

# Forgotten Futures IV

## The Pentacle Files



**Role Playing Adventures for  
William Hope Hodgson's  
*Carnacki The Ghost-Finder***

**Marcus L. Rowland**

With Additional Material by Alex Stewart

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Adventures in the world of William Hope Hodgson's  
*Carnacki The Ghost-Finder*

by Marcus L. Rowland

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## Introduction

This is a collection of short adventures linked by the phenomena described in the Carnacki worldbook. Each adventure can be played in a few hours. All are set in the period between 1910 and the First World War; with one exception the exact dates are unimportant, and they can be run in any order.

Characters are adventurers in a world superficially like our own, but one that is occasionally menaced by Ab-natural entities. It is a world where it is wise to be afraid of the dark.

Because of the size and scope of these adventures minor NPCs are not described in great detail; they have average characteristics of 3 or 4, and skills appropriate to their jobs or ranks. All characters and organisations mentioned are imaginary, unless stated otherwise. Maps and charts are only provided for key locations where exact placement of characters is important; many details are entirely imaginary or are based on limited (and possibly inaccurate) information. Referees are strongly advised to obtain suitable maps, charts, and photographs to supplement the illustrations provided, and modify details where I have made mistakes. Wherever possible sources are mentioned.

When referring to characters the words “him” and “his” are sometimes used for “him/her” and “his/her”; unless stated otherwise the characters may be of either gender. The male pronoun is sometimes used to give a more natural flow of text - blame the English language, not the author! All the adventures are written for groups of 3-6 characters; more are usually more trouble than they are worth, smaller groups may lack some of the skills needed for success. It is assumed that the characters are British; if not, some modifications may be needed. In this period foreigners are generally regarded with suspicion, since there is a growing socialist and anarchist presence, mostly fuelled by the Russian pogroms of the late 19th century, which will lead to violence within a few years. See the *Forgotten Futures 5* adventure *The Blood Red Tide*.

At a few points words which are now archaic, or have different meanings in Britain and America, are used. A brief list follows:

Estate Agent	Realtor
Jakes	Crude term for lavatory
Laudanum	Tincture of opium, used as a tranquilliser
Underground	London subway
Ground floor	Equivalent to U.S. 1st floor
First floor	U.S. 2nd floor (etc.)

These adventures were written several years before I added an optional Magic characteristic and related skills and rules to the Forgotten Futures rules. Unless you are already using these later additions I'd recommend sticking with the worldbook's rules for magic instead of trying to change the setting and adventures to use them – the new rules make magic a little easier and more controllable, which isn't ideal in the context of the Carnacki stories. Magic should be dangerous and unpredictable, only used as a last resort...

## Campaign Summary

These adventures are connected mainly by their background; there is no strong linking theme, apart from the possibility of Ab-natural intervention.

**The Cutting** involves the adventurers in a problem on a railway. The line seems to be haunted by a murderous spirit. But there are a few unusual complications...

In **Folly of the Wise**, something very odd seems to be stirring outside a Wiltshire mansion. Is it a ghost, is someone playing a very odd joke, or is there some sinister reason for the disturbance?

**Sussex Belle** introduces the adventurers to the wonderful world of the cinema. But there is more to the haunting they find than meets the eye.

**Something Nasty In The Woodshed** and **Cold Sweat** are two adventure outlines, which will require some preparatory work by the referee. One is set in Scotland, the other in London. Both are lethally dangerous.

Finally, **When Hell Freezes Over** by Alex Stewart appears for the first time in the 2023 revision of these adventures; it sends the adventurers to one of the poorest parts of London to investigate an odd death. Since some aspects of the story are similar to **Cold Sweat** I recommend running at least one adventure between them, or changing them to include a connecting cause for events.

## Timing and Distances

These adventures are written to avoid the need to adhere to a strict timetable. Usually the characters will learn of a problem then have the time they need to deal with it. Occasionally their actions will precipitate events, causing a new problem that requires a rapid response, but even here it should be unnecessary to adhere to a rigid timeline.

In play-testing a freewheeling approach was used. Regardless of their efficiency, the characters always managed to be at the right places at the right times, more or less equipped to deal with the situation. From then on the outcome of the scenario was based on the players' actions. This melodramatic approach is strongly recommended.

Referees should always remember that these scenarios can't possibly handle every contingency; players may think of plans that didn't occur to the author and play-testers, or ignore clues that seemed obvious when these adventures were written. Be prepared to think fast and abandon the written plot if things aren't going well; the players may think of something much more entertaining if you let them develop their ideas!

## Characters & Equipment

It is advisable to generate new characters for a Carnacki-based campaign, since it is likely to emphasise such unusual skills as Scholar (Magic) and the use of weird science equipment. Some likely careers for characters include Clergyman (of any faith), Professional Medium, Reporter or Author, Scientist,

and (of course) Psychic Detective. Note that characters who are paid to work as professional mediums or psychic detectives are likely to encounter Ab-natural problems long before others, but will never be treated as anything better than hirelings or (at best) hired consultants.

Before running any adventure the referee is strongly advised to point out the main ideas of the Carnacki stories; the existence of malevolent and extremely powerful supernatural creatures which are always looking for openings into our world, their immunity to most forms of harm, and the absolute need to take every possible precaution in dealing with them. Players should also be aware that magic exists but is extremely dangerous; there is no need to spell out just how dangerous...

It is reasonable to assume that characters have had a chance to pick up some knowledge of the Ab-natural before play begins, without necessarily having ever encountered a serious manifestation. Carnacki patents the Electric Pentacle in 1908 and a commercial model is available from 1910 onwards, so it is plausible that characters with an interest in these matters might own one. One large enough for a single man costs £24 19s 11d; add extra sets to increase the size of the pentacle for more occupants.

Characters should not initially be on friendly terms with Carnacki, and he should not normally be available for consultation. If characters try to reach him, they should always be told that he is “away on business”; maybe he’s a few miles away, visiting a haunted manor, possibly he’s in Outer Mongolia or spending a few weeks at sea. He doesn’t travel with servants; his household staff (a valet and cook/housekeeper) are paid well to keep quiet about his business. The valet sleeps on the premises and has access to a shotgun, so breaking in to rifle Carnacki’s papers or learn his itinerary is not advisable. While Carnacki may occasionally be used to get characters into trouble, he should not get them out again.

For convenience it is assumed throughout that the adventurers are based in London. If this is not the case some changes may be needed. Since London is a large city, it may be useful to specify the exact address, or at least the general area:

Aristocrats and other gentry tend to live in the country but have town houses in Kensington or Chelsea; there are also wealthy homes in Marylebone, especially around Regents Park, in the West End and in Westminster, although the latter are most likely to be the London residences of members of the Houses of Parliament. Carnacki, of course, lives in Chelsea. Aristocratic bachelors might live at an exclusive club, usually in the West End, or in a flat somewhere in the area; for example, Lord Peter Wimsey lived at 110a Piccadilly. One notable possibility is the Albany, a block of flats for the wealthy, which is off Piccadilly. Fictional tenants include such famous characters as A.J. Raffles and Lord John Roxton (see *Forgotten Futures* 3).

