Castlespite's tattoos will notice the scrawls are similar to the tattoo designs.

Searching the papers reveals scribbled numbers and swirling shapes. There is no chance of making sense of them. Amongst them is a diary (Search DC10). There is a scribbled note on the inside cover – 'Page 64'. There is nothing on page 64 of the diary but writing too dense to be read. The diary contains a couple of passages that are just legible –

'...for every story needs an end.'

'When the story is complete, the Epic will send his servants to do His will upon our world...'

Searching the table reveals two empty vodka bottles and a business card holder. There are about twenty cards inside, all reading 'Nathaniel Glass, CEO, Aidcom'. There is an email address listed as contact, along with a telephone number. The number is that of Whealdon House. The email address does not exist.

Searching the books reveals that they are all novels – romance, thrillers, mystery, children's picture books. All except one entitled 'British Cold War Nuclear Installations'. Anyone specifically looking at page 64 will find the entry for Kestrel Falls, containing the information listed for researching the place below.

This is where Nathaniel Glass lived until he left for St. Cymbeline's Isle.

20 Guest room. There are sleeping bags and blankets spread out across the whole floor. Searching it suggests that six to eight people slept here until recently.

21 Guest Room. The door is locked (Strength DC15, Pick Lock DC13). This room is immaculate and clearly hasn't been entered for some time. The bed is made and the furniture – bed, desk, wardrobe –

are neatly arranged. There is a Gideon's Bible on the desk and a couple of coathangers in the wardrobe. There is nothing else here apart from a faint musty smell.

22 Bedroom. This is where Castlespite was held until the fateful car trip. The furniture has all been removed, even the fitted toilet, shower and sink. The carpets have been pulled up. There are two holes drilled into the wall through which have been looped a length of rope. This is where Castlespite was tied. The floorboards around the rope are warped and stained, and there are brown stains on the walls (bloodstains – Knowledge Streetwise or Medicine DC5). The only objects in the room are some medical-looking implements, like large chunky syringes with dark stains. They are very difficult to identify (Knowledge Art or Medicine DC18) as tattooist's implements.

If Castlespite has somehow survived this long and is accompanying the PCs, he recognises this as where he was held.

23-27 Bedrooms, each with a single bed, bedside cabinet, and small bathroom with a toilet, sink and shower. There are sleeping bags and blankets scattered about. PCs searching the place can guess that there were about 25 people sleeping in these rooms. Searching reveals a policeman's helmet in Room 24, a kettle in 25 (the element is burned out and it doesn't work) and a flak vest in room 27. The vest adds +1 to AC, but it really stinks until it's had a good wash.

SECOND FLOOR

28 Stairs down to 2nd floor. This floor is cold and breezy, for the roof above is ill-maintained and the wind is blowing through. There are damp stains on the floor where the rain has got in.

29 Stairs down to 2nd floor.

30 Balcony. Several dying pot plants languish here. No matter what time of day the PCs arrive here, the view from the balcony is always of sunset. This is strange, not only because it happens regardless of the time, but because the balcony faces east. If anyone notices this is wrong (San 0/D3), the next time they look it shows the east-facing sky as it actually is outside.

31 Kitchens. The workbenches are scattered with implements and unwashed chopping boards. The sinks are full of washing-up, some of which is growing mould. There is a meat locker in the corner containing two sides of beef – the refrigeration has broken down and meat is rancid and maggot-ridden. Anyone opening the door must take a Fort save or throw up at the stench, suffering 2 Con damage for the rest of the day. A Listen check (DC18) causes the PCs to realise that the locker isn't emitting the usual refrigerator buzz.

The cupboards above the work surfaces around the edge of the room are packed with food. About half of them contain catering packs of Chicken and Mushroom flavour Pot Noodle. The other half contain a mixture of cheap supermarket Cola, tinned beans and spaghetti, and packets of Angel Delight.

32 Loft. The loft is huge, supported by six wooden columns. In the centre of the room is a huge scorch mark surrounding the remains of a fire. Searching the remains indicate that a huge pile of books was burned here.

Next to the bonfire is a stone block. Anyone examining it closely sees there are obscure, squiggly carvings half-erased by time. If they look closely enough (Search, DC17) they see the carvings shift and squirm before their eyes, until they shake the sensation out of their head (Sanity 0/1).

Anyone who researched St. Cymbeline's isle and knows about the carvings might recognise (Spot, DC10) that the block closely resembles those of the pre-Viking cairns on the island. Anyone taking a rubbing of the carvings can confirm this fact by comparing it to this research.

Should a character decide to pile up a load of books here and set light to them, they will enact a spell to contact the Epic. The group suffers 15 Wis damage spread between them as with group spellcasting, and whoever set light to the pile loses D10 sanity. Anybody who touches the altar after the spell is enacted will see a vision of the Epic's world, a place of emotions and concept made real, a blasted and evil realm so utterly alien that their minds are seared with its hideousness and they go immediately and permanently insane. That'll teach 'em.

Kestrel Falls Early Warning Installation

Kestrel Falls is in the middle of a tract of countryside, half an hour's walk from the nearest road. It is a desolate place of concrete and wasteland – there is a storage hangar and a main building with a huge rusting antenna dish on top.

1 Guardhouse. A small concrete building. It is abandoned and has been used as a urinal. There is a mass of litter inside – searching it causes a Dex test Dc12 – failing it causes 1 point of damage from discarded hypodermic needles.

2 Storage hangar. There is a truck in here, long since derelict and useless. Anyone searching it might notice (Spot 18, Knowledge (Medicine) 12) that there are racks inside for transporting gas bottles, like oxygen bottles in ambulances. There is nothing in the truck now, however.

3 Antenna dish. This is streaked with rust. However, anyone climbing on top of the building and specifically checking the moving mechanism can find (Spot 18, Knowledge (Engineering) 12) that the mechanism is in working order and the dish could still be moved if there was a control system.

4 Entrance to Basement 1. A large pair of steel double doors. They were once chained shut but the chain has been cut.

5 A burned-out car. There are five charred dead cats in the boot, neatly arranged (San 0/1).

6 This area is scattered with litter – plastic bags, discarded food, old clothes. Searching it reveals ruts in the ground where caravans and cars were parked. This site has been used by travellers who have since left.

BASEMENT 1

1 Dormitory. An enormous room. The walls are painted cream and the floor is bare concrete. There are lights which still work. There are beds here for about 50 people. The ones nearest the door have been used, presumably by the homeless. The west side of the room is equipped as a kitchen with a tiled floor, large enough to cater for a lot of people. There's no food in it now but there are plenty of knives and other implements for PCs to help themselves to.

2 Men's washrooms. There is a sign on the door reading 'Gentlemen'. Showers (cold water only now), sinks, toilets. This place was used by the homeless and reeks of stale urine. There is graffiti all over the walls in black marker pen but no matter how hard they try the PCs cannot decipher them.

3 Women's washrooms. There is a sign on the door reading 'Ladies'. Rather cleaner than the men's. A search reveals two used condoms floating in one of the toilets.

4 A short, wide corridor. The word 'MONITORING' is stencilled on the floor in front of the south door.

5 Rec room. The light here is burned out. There are a couple of armchairs, musty with age, a pool table, a table football set, and a dartboard. The darts are on the pool table and can be used as thrown weapons, but they only do D2 damage. Searching the room reveals a copy of The Times from 1974.

6 Laundry room. There are six toploading washing machines and three large tumble dryers. These all still work, although there isn't any detergent. Searching the room reveals a wad of three hundred £1 notes stuffed into a sock and hidden in the drum of one of the tumble dryers. £1 notes are, of course, no longer legal currency.

7 Monitor room. This room is massive and shadowy, with most of the lights burned out. Two banks of monitor stations run down the sides of the room. These are consoles with a screen like a radar screen and a keyboard, each with a swivel chair. If they are switched on the screens will glow green but they can't be made to do anything else.