Middle class adventurers might live in Bayswater or Paddington (see *The Cutting*, below), Marylebone, or any of the districts mentioned above; not every house in these areas is a mansion. They might be resident in the suburbs around London, commuting into town for work or pleasure; the middle classes,

especially businessmen, are by far the most likely to commute. Academics are most likely to live near one of the great centres of learning; Kensington is especially favoured by scientists, since the area contains most of London's major scientific institutions, while the Bloomsbury district, containing the British Museum (and its library, later the British Library), various colleges, appeals to scholars of the arts and classics. Both areas also offer student accommodation, in the colleges themselves and in numerous lodging houses around them.

Lower class characters could live almost anywhere; servants are likely to occupy rooms at their employers home, otherwise there are poorer quarters in every district. It is unlikely that they commute; in most of the poorest areas the vast majority live within walking distance of their work, although trams and the other new transport systems are beginning to change this. The East End of London, especially Whitechapel (see *Cold Sweat* and *When Hell Freezes Over*), Stepney and the surrounding areas is notorious as a densely crowded haunt of the poor, immigrants, and the 'criminal' classes, but there are many other poor areas; for example, North Paddington is regarded as one of the worse areas for poverty in London.

## Acknowledgements

Unless stated otherwise, all events and individuals referred to in these adventures are entirely imaginary, and any resemblance to real persons is entirely accidental. Real places and companies are sometimes mentioned, but it should again be emphasised that there is no factual basis for the activities described.

Numerous play-testers helped to evaluate these scenarios, and one other which turned out to be unsuitable for this background and unplayable as written. My thanks to all of those involved.

The title of *The Cutting* was suggested by *The Gutting*, a horror spoof by Dave Langford. Some plot elements in this adventure and in *Cold Sweat* derive from *The Paddington Horror*, a short *Call of Cthulhu* adventure that appeared in *White Dwarf*.

*Folly of the Wise* draws heavily on my articles about "Mummerset", the faking of "realistic" country accents, in various magazines. Many thanks, again, to Michael Cule for his help with these articles. One (deceased) character is based on an NPC appearing in two *Forgotten Futures II* adventures.

Alex Stewart can probably be blamed for *Sussex Belle*, since he suggested the historical background, the less savoury side of Britain's early film industry. Kim Newman and Tim Illingworth provided additional information. The names of some characters were suggested by Leslie Charteris' *Saint* stories.

*Something Nasty In The Woodshed* is a quote from *Cold Comfort Farm*, by Stella Gibbons. If you haven't read this you really should, or at least catch one of the TV and film versions that have been made – I especially recommend the 1995 BBC version starring Kate Beckinsale, Joanna Lumley and Stephen Fry.

Finally, Alex Stewart sent me *When Hell Freezes Over* in 2017; unfortunately sloth intervened and it's taken me more than five years to get it on line, for which many apologies.



## Adventure 1: The Cutting

Busy railway lines in the middle of London hardly seem the most likely place for Ab-natural events, but a series of incidents has begun to scare the crew of the engines. Are they an echo of past deaths, a cunning hoax, or a premonition of events to come?

This is a short introductory adventure with a simple plot that should take only a few hours to play. The adventurers should have some interest in unusual phenomena; previous experience of the Ab-natural is not essential.

The referee should print the newspaper stories in the next section as player handouts. It may be a good idea to print out the map below, or get hold of a larger version. The best map available for this period is one of a series of old Ordnance Survey maps published by Alan Godfrey (see the *Forgotten Futures* rules): London Sheet 50 (Paddington 1914). Specify the 1914 revision if ordering, since the 1872 version is also available and omits some vital details. The National Library of Scotland has a large on-line library of maps which may be useful – the map below is from this source, it's actually from the 1930s-40s but there are no important changes.



There are numerous recordings of train noises which can be used to add atmosphere to this adventure. Look especially for recordings of steam engines, shunting, and electric underground trains.

All railways, streets, etc. described in the adventure were entirely real in 1910, but the area North of the railway was bombed heavily during the Second World War, and changed considerably in post-war construction. The slums and warehouses were torn down in the 1950s and 60s, replaced by blocks of flats and roads. The railway has also changed significantly since the 1960s, with the shunting yard, freight terminal and cattle pens gone, electrification, removal of the locomotive turntable visible at bottom right, and major changes to rail layout.

## Players' Information

Variations on the following three stories appear in London newspapers in February 1910. Anyone who is interested in the occult notices the first two, and will probably notice the third if looking for related news:

From *The Evening News*, Saturday:

### **SPIRITS ON THE LINE?**

Passengers on the Metropolitan Railway may be alarmed to learn that the line is reputedly haunted. Staff claim that the ghost of a labourer who was killed while building the line haunts the tracks near Royal Oak station, and has been seen on many occasions. It is described as a pale insubstantial figure, seen at night in the cutting near the station. Trains have hit the figure, without any apparent effect.

Although the story sounds alarming, our reporter could find no record of any deaths during the construction of this section of the track, and no local residents admit to having seen the elusive poltergeist.

Spirits are undoubtedly involved in these reports, but it seems most likely that they are alcoholic in nature and that this story is another example of a drunken tale that has grown in the re-telling!

From *The Evening Star*, the following Tuesday:

### **METROPOLITAN SHARES DOWN 2s 3d - GHOST STORY BLAMED FOR LOSSES**

Reports of a ghost haunting the Metropolitan Railway are widely blamed for an unexpected decline in share prices. Selling of small lots began soon after the Exchange opened yesterday and continued today, with the closing price down 4s 11d from Friday's close; today's final figure was £2 15s 3d. Sir Joseph Wager, Managing Director of the company, stated "These stories are poppycock and the line is entirely safe."

While superstition may have had a part in the fall, the City & Continental Bank sold more than 11,000 shares yesterday afternoon, accelerating the decline. Bank officials have not commented on their reasons for the sale.

From *The Evening Standard*, on Friday:

### **BODY FOUND ON LINE**

The body of an unnamed man was found on the Metropolitan Railway electrified tracks between Royal Oak and Westbourne Park stations early this morning. Scotland Yard is treating it as a suspicious death.



## Referee's Information

Reasons for adventurers to take an interest in the matter might include ownership of Metropolitan Railway (Met.) shares, a desire to learn more of the Ab-natural, professional curiosity as reporters or detectives, or (as a last resort and only if the adventurers are well-known as psychic detectives) a commission from Sir Joseph Wager.

The ghost began to appear in June 1909; what has gone unnoticed is that it was first seen less than a week after some high-voltage cables were replaced in the cutting. Electromagnetic resonance between the currents in the railway lines and one of the new cables is generating a freak etheric signal which is unusually attractive to Ab-natural entities. Conditions for a manifestation are at their best when an Westbound train approaches the cutting on the Royal Oak Station side of the tunnel; the power surges that accompany it sometimes create “rips” in the world-barrier which a sufficiently determined “ghost” can use under these peculiar conditions. The effect would be almost impossible to create deliberately; it can be cured by disconnecting the cable and attaching it to the rail again at a slightly different point.

A powerful Aeirrii entity stumbled across the “rips” and used them to attempt to materialise as trains passed. Even if it fails, it is sometimes visible as a shimmering ghostly immaterial form. Unfortunately each sighting of it increased its psychic presence and its ability to materialise; on the night of the 24th it finally succeeded in breaking through to our plane for a few minutes; it attacked a passer-by, dragging his body back towards its portal. From now on it will be able to materialise once or twice a night until it is stopped. This doesn't mean that it will kill someone every night; it can't move far from the “rip” and must return after a few minutes, so a victim must be close at hand before it can attack. It will kill animals, such as rats, cats, or dogs, if no human is available. It won't try to attack trains; they move too quickly.