Three large tables stand in the room. The northernmost has a map of Southern England modelled in papier mache and covered with green cloth. There are several map pins stuck into the map, all with little red flags. There is a meat skewer from the kitchen stuck into the location of Whealdon House.

The middle table is covered with papers. Searching them reveals they are mostly mundane requisitioning forms requesting food, fuel and other supplies for Kestrel Falls Early Warning Installation. A couple of them are hazardous material requisition forms, requesting varying amounts of LSD. The authorisation signature is a stamp that reads 'BEOWULF'.

The southernmost table has a papier mache modelled map of Northern England and Scotland. There are lots of map pins with blue flags stuck into it. There is a knife from the kitchen stuck into St Cymbeline's Isle.

8 Furnace Room. A large generator takes up most of the room. It has 'Emergency Generator' stencilled on the side of it in red paint. It cannot be turned on. There is also a furnace. It is cold and unfired, but opening the furnace door reveals a set of stairs down to Basement 2.

9 Cells. This narrow corridor has four cells. A door at the East end is large and shut fast. It has a combination lock. All the dials have had their numbers filed off. The lock can be picked (Pick Lock DC12 – it's old and badly maintained) or the door can be forced. It feels very stubborn at first but will always give on the second try, suddenly flying open as if it hit by a great force. The door is booby-trapped with a tripwire. It takes a Search check DC 17 to spot it, and a Disable Device check of 17 to unhook the wire without setting off the trap. The trap is sprung once the door is opened.

10 Lab. This is a white-painted laboratory with a tile floor. Benches run around the edge of the room with test tube holders and glass flasks. There are three gas bottles at the back of the room, painted dark green. The trap on the door, if activated, causes the valves of the gas bottles to crack open three rounds after the wire is broken. This will also happen if anyone meddles with the bottles. The bottles contain a form of nerve gas which causes madness. Anyone in the room when they go off must pass a Fort save or go short-term temporarily insane. The gas disperses after 10 rounds, during which time mad PCs have ample opportunity to harm themselves and each other. The gas also fills the cell corridor if the door is not closed. The gas is a sinister dark blue and it can easily be seen, so it is simple to tell when it had dispersed.

Anyone going bonkers because of the gas will lose D3 Sanity once they come round. Searching the room reveals a report sheet on the floor under one of the benches.

'In conclusion, Project Beowulf has achieved little of use to the Ministry of Defence and it is recommended that funding is moved elsewhere. The nerve gas created by the Kestrel Falls lab was of moderate success in producing confusion and hallucination in subjects, but there are few uses for such a weapon when there are more potent agents of similar type already available, as well as those which are directly fatal or injurious.

Another weakness is the comparative simplicity with which a high-oxygen atmosphere, while having dangers of its own, counteracts the effects of the Project Beowulf agent.

The project had potential for creating an interrogation tool rather than a weapon, but the mind-altering properties of the gas were too difficult to control and the result was invariably short-term delusion without use or structure. Project Beowulf was a welcome step in the direction of psychological warfare rather than directly physical, but in itself it has not been a success.'

The gas developed by Project Beowulf here in the early 1970s was used by Nathaniel Glass in brainwashing the youths he kidnapped.

There is a small chance the PCs will be able to act on the information, perhaps by gathering some bottled oxygen (which will be expensive) and using it to counteract the effects of the gas.

BASEMENT 2

1 Control centre. This is a large room with banks of computers looking towards a large screen mounted on the south wall. The screen is divided up into semicircles – there are nine of them. Knowledge (astronomy) DC5 or simple common sense might help a PC work out this is a representation of the solar system.

There is a short flight of steps leading to the lower-level south half of the room. There is a long bank of computers here. One of them can be switched on (Knowledge (Electronics) 12, Disable Device 18). This console controls the dish antenna at ground level. There is a co-ordinate in the console's memory banks – playing around with the controls for long enough or Computer Use (12) reveals it. Pointing the dish to these co-ordinates causes a satellite image to appear on the screen on the south wall. It is a shot, from orbit, of St. Cymbeline's Isle, which might be recognised by someone who had a good Research test on the place. A photograph or good sketch of the island can let someone find out that this is St Cymbeline's Isle. The image has a set of map co-ordinates in the bottom corner. These are the coordinates of the island.

2 Computer room. This room is bright and clean. The lights are already on when the PCs enter. There are several eight-foot-high memory banks with spools of wire. These will be spinning round the and whole room will be humming if the console in room 10 was turned on. The rear of the screen can be seen on the north wall. There is a main console in the middle of the room. There is a single book on it – it appears to be a children's book that has been hand-made, with illustrations and lettering done by hand. The cover shows a knight in shining armour battling an evil wizard. There is no title.

THE FAIRYTALE

Sanity D4 + D6. DC22, D6 days.

1 spell – Red Sign of Shudde M'ell (*Last Line*).

Cthulu Mythos + 1 (But the reader adds an additional +2 on matters relating to the Epic).

The tome tells a simply childlike fairytale A wicked wizard leads a mighty horde of darkness against an outnumbered foe. But a band of heroes slay the wizard at the height of the battle, and his leaderless army is crushed. The Mythos hints and spells are hidden in the dense border illustrations, which suggest a god who draws his power from the stories enacted by his followers.

3 Store room. There are several piles of folded laundry, musty from age and apparently never used.

4 This corridor is lined with doors leading into small two-man dorm rooms. Each one has a double bunk and a table. Most of them have no nameplate on the door but one has 'Prime Minister', another 'Secretary of State for Health', and one at the end of the corridor 'Home Secretary'.

5 Women's washrooms.

6 Men's washrooms.

7 Stairs up to Basement 1 furnace room.

8 Decontamination chamber entrance. This is a small room. On the wall hang three environmental hazard suits. There is a pool next to one wall – it is full of sterile fluid. It is possible to swim down a short tunnel and emerge on the other side of the wall. Doing this without a suit on causes D6 Con damage as the chemical fluid gets into your eyes and mouth.

9 Decontamination chamber exit. A high-pressure shower automatically hoses down anyone coming out of the pool.

St. Cymbeline's Isle

To get to St Cymbeline's Isle, the PCs have to find someone in Dunmuir who will hire them a boat. This proves to be rather difficult (Gather Information, DC16). Alternatively, they can find AidCom's boat in the largely empty Dunmuir marina. It's been left unlocked. Hiring someone to sail it isn't too difficult, and the locals seem strangely eager to have the boat leave, even if one of them has to pilot it.

St. Cymbeline's isle is mostly windswept rocky grass, with two stubborn wooded areas. The air tastes of sea spray and the weather is grim and drizzly. As the PCs arrive the wind gets up (-4 to ranged attacks and Listen checks). As the PCs head towards the battle site streaks of purple lightning flash in the huge grey stormclouds overhead.

St Cymbeline's isle is the site of the ritual that Nathaniel Glass hopes to enact so the Epic's servants can be summoned to earth. To do this he needs to re-enact the story that he wrote, for concluding the story will create the power the Epic needs to manifest his servants. The story had valiant heroes killing an evil wizard during a battle. The heroes are the PCs and Glass is the wizard. The battle is being fought out on the island by the youths Glass captured and brainwashed using what he learned from Project Beowulf in Kestrel Falls. If the PCs kill Glass, they will complete the ritual and the Epic's servants will arrive. The chances of anyone surviving this eventuality are very slim indeed.

To stop the ritual they can subdue Glass or stop the battle. Stopping the battle is much more difficult. The effects of the Project Beowulf gas can be counteracted with an oxygen-rich atmosphere. Hurling a leaking bottle of oxygen gas into the middle of the battle will cause youths to come to their senses to stop fighting. Chaos will break out – if there were enough oxygen bottles the battle will break up and lots of the kids will survive. If there were only one or two, a few will escape and most will die in the all-in slaughter that erupts in place of the battle, but the ritual will be disrupted. Any PC just wading into the battle will be attacked by the maximum eight combatants with knives every turn until they are dead or they fight their way out (every youth killed or subdued allows 10 feet of movement through the melee).