There is a red herring in this adventure; the story about the company's financial difficulties, which could make players think that the haunting is a hoax intended to lower the price of shares before a take-over bid. In fact the share crisis has been exaggerated in the press. The railway runs at a modest profit; the ghost story happened to coincide with some insider dealing (not illegal in 1910), with directors of the City and Continental Bank selling their own shares at the original price before unloading a large block owned by the bank. This caused the original price drop. The bank wants the money to invest in the White Star Line, in anticipation of big profits from the new liner Titanic when it is launched next year. When Met. prices began to slip some other investors decided to pull out, but the situation will stabilise at a slightly lower price within a few days.

At this time of year the weather is cold but dry, with temperatures -1 to 1C (30-34 F) at night, 8-10 C (47-51 F) by day. The sun rises at 7.05 AM, sets at 5.25 PM. The sky is overcast.

If players aren't interested in investigating this mystery, another death occurs three weeks later. Share prices fall again. Continue mentioning deaths at intervals

of three to six weeks; there will also be unreported animal deaths every few days, unless the adventurers decide to intervene.

Once they are involved, the adventurers should be able to deal with this apparition reasonably quickly. The situation isn't complicated, apart from the unusual setting and the difficulties it causes.

## Lines of Enquiry

Adventurers may wish to begin by looking at the track or the victim, by investigating the history of the haunting as it was reported in the press, or by following up the financial side of the case. If they decide to plunge straight into the cutting without finding out the facts see *The Wrong Side of the Tracks* below.

The Metropolitan Railway (Met.) was London's first underground railway. In the city centre it runs in covered cuttings and shallow tunnels, with above-ground extensions to the North, East, and West. It carries tens of thousands of passengers a day. Since the late 19th century it has been electrified throughout, unlike the long-distance main line railways. The Western part of the line begins at Paddington Station, continuing almost entirely on the surface to Royal Oak, Westbourne Park, and other stations to Hammersmith.

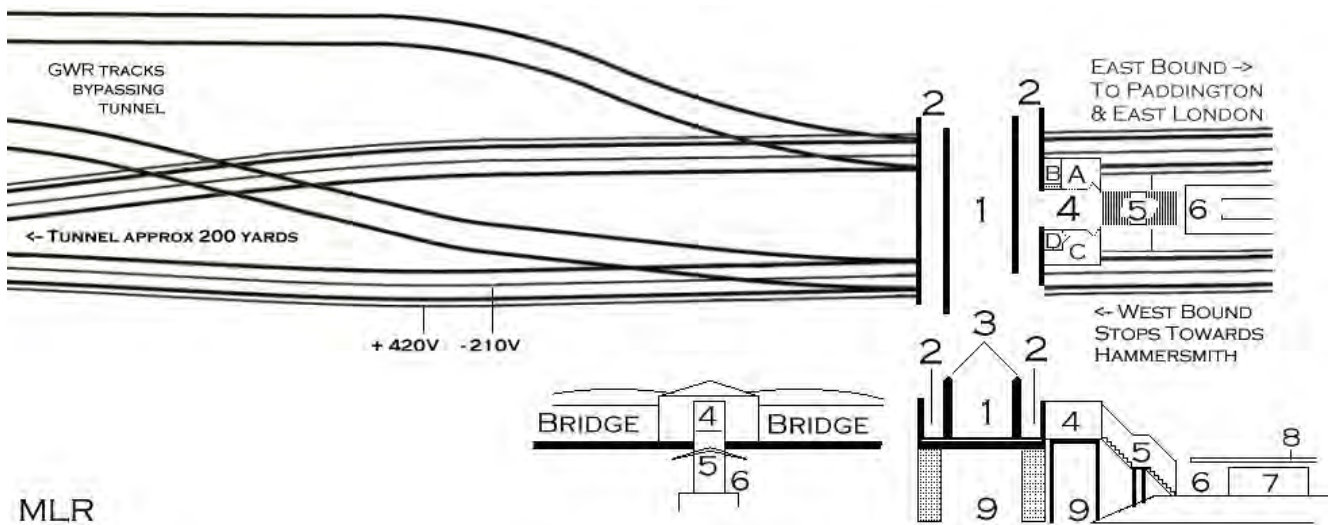
**Royal Oak station** is in the middle of Paddington Station's shunting yard and points system, which is owned by the Great Western Railway (GWR), and some GWR commuter steam trains still stop at Royal Oak on their way out from and into Paddington at peak hours. This is an extremely complex branching web of tracks, one of the busiest in Britain, with eighteen parallel lines criss-crossed by points. West of Royal Oak the electrified line (shown in red on the map below) dips down into a cutting and a short tunnel to bypass some other tracks, then on to nearby Westbourne Park station and all stations to Hammersmith; points to the east and west of the station switch steam trains on or off the electrified lines; steam trains stay on the surface. The tracks converge and the distance between them is reduced to a safe minimum before they enter the tunnel.



The cutting begins immediately after the tracks diverge from the points west of the station, the tunnel mouth is approximately 330 yards from the station. Since the line is more or less straight and the slope is gentle the tunnel mouth is visible from the platforms, but is in shadow from the late afternoon onward. Trains coming from the tunnel are first visible by their lights, with little detail until they are in the light. At night very little can be seen apart from the train lights; to protect the night vision of engine drivers all street lights visible from the track (especially those on Lord Hill's Bridge) are fitted with metal shades on the railway side of the light.

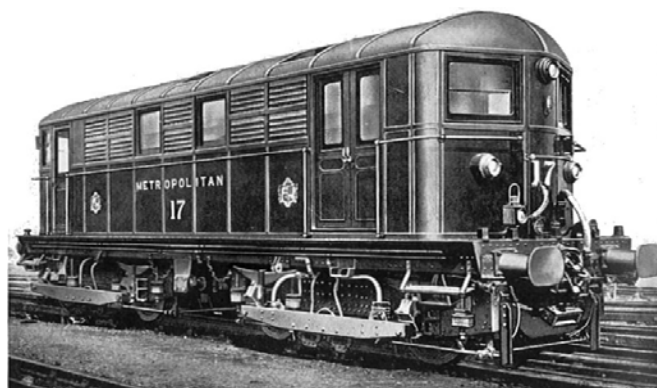
## Forgotten Futures – The Carnacki Cylinders - Adventures

Before the railway was built there were fields on the site. There is no record of any suspicious deaths anywhere in the immediate vicinity.



The station is built on two levels. The upper part is reached from Lord Hill's Bridge (1), a road bridge which crosses the tracks. There are two footpaths (2) separated from the road by the supporting girder structure (3); the booking hall (4) has a ticket office (A), a kiosk selling newspapers, tobacco and sweets (B), and a room for the station staff (C) with lavatory (D). Stairs (5) lead down to the platform, which has two small waiting areas with seats (7), little more than wind shelters under a leaky roof (8). There is a fully enclosed lady's waiting room further down the platform. Between the tracks under the station, and under the bridge West of the station, are storage areas (9) containing oil lamps and other equipment. There is a triangle of waste ground, between the tracks West of the bridge; a small pentacle could be set up in this area, but the ground is uneven and there is little room for mistakes.