If the battle is broken up, Nathaniel Glass will try to attack the PCs. The PCs can kill him at this point without completing the ritual.

Subduing Glass is more likely. Nathaniel Glass is a dangerous man and a powerful magician, so this will take some doing. All his spells have somatic components so pinning him down while someone punches him out will do the trick.

If Glass is subdued, there will be a terrible keening from the battlefield. Youths will break off from the battle and begin running into the sea, where they will drown unless the PCs manage to rescue some of them. This is a horrible thing to witness and costs D4/D10 sanity.

If Glass is killed, a huge purple-black portal will open in the sky above him and two Servants of the Epic will drop through it onto the ground. They will immediately attack the nearest living things, usually Glass himself followed by the youths or PCs. PCs who flee and make it to the boat might survive. Fighting the Servants will almost certainly result in death.

A PC who ends up in the sea has 10 rounds before the cold sets in. They must pass a Fort save every round thereafter, suffering –1 for every such round that has gone by, or slip under the waves as the cold claims them.

PCs escaping by boat once the Servants have arrived will have to get the boat more than 60 feet from the shore or a Servant will leap from the shore onto the boat. The boat is unlikely to survive this, let alone the PCs. They will have to hope, rather callously, that the Servants are too busy eating the battling youths to notice them.

1 A small pontoon juts from the stony beach. This is where the PCs will land unless they specifically ask otherwise.

2 Burial mounds. These are jumbled piles of huge stones. There are three of them. Examining them shows carvings, which the PCs may recognise from research into St Cymbeline's or the altar stone on the 2nd floor of Whealdon House.

3 The battle site. The youths, about 2000 of them, are battling with knives, sticks, anything they can find. There are two 'armies' of 1000 each, one army with blue armbands, the others red. There are far more youths than just those who disappeared from Timsdown West, for Glass has been 'collecting' them from elsewhere, too, it's just that most of them haven't been missed.

4 A low hill overlooking the battle site. This is where Glass is standing, hands raised high, chanting at the top of his voice (PCs getting close will hear him, but not recognise the words).

AFTERMATH

If the PCs find out what happened to the youths, they can go to the police or back to Timsdown West. By this time the estate is totally deserted and the inhabitants can only be contacted indirectly. If the PCs save any of the youths, one of them will be Lee Robinson, who can be reunited with his parents 'off-screen'. If the Timsdown West residents learn of their children's fate they will pay Open Eye's fee. If any survive they might donate other things in gratitude, or even form a support group/investigative organisation to find out what other families have lost members to cultists like Glass.

There will probably be a horrible scene left of St Cymbeline's Island, which could be investigated by the police or the Government (especially if several members of Open Eye Investigations never made it off the island). The MoD might want to know how Glass managed to get hold of Kestrel Falls, and there is now a rogue spy satellite over the UK available to anyone with the courage and knowledge to control it from Kestrel Falls – like the investigators, for instance.

If the PCs succeed in subduing Nathaniel Glass, then what they do with him is up to them.

STORY GOALS

Survive.

Stop the ritual from taking place.

Kill/subdue/capture Nathaniel Glass.

Save some of the youths.

Save lots of the youths.

Discover Kestrel Falls

Discover Whealdon House

Discover St Cymbeline's Isle

Make the connection that Nathaniel Glass is a cultist using the AidCom charity as a front for his activities.

Read the Fairytale.

Sanity Rewards

Saving some of the kids. D4

Saving lots of the kids. D6

Solving the Timsdown West case. D6

Research

WHEALDON HOUSE

DC6 – Stately Home, 18thC, in Staffordshire. Previously open to the public, closed for eighteen months for refurbishment. There are plans to convert it into a conference centre.

DC12 – Bought 18 months ago by AidCom at a knockdown price from the National Trust. Currently unoccupied.

DC18 – The house's staff were all laid off when it was bought. The ballroom has been stripped of its furniture and decoration, and the decorators hired were paid in cash. The decorators and staff cannot be found.

ST. CYMBLELINE'S ISLE

DC4 – An island off the Northeast coast of Scotland. The nearest coastal town is Dunmuir.

DC8 – The townspeople tried to use the island as a tourist attraction on account of its pre-Viking burial cairns. However, a ferry service proved uneconomic and the idea was scrapped.

DC15 – There was a settlement on the island but it never received electricity or telephone connections. The last family left in 1979.

DC20 – a paper written on the island’s cairns mentioned hieroglyphic inscriptions depicting an unnamed battle.

KESTREL FALLS

DC15 – Kestrel falls Early Warning Installation is a radar installation and nuclear bunker on land now belonging to the charity AidCom. Ownership of the facility itself was disputed by the MoD until 1994, but the matter appears to have been forgotten. The station itself was closed down in 1974.

DC17 – Kestrel falls’ now-primitive computer dates from the 1960s, when it was one of the most impressive of its kind. The station was intended as a possible site where elements of the Government might shelter and operate in the event of a nuclear alert.

DISAPPEARANCES FROM TIMSDOWN ESTATE

DC10 – Local newspapers reported two men bundling a youth into a car (this was Andrew Castlespite, although the PCs might not realise it). Police suspected abduction and the incident was later linked to the later disappearances.

The abduction theory soon disappeared from the newspapers, as did the whole story, which is odd considering its potential importance. Newspapers with reports about the incident have a tendency to go missing from library files.

REGISTRATION OF WRECKED CAR

DC12 (Characters who use police connections do not need to test). The car is registered as a company vehicle of a registered charity, AidCom. The purchase was signed by Nathaniel Glass.

NATHANIEL GLASS

DC11 DoB 24-09-69. CEO of AidCom, a registered charity. There are no records of him for the past 18 months.

DC14 Sent down from University College London at age 19. Details unavailable.

DC21 Arrested for theft of books from the UCL rare collection. Charges dropped.

ANDREW CASTLESPITE

DC6 – No criminal record. Date of birth 04-05-82. Bright but academically idle with no post-16 education, he works on the checkout of the local supermarket.

THE EPIC (Cthulu Mythos check)

DC19 – The Epic is a god only recently worshipped. His epithets include the Story God.

DC25 – His rituals involve acting out a story. Reaching the end of a story is like completing a circuit, and it is from this that the Epic gains his power.

AIDCOM

DC8 – AidCom is a registered charity, lending logistical assistance to aid agencies in the Third World. It is run by Nathaniel Glass.

DC13 – There have been no movements in AidCom’s accounts for eighteen months. The charity owns the stately home, Whealdon House.

DC17 – The charity owns the ex-MoD land around the Kestrel Falls nuclear early warning installation. Attempts by aid agencies to use AidCom always fail.

GO TO THE POLICE

If the PCs go to the police their statements are taken and they are politely ignored.

If they act suspiciously or come to the attention of the police through a potentially criminal act, Detective Inspector Lynch – a portly but dedicated copper – will keep an eye on them. He can follow them between locations if they do something he can track, like using a cashpoint or researching something. If he follows them and sees them committing a crime, he will intervene. He is officially off-duty on doctor’s orders (high blood pressure), so he is alone. If he sees anything utterly outrageous he will summon a rapid response unit to help/arrest the investigators.

If the PCs are arrested and detained, they are handcuffed in a police van and driven to a deserted riverbank. The two police driving (who will not include Lynch) silently stop the engine, get out, and push the van into the river. The PCs must kick out the back window (Strength check, DC12) within 6 rounds or start to drown as the van sinks. Only 1 PC can get out at a time. Once out they must swim to the shore (swim check, DC12). The police are gone. Contacting Lynch after this requires a Gather Information check (DC15), and he will assist them if they are convincing enough, but he will always be alone since he's now on long-term sick leave against his will.