The Met. uses four-rail standard-gauge track with two power rails – the “third rail” at -210v volts DC, and an outside rail at +410V. The trains have electric engines pulling up to six small carriages, each having six compartments holding eight seated and a maximum of ten standing passengers. Trains run every 20 minutes from 6.30 AM to midnight, at ten minute intervals in peak hours, with power shut down outside these hours. Steam trains stop at the station twice an hour during peak hours only – 8.00-11.00 AM and 4.00-7.00 PM. The last trains pass through the tunnel at roughly 11.35 PM Eastbound, 11.50 Westbound. There are walls and fences to keep trespassers off the tracks, but the surrounding railway system is so huge that there are dozens of gaps; for

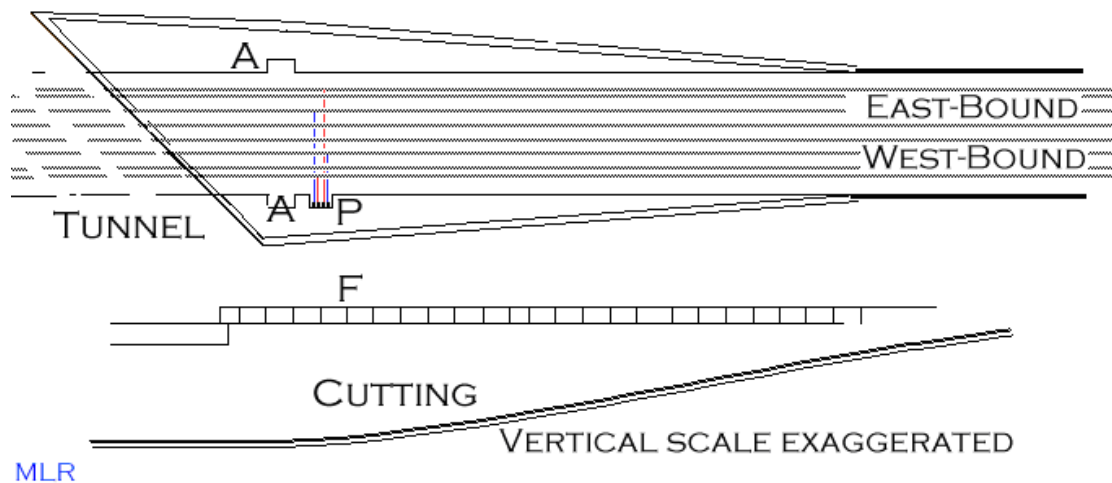


Metropolitan line electric locomotive circa 1910

example, there is an access gate leading to the shunting yard a few yards from the footbridge at the West end of Westbourne Park Villas, or someone could simply walk along the track from a station platform. Naturally this is extremely dangerous; dozens of trains an hour use the main lines, and the Met. lines are electrified. On the main lines or the shunting yard a foot in the wrong place at the wrong time could be caught in points (Difficulty 15 to get free, 10 if a lever of some sort is available), leaving an adventurer trapped in the path of an express or a heavily laden freight train! The electrified lines have their own danger:

Live Rail	(+ 410 Volts DC)	Effect 12, A:C, B:K, C:K
Return Rail	(-210 Volts DC)	Effect 10, A:I, B:C/K, C:K

The line uses DC power, so anyone touching the electrified rails will not be thrown clear by muscle spasms; they will be “frozen” to the rail by the shock, and the damage will be repeated each round until power is somehow cut or the victim is killed. The return rail is less dangerous but can still give a nasty shock, possibly triggering heart failure.



The plan and side view above show the layout of the cutting and tunnel entrance – after the GWR lines separate there is a slope down to the tunnel mouth. Just before the entrance to the tunnel, and at intervals along it, are safety alcoves (A) and power lines to the rails – red is 500V, blue is low voltage. There is a fence (F) along the sides of the cutting and over the tunnel mouth; it’s only 4ft high and is there to stop accidental falls, not to keep people out, since unauthorized personnel should not be on the tracks. The tunnel curves left then right to cross under the other tracks, then comes up in another cutting and on to lines which continue West toward Hammersmith.

Bearing the danger in mind, it is inadvisable to stray onto the tracks without the cooperation of the Met. and GWR. Unless a good reason to do otherwise is argued extremely persuasively, the Met. will only allow visitors on their line when the power is off; since the ghost only appears in the wake of electric trains, this is not very useful. When the power is off there is nothing whatever to indicate that there is anything Ab-natural about the system. When the power is

on, a medium (or anyone else with high SOUL) passing through the cutting, or walking beside it, will feel an odd “pringling” sensation; if a train passes the feeling intensifies. They will feel this most strongly when passing an alcove in the cutting wall where some of the high-voltage cables emerge from buried pipes to join the Eastbound track. The alcove itself is not especially significant; the “rip” is over the electrified rail of the adjacent track where the cable joins it. This intensification of feelings is not perceptible when passing through the tunnel in a train.

The cutting isn't visible from any of the bridges over the track; to minimise the nuisance from smoke and prevent suicides, they have high solid steel walls, not railings. It is possible to climb up, of course, but the road bridges are fitted with spikes to deter climbers, while the foot bridge walls are topped with strands of barbed wire. These have nuisance value only, and should cause nothing worse than flesh wounds if scaled; any sensible precaution will prevent harm.

Adventurers who wish to make house to house enquiries in the area should perhaps be warned that approximately 145,000 people live in the borough of Paddington, and that dozens of houses overlook the track. In any case the police have already done much of this work, with the results described below. If adventurers start to conduct large-scale enquiries they should run into endless problems; hostile dogs, policemen who want to know what they are doing, and people who have reasons of their own to avoid answering questions. Since nobody actually knows anything, apart from the points mentioned below, it will be totally futile.

The streets around the railway are dirty and noisy, with an endless fallout of soot and grime. At night they are dimly lit by gas lights. A few houses have electric lighting, most do not, and virtually none have telephones. Sooty steam billows across neighbouring roads as trains run in and out of Paddington. It is never quiet; shunting engines and goods trains run through the night, and in the early hours sheep and cattle wagons are frequently moved to the sidings, bound for Smithfield and other markets; the cries of these animals add to the background noise. The streets North of the railway are grim working class housing; it is one of the poorer areas of London, officially recorded as an area of 'chronic want'. The houses South of the railway are largely occupied by middle class families, with their quality improving further away from the dirt and noise of the tracks.

Scotland Yard is treating the case as a possible murder, and some details are kept from the press until the inquest. Characters with police contacts can easily learn the facts before then, others must wait for the Coroner's Court to sit at Paddington Town Hall, in Porchester Road, on March 1st.

The victim was Robert Hanshaw, aged 37, who lived at 23 Westbourne Park Villas on the South side of the tracks. He was reported missing on the night the body was found, and has been identified by his pocket watch, dental records, and a birthmark. His body is not a pretty sight; it has been burned, twisted, and charred beyond easy recognition.

Hanshaw was a clerk in the City of London. He left home at 10.15 PM, ostensibly to walk his dog Rover. The police have since learned that he was in



the Hampden Arms, a pub in on the North side of the railway near the footbridge, from 10.30 until closing at 11.00 PM. He drank three pints of beer, but didn't appear to be drunk. He was last seen walking back towards the bridge.

Rover returned on his own at 11.30; when she realised that her husband was missing, Hanshaw's wife waited for the local policeman to walk by on his regular beat, and alerted him just before midnight. At 12.10 AM the same constable noticed that a gate onto the railway yard near the footbridge was open, with links in the chain broken. There was a ripped hat on the track. Railwaymen checked the area for trespassers, and found the body at 2.20 AM. When police enquired at nearby houses, they found that three residents had heard a shout, barking, and scuffling noises a little after eleven; none looked outside in time to see what was happening. Since the railway is very noisy, nobody else heard anything.

The body was found in the Metropolitan Railway cutting. It was more than fifty feet from the footbridge, which makes it unlikely that Hanshaw somehow fell from it. It was by the North (East-bound) side of the track; it was badly burned but had apparently not been hit by any trains. Several bones in the arms and legs were broken, possibly by a fall or by spasms following electrocution. In view of the condition of the body, it was not possible to determine the exact cause of death. None of the drivers saw it.

In the light of these facts, the coroner decides that Hanshaw stumbled across intruders who were breaking into the shunting yard, and was attacked by them and dragged onto the track. He was either thrown onto the electrified line or broke free and stumbled onto it as he tried to escape. He was electrocuted, with spasms caused by the electrocution inflicting his other injuries. The verdict is murder by a person or persons unknown. The coroner comments scathingly on "wild gutter-press stories about ghosts" which can "only cause distress to the widow of this unfortunate man".

This explains the facts to some extent. In reality, Hanshaw was caught by the entity, and dragged back to its materialisation point; it used its Disruption power to kill him. He was already dead when his body touched the tracks, and the electricity simply cooked his corpse. Once it realised that he was dead, the entity threw the corpse away.

There are no obvious clues to prove the theory false. The lock and chain on the gate to the railway yard have been replaced; the originals have been kept by the police. If examined, it's obvious that the chain has literally been torn apart by some enormous force; links are distorted as though stretched by hydraulics. It might conceivably have been done by a crowbar or some sort of jack, but there are no tool marks. The lock itself is also bent, and looks like it was torn open, then twisted after it was open. The police aren't ready to speculate; one officer suggests that it might have been pulled open by a horse hitched to the chain, but there are no tracks, and no other evidence that any horse was present. Nothing appears to have been stolen from the yard, but something might have scared thieves off after they killed Hanshaw. There are several deep dents in the metal

of the door, apparently made by something on the railway side. They aren't mentioned in the report, because it was assumed that they were old damage.

The adventurers may wish to visit Mrs. Hanshaw and interview her. She is an attractive woman in her thirties (an average NPC with no special skills), and wears full mourning including a veil, black dress, etc. She has already been pestered by reporters and is not interested in answering questions about her husband's death, especially if ghosts are mentioned. She is a Baptist and doesn't believe in such "wicked nonsense". There is an estate agent's board in the front garden, offering the house for rent or sale; she can't afford to carry on paying the rent, and intends to move to a country cottage within a few days. If the adventurers are suspicious of her, they can easily learn that she has led an entirely blameless life, regularly plays the organ at the Baptist church at the end of the road, and inherited the country cottage from a brother who died in India a year earlier. Her husband was not insured, apart from a small burial policy, and they were not wealthy. No other men seem to be involved in her life. In other words, it does not seem likely that she murdered him, or had a hand in his death.

The original ghost story doesn't carry the name of a reporter. Characters with press contacts can find out that it was written by Thomas Conway, a freelance reporter. He heard some railwaymen talking in a local pub, asked a few questions, and sold the "exclusive" to every newspaper he could find.

Even if characters don't go looking for Conway, he will find them before they get far with their enquiries. He starts to dog their heels, and should be used to cause problems whenever things seem to be going too well; for example, he might turn up while they are waiting for the ghost to appear, and accidentally tread on one of the tubes of their electric pentacle...

If promised a real story, or bribed, he will take the adventurers to the Railway Tavern, a pub near Paddington Station, and introduce them to the engine drivers who told him about the ghost; Ernest Whistler and Fred Ryan (average NPCs with Driving [6] skill). Both are uneducated and use speech sprinkled with frequent profanities, but are willing to talk if bribed with a few pints of beer. They can't really add much to the newspaper story. Both first saw the ghost towards the end of 1909; neither can give an exact date. Both have seen it several times; each time it seemed to be clearer and more distinct. At first they saw it as a vague dark mist, but as they started to look for details they began to find them; when they last saw it, it looked like a grey man-shaped mist carrying a dim lantern. Neither of them realises that it has gradually been assuming the form that they (and other drivers) expected to see; if they had somehow come to believe that it was a ghostly cow, they would have eventually seen that! Characters with any relevant skill will be reasonably sure that they are telling the truth. Several other drivers and guards will confirm the tale if questioned; Whistler and Ryan have seen it more often than most, but that is simply because both men are unmarried and are free to work more evening shifts than many of their colleagues. The earliest they have seen it is at approximately 9.30 P.M.; this may lead adventurers to think that it can't appear earlier, but in fact there is

nothing to stop it appearing or materialising at any time after dark. It simply hasn't done so yet.

The story about a dead track-worker has no basis in fact; nobody has ever been killed in the cutting. If adventurers check back far enough they will find a few deaths associated with the construction of the station and its nexus of lines; in such a huge project a few accidents are almost inevitable. None are relevant to the current case.

If properly motivated, Whistler or Ryan might be persuaded to allow adventurers to ride through the cutting in their engines. This could give the adventurers a quick glimpse of the ghost, without confronting it directly. See the next section for more details. If anyone wishes to stop the train, both drivers have the sense to wait until it is clear of the tunnel before slamming on the brakes. Unless adventurers are fully prepared for an encounter with the creature, or are at least under the impression that they are ready, it is not advisable to let them meet it yet.

The second newspaper story is pure sensationalism. Nobody originally said anything about the ghost story causing the sudden rash of stock sales; the Star's own reporter suggested it while interviewing Wager. The events really aren't connected, except for a few small sales which were caused by the story!

One other possibility is an attempt to find out more from local libraries, church records, and other sources. These checks will take days, and will be unproductive. There are at least a dozen churches in the area, not just the few marked, and many small nonconformist chapels in nearby Harrow Road. None have any useful information, and none (apart from a Spiritualist chapel that isn't particularly close) appear to be in the business of summoning up ghosts. There is only one library nearby, at the Town Hall in Porchester Road; it doesn't hold anything that looks promising. The Town Hall's records are also unhelpful.

## **The Wrong Side of the Tracks**

How will the adventurers find out more about the ghost? The best method is probably to watch the track, and especially the cutting, and see if it appears.

For a distant view the houses along Westbourne Park Villas are probably the best choice; there's a wall between the street and the railway, but the street runs parallel to the track, so it's possible to get a clear view of the cutting from the upper windows. The victim's home is opposite the cutting, and if the adventurers have visited the street, they'll know that it's on the market. Mrs. Hanshaw will NOT be happy if she learns that a group of ghost-watchers are after the place, and will go out of her way to make things difficult for them; for example, she will switch off the gas and water before leaving, and lock the door of the cellar containing the taps. The house is available, furnished, for £5 a week, or for sale for £700, somewhat more than it is really worth. It is a modest semi-detached house with garden, and has room for a small family with no more than one or two servants. Middle-class adventurers in need of a home could do worse, if they can live with the noise and soot, but it isn't suitable for a gentleman.