NPCS

HITBEAST

Use Ghoul stats, but does not count as undead and 'Worry' is replaced with 'Constrict'.

ANDREW CASTLESPITE

Lv1 sucker.

9Hp.

Initiative +0

Speed 30ft.

Armour Class 10

Attacks +2 (butcher's knife)

Damage D6 +3 (butcher's knife)

Face/Reach 5x5/5

Special – Tome of the Epic (tattooed on torso), magic weapon (butcher's knife).

Saves – Fort +0, Will +2, Ref +2

Abilities – Str8, Dex10, Con11, Int15, Wis12, Cha14

Skills – Mythos +1, Hide +3, Sense Motive +2.

Sanity 39 (1/5 8)

Butcher's Knife – this is a dangerous, malevolent +3/+3 weapon. It appears to be a large rusted knife with a stained, pitted blade. The weapon has 25 Sanity and will lose 1 point for every point of damage it does. When its sanity reaches 0, the wielder must take a Will test every turn he holds the knife or go short-term temporarily insane. This insanity usually takes the form of frenziedly attacking anyone nearby until subdued.

NATHANIEL GLASS

Lv 3 cult sorcerer (Defensive Option)

HP 13

Speed 30

AC 12

Attacks +2 (Revolver)/+1 (fire axe).

Damage D10 (Revolver)/D8 (Fire Axe)

Special Qualities - Adept Spellcaster (casts Epic's spells at Lv5)

Saves Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5

Abilities Str11, Dex12, Con11, Int15, Wis14, Char16

Skills Cthulu Mythos 7 (11 when dealing with the Epic), Concentration 5, Knowledge (Occult) 5, Swim 3, Wilderness Lore 4

Feats – Iron Will, Combat Casting, Weapon Proficiency (handgun), Weapon Proficiency (Melee)

CR 4

Sanity – Permanently Insane.

Spells: Frozen Tracks, Evil Eye, Contact Epic, Magic Weapon, Levitate.

Nathaniel Glass wears a neat suit and tie, but his head is clean-shaven and every inch of his skin is covered in self-inflicted scrawling tattoos, wild loops and scribbles with no discernible meaning. His eyes are pale blue, cold and piercing, and his build is tall and slim.

In combat he levitates and attacks with spells and his handgun. He has a fire axe lying nearby and will run and grab it if PCs get too close.

SERVANT OF THE EPIC

Huge Outsider

HP 190

Speed 30ft

AC 17

Attacks 3 Claw +16, Bite +21

Special Attacks – Impale. A natural 19 or 20 to hit with a claw attack automatically causes a Massive Damage check in addition to any damage caused as the Servant skewers its victim. This can cause 2 such checks from one attack.

Damage D10 + 10 (Claw)/2D10 + 15(Bite)

Special Abilities - Damage Reduction 10/+1, Fast Healing 3.

Special Qualities - Intuit Direction, Appalling Stench – anyone within 30 feet of the Servant must take a Fort test or suffer a –2 Morale penalty to all attacks and saves due to the nauseating reek.

Saves

Abilities Str25, Dex 14, Con22, Int 4, Wis7, Cha 18

Skills Spot +51, Wilderness Lore +40, Climb +30

Feats Track, Great Cleave.

CR High.

Sanity Loss D10/2D10

A Servant of the Epic is a huge monster with a central body supported by nine legs each ending in a single massive talon. In combat it stabs down with these talons, hoping to spit its enemies on them. Its head is a massive flat disk that opens like a clam to reveal rows upon rows of sharp teeth, disappearing down its throat. Its legs, knot-like body and head are clad in a dirty white carapace like a crab's, pitted and stained.

The Servants are surrounded by a hideous stench, rotting shellfish and excrement. They are largely mindless but utterly implacable hunter-killers, running down the enemies of the Epic ruthlessly. They could be said to have a form of near-sense because it is all but impossible to hide from the Servants of the Epic.