The best view of the cutting can be seen from the front bedroom of these houses. For each hour of darkness the adventurers spend watching, roll 2D6 + 1 per hour; on 10+ the ghost appears as a train approaches, leaps up and out of the way, seems to move around the tracks for a few minutes in an expanding spiral, then returns to the cutting and vanishes. From this vantage point it's seen as a pallid blur, a patch of grey against the near-darkness of the surrounding railway yard. If the adventurers watch after an initial sighting, it eventually appears again; this time it moves straight out, seems to pounce on something, and moves back to the cutting much more rapidly. In the morning a dead cat can be seen near the cutting. The pattern of appearing, spiralling outwards, and retreating to the cutting is repeated whenever the ghost is seen; occasionally it stays much longer, and its "sweep" takes it right up to the walls of the railway yard; it might even climb over to attack someone who is passing on the street. If the adventurers let events progress to this point, remind them that they might have been able to prevent another attack; this may motivate them to intervene more directly.

The buildings on the North side of the tracks at this point are mostly warehouses, with few windows; none have a particularly good view. If one is used, the events described above should occur.

The cutting can also be observed from the platform of Royal Oak Station, although the station staff may not be pleased if the adventurers want to stay there all evening. Platform tickets cost a ha'penny. Unless the Metropolitan Railway Co. is somehow persuaded to cooperate, adventurers will not be allowed to set up an electric pentacle (or any other magical defence) on the platform, and will not be allowed to stay on the platform after the station closes (this would be futile anyway, since power is cut a few minutes after the last train goes through, but don't reveal this information to the adventurers).

The station isn't busy after the end of the evening rush hour, at roughly 7 P.M.; almost all of the late evening traffic consists of passengers returning home from Central London, so the platform is usually empty within a minute or two of the arrival of Westbound trains. Occasional exceptions will undoubtedly be extremely curious if the adventurers start to cast spells or erect electric pentacles.

From the platform it isn't possible to see the ghost appear; a train is always in the way. Eventually it should be sighted, leaping out of the way of a train and climbing (or possibly floating) up the side of the cutting and onto the surrounding yard. Clear features aren't visible, even with telescopes or binoculars; there seems to be some resemblance to a human form, and if the adventurers are expecting to see a phantom railway worker they may get a vague impression that it's carrying a lantern or a pick, but its movements seem completely inhuman. At least once the adventurers should feel that it is staring at them before it returns to the cutting and disappears. If they look at the tracks where it appeared, while it is still present, they should notice that the air seems to waver slightly over the rails, as though they were hot; since it is dark, this is seen as a shimmering of signal lights in the tunnel. This effect is not visible from any point outside the yard. When it vanishes the rails flicker with a faint blue

glow, like St. Elmo's Fire, for a few seconds; again, this is not visible from the surrounding houses. If the adventurers stay on the platform and don't decide to take a more active role, it will eventually attack them.

If they have help from the GWR authorities, it might be possible to set up to observe the cutting from close range; by arrangement, the siding along the north side of the cutting could be cut out of the system for a few hours, allowing the adventurers a direct view at a range of only a few feet; of course the ghost would be able to reach them immediately.... The disadvantage here is the difficulty of setting up a pentacle, or any other defence, on railway lines. Add 4 to the Difficulty of the spell.

As a variation on this idea, the adventurers could borrow a goods wagon or passenger carriage from the GWR, and have it left in the siding; this would let them watch the cutting in relative comfort, although they would still be in easy striking range.

Once the adventurers realise that the ghost only materialises when trains use the cutting, it might be possible to arrange for the Metropolitan Line to run a "special" after the line closes. This would involve running a train backwards and forwards along the affected line until the ghost appeared, and stopping the train near enough to observe it. Neither of the drivers above will like this idea, nor will their colleagues. However this is set up, the driver would still be in the engine when the train stopped, and an obvious target for the ghost.

Whether the adventurers are on the platform, the line, or aboard a train, they should eventually be attacked. If they don't set up some magical protection, the ghost will attack them the first night that it reaches them; if they are using protection, it will try to find a way past the defence, circling for several minutes before it returns to the cutting and disappears. The next night it will appear again and try to throw things into the defence; lumps of coal, wood, and anything else that is lying about. On the platform this can include fire buckets and axes, a vending machine, burning oil lamps, and other fixtures. Anyone hit takes damage appropriate to the size of the object; if the result is an injury or knock-out, the character may be knocked out of the defence and attacked directly. If they are inside a railway truck or carriage, it will batter its way through the sides to reach them; it doesn't open doors, even if they aren't locked.

Eventually the adventurers should realise that the ghost is somehow using the electricity of the line to force an opening into our world. The point at which it appears is suggestive; in daylight it's obvious that a cable joins the track exactly where the ghost appears. Once this is realised, it should only be a matter of time before they arrange to have the cable re-routed, and put an end to this particular haunting.

## Rewards

This is an extremely violent ghost, but has some serious limitations on its capabilities. Anyone involved in a fight with it and surviving should earn 4 bonus points, less if they charged in without any attempt to find out what they are



tackling. Adventurers who spend some time making a detailed study of the problem before taking on the ghost should be given extra points for their caution. Anyone using magic successfully should be given extra bonus points, but remember that knowledge of magic tends to affect the acquisition of skills. See the worldbook for details. Deduct points if the adventurers let the ghost kill anyone else. Finally, award points for effective role playing, making the referee laugh, or anything else that seems appropriate.

If the adventurers have been hired by the Metropolitan Railway to clear up this mystery, they should be paid for their time and trouble; remember that taking money for their work reduces them to the level of tradesmen, and is not appropriate for upper class ladies and gentlemen. If they have been asked to look into the situation as amateurs with an interest in unusual phenomena, no reward will be offered, but the adventurers will receive Sir Joseph Wager's thanks, and news of their public-spirited help will soon spread. The characters will be able to dine out on the story for months.

Finally, shrewd investment in Metropolitan Railway shares could raise a few hundred pounds; the price will go up by about 10% when the haunting ends, if it is properly publicised. There is nothing to stop a gentleman taking advantage.

## Further Adventures

Is this the only Ab-natural incursion on the Metropolitan Railway? Parts of the system never see the light of day, and new deep tubes are already being built by other companies, far below the surface. While the entity in this adventure is summoned electrically, some of the tunnels must cut through ancient burial sites and other areas with magical or supernatural connections. Men are killed digging the tunnels; some are crushed by rock-falls, others, especially those working in pressurised cuttings under the Thames, suffer lingering deaths from crippling ailments caused by the bends, dust, cold, and damp. Things might get very weird, especially in sections of track and tunnel that are cut off as the system is expanded and modified... If you use this setting, remember that there might also be links to other underground facilities and passages, from long-forgotten caves and crypts to London's complex sewer system. For example, the River Fleet, now mainly used as a sewer, is piped through Fleet Street station.

The spread of electricity, and its potential for creating vibrations which may harm or attract Ab-natural entities, could lead to other problems. A haunted power station could be an interesting setting for another case. More problems might arise as radio comes into widespread use, although it will eventually be used so widely that the level of electromagnetic "noise" drives most Ab-natural entities away from the Earth.

Carnacki encountered a ship that was inherently attractive to the Ab-natural; could this happen to a train? Several adventures for other systems have looked at this idea; see especially *Horror on the Orient Express* and *Fearful Passages*, both published by Chaosium Inc. for *Call of Cthulhu*.

## Characters



### **Thomas Conway, Reporter**

BODY [2], MIND [3], SOUL [1]

Artist (author) [3], Stealth [6]

Equipment: Notebook, pencil

Quote: *"Hmm... pentacles.... so-called ghost hunter in Satanic rituals sensation..."*

Notes: Conway is an unscrupulous journalist who will do anything for a scoop. He is obsessed with the idea of seeing his name in print, even if he hurts other people to get a story. Fortunately he is also greedy; he can be bribed, but won't stay bought for long. Once he has some inkling of the existence of the Ab-natural, or knows that the adventurers are likely to be newsworthy, he will never leave them alone. Once met, he will repeatedly turn up, hopefully at the most awkward moment.



### **The Phantom "Railwayman" (Aeiirii entity)**

BODY [8], MIND [1], SOUL [3]

Light resistant [9], Materialise [6], Telekinesis [7],

Visible [6]

Brawling [10] Effect 10, A:F, B:I/KO, C:C/K

Disruption [5] Effect 5, A:F, B:I, C:C/K

Notes: This creature appears as an indeterminate form somewhat larger than a man; once seen, it gradually takes on the form people expect to see. Since the engine drivers expect anyone on the track to be a railway worker, that is what they saw. Once it has been described, characters are likely to see that form too. If they don't know what to expect, its shape is less defined. It is fast and agile enough to dodge trains.

It can only materialise at one point in the cutting, as described above, and must return there to dematerialise. The time before dematerialisation varies erratically; at intervals roll its BODY against the time (in minutes) since it appeared, if the roll fails it must immediately return to the cutting and vanish again.

When materialised the entity is solid but jellylike; if it is hit, on a C or K result it vanishes for 1D6 days. Its main attack is its Disruption power, which is a drain of the victim's life-force. Its Brawling attack is almost incidental, used mainly to hold victims still for draining. If it can't get at adventurers directly, it will use its telekinesis to throw things at them.

It is resistant to all forms of artificial lighting (after all, it draws its power from electrical discharges); only full daylight can drive it away.

## Adventure 2: Folly of the Wise

The idea seems simple; visit an old mansion, find out if a folly in the grounds is really haunted, and get rid of the ghost if it exists. But things aren't always quite as simple as they seem...


This is essentially a simple adventure, but additional complications can easily be added if a more complex situation is required. Playing time should typically be a few hours. It may be worth checking if any player suffers from vertigo that might be triggered by discussion of the building described below.

No special preparation is needed for this adventure, apart from printing out one player handout. Referees who have not studied physics may wish to look up the details of Foucault's pendulum, which can be found in most encyclopaedias and (very briefly) at the end of the adventure. The mathematics of this device need not be mastered to run the adventure!

Please note – the “telegram form” below is a lot less complicated than the real thing, which would include handling information, a notice about refunds for errors in messages, etc. Numerous examples can be found on line.

### Players' Information

One of the characters, who should be known as an expert on the Ab-natural, receives the following telegram (adding the recipients name etc.) in early August.

Sent _____ AM/PM		 POST OFFICE INLAND <b>TELEGRAM</b>	Office Stamp
Recd _____ AM/PM			
Charges    s    d			
FROM	LORD ETHELRED STARLING, STARLING MANOR, UPPER POOLFORD, WILTSHIRE		
TO			
FOLLY APPARENTLY HAUNTED, NOISES UPSETTING GUESTS. CAN YOU AND YOUR ASSOCIATES HELP? IF SO, BEST ROUTE HERE IS TRAIN TO LOWER POOLFORD VIA SALISBURY. LET ME KNOW ARRIVAL TIME AND I WILL ARRANGE TRANSPORT TO HOUSE. STARLING			

The adventurers have never heard of Lord Ethelred Starling or Upper and/or Lower Poolford, but things are otherwise quiet. It might be interesting...

## Referee's Information

Lord Ethelred Starling is 24, a postgraduate student at Imperial College in London, and is currently on vacation. He and a few friends are staying at Starling Manor, the family home. The folly stands in the manor's grounds and is a remarkable structure; a pagoda 150 ft tall, standing over a thirty foot deep pit. It was built by the late Lord Alfred Starling in 1875 to house a Foucault pendulum. It cost £7,250, and was constructed to prove that the Earth rotates and win a £100 bet. This may seem a poor return on an investment, but the Starling family is rich and has a tradition of rational scepticism; they oppose anything that can't be proved scientifically. Now Starling is beginning to think that he must change his opinions, as something strange and apparently uncanny is happening in the pagoda.



For nearly a year moaning noises have been heard in the folly. They are audible all year round, but most frequent when Starling is in residence. Several searches of the pagoda have found nothing unusual, and he is reluctantly coming to the conclusion that it is haunted.

In fact there is a natural cause; the “ghost” is being faked by Lord Starling's American cousin, Alan Longbaugh, aided by Gordon Fergusson, the estate

manager. Details of the method they use are in the next section. They hope to convince Starling that the ghost is real. There's a good reason; in addition to the mansion and various factories, which Starling already owns, his father's will has left him eight hundred thousand pounds, which he will inherit when he is 25 (early next year) if he is not insane. The terms of the will include the following remarkable definition of insanity, following the usual clinical forms:

*"iv: Belief in ghosts, supernatural beings, and other unprovable phenomena, with the exception of Christian beliefs appropriate to membership of the Church of England."*

If Starling doesn't inherit, the estate is split between four cousins including Longbaugh; Longbaugh has promised Fergusson a 10% cut if he inherits.

After nearly a year Starling has had enough of the noise, and finally sought the adventurers' help. Longbaugh, a frequent visitor, sees this as a golden chance to finally persuade Starling that the pagoda is indeed haunted, and has hired a fake medium to help with this "joke" on his cousin; naturally she is not aware of the stakes, and doesn't know anything about Fergusson. If the adventurers see through the deception Longbaugh will be disappointed, but give up his plans; the only other way he could inherit is to kill Starling, and he isn't a murderer. Unfortunately Fergusson is becoming impatient, and has fewer scruples...

## A Little Night Music

The mechanism that produces the groaning noise is a simple hydraulic organ pipe.

The grounds of the manor include a large pond with several ornamental fountains, requiring a water supply and efficient drainage. These are supplied through a tunnel (headroom 4 ft) which links the ponds to a nearby stream; an hydraulic ram under the stream bed pumps water to the fountain and the house, with drainage back from the fountains through the tunnel. Drains from the house are further downstream. Drains from the pagoda gutters feed in to the larger drain via side tunnels. Fergusson and Longbaugh have dug out enough bricks and concrete to reach one of the tubular steel supports that hold up the pagoda and installed an extra tap and a hose rigged to fill an old lavatory cistern, which has been modified to flush automatically when it is full. The flush is connected to one of the pagoda's hollow support pillars which acts as a crude hydraulic organ, producing low moans at irregular intervals. It's impossible to tell where the sound comes from; it resonates through the entire structure of the folly.

Every evening Fergusson slips into the tunnel and turns on the tap; he turns it off after a few groans if Starling isn't in residence, or an hour or two if he is at home. There isn't much risk; the stream runs through thick bushes, and Fergusson has the only key to the tunnel entrance, a grilled gate hidden under an ornamental bridge.



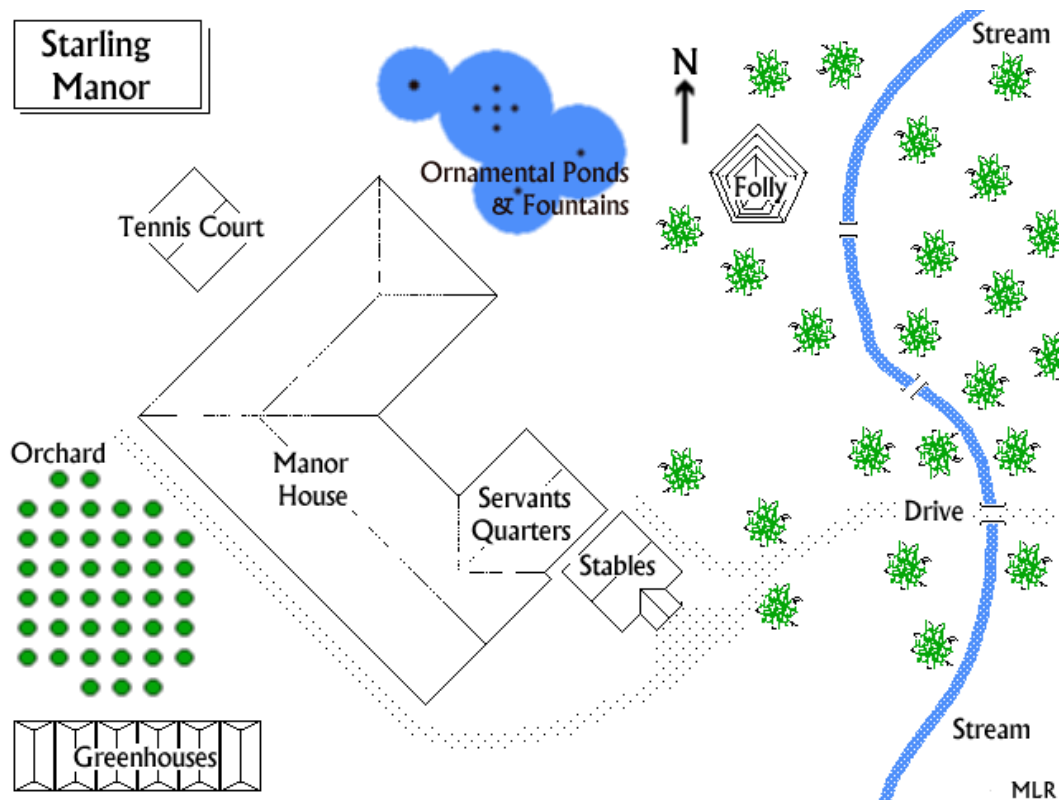
## Get Ye Back To Lunnon...

It's assumed that the adventurers decide to head for Wiltshire; if not, this will be a very short adventure! Before leaving, they may wish to check up on Lord Starling or Upper Poolford. *Who's Who* has the following entry:

**Starling, Lord Ethelred Isaac;** *born 1886, 1st son of Lord Alfred Wallace Starling (d. 1904), and of Yvonne Deschamps (d. 1895), daughter of Jean-Pierre Deschamps of Ghent (d. 1870). Educated: Eton College and Imperial College, London (1st class honours, Chemistry, 1907; postgraduate research continuing) Recreations: Chess Clubs: Royal Institution Residence: Starling Manor, Upper Poolford, Wiltshire*

All that can really be deduced from this is that Starling is bright; he graduated unusually early. His membership of one of Britain's premier scientific organisations confirms this.

Baedeker's Guide has no entry for Upper Poolford; it isn't on a railway line. Lower Poolford has a station; there is a train from Salisbury every few hours. A map shows the villages as tiny dots on a minor road outside Salisbury; they are about five miles apart. There are symbols for public houses in both villages, but neither has a garage (service station). Wiltshire tourist guides can probably be obtained if needed; the only folly mentioned in the area is the "Starling Manor Pagoda". It is described as visible from the village, but not open to the public, with no other details. Ordnance Survey maps, widely available throughout Britain, show the manor and a pentagonal structure near it, marked as "folly".



Assuming that the adventurers are not based in the immediate area, the best way to reach Upper Poolford is probably as suggested; by train to Lower Poolford via Salisbury, then by carriage to the manor. Although most roads in Britain are already paved, they are often too narrow and uneven for motor cars. The villages are at least twenty miles from the nearest main road, and the route includes three fords and several hump-backed bridges. Any motor journey should be fraught with difficulties including punctures, breakdowns, fords that are deep enough to drown the engine of a car, and other problems. The remainder of the adventure assumes that the adventurers let the train take the strain; if not, they will not meet 'Old Harry'.

The railway journey is uneventful, and the train is a few minutes early. When the adventurers reach Lower Poolford they find that nobody is waiting for them on the platform. 'Old Harry' (Alan Longbaugh in disguise; see characters) is outside, sitting at the reins of an elderly open carriage and pretending to doze. The horse also seems to be dozing.

'Old Harry' is a bearded man with yellow teeth; he smokes a foul pipe and wears gloves and a heavy overcoat, despite the warm weather. If approached he pretends to wake then says "Be you they as wants Starling Manor? Well, Old Harry is here to take thee."; his accent is best described as a cross between Long John Silver and the Ancient Mariner. Once their destination is confirmed, he climbs down from the carriage (cursing his "danged rheumatics" and limping), pretends to have difficulty loading any luggage that isn't already aboard, then sets off for Upper Poolford. If truly vast amounts of luggage are involved, more than the carriage can carry, he'll leave it with the station-master and promise to collect it later. This promise won't be kept.

Along the way he pretends to be interested in their reason for travelling to the manor, but continually utters enigmatic warnings of immanent doom, especially if they have admitted that they are interested in the ghost. Useful phrases are "Are ye sure ye wants to go... (pause) ..there, surr?", "Strange things do happen in those parts...", "they do say that the folly be haunted... ..that be what they do say", and "if oi were thee, oi'd go back to Lunnon [London] while ye can, surr". At this stage the adventurers should have no reason to suspect that he is anything other than he seems; a garrulous superstitious old yokel. Ignore the results of any attempts at psychology, lie detection, etc.; they all show him to be an honest and sincere country bumpkin because he's an extremely good actor.

Eventually the carriage clatters through Upper Poolford. If the adventurers suggest it, 'Harry' will stop to allow them to talk to the villagers; he stays at the reins of the carriage and pretends to doze, hoping (successfully) that none of the villagers will wonder who he is. The villagers have mostly heard the noise, and are genuinely a little frightened of the Manor and especially the pagoda: "you wouldn't catch me going anywhere near... (pause) ...that place after dark". At the same time they are full of praise for Lord Ethelred, "A real gentleman, despite everything".

As the carriage passes the village green 'Harry' shouts "whoa", stops the carriage, and points East towards the tip of the pagoda, which is now visible over

the trees; “There it be, sorr, yon heathenish tower. ‘Tis said the demons of the pit can be heard there of an evening. ‘Twas overweening pride that made the old Lord build it, to spite a man o’ the cloth. Much good did it do him....” He spits, and sets the carriage in motion again. If the adventurers press for more details, he tells them that it was built to settle a bet with “Old Reverend Green, who passed away last Michaelmas” (29th September); this is true, and may lead adventurers to suspect that he has returned to haunt the tower. ‘Harry’ is vague about the details of the bet; “‘twas something about whether God made the world as a ball, or so oi’ve heard.”

Soon the carriage passes through wide iron gates and along a long gravel driveway to the manor, a beautiful 17th-century mansion with ample room for a large number of visitors. As yet it has no telephone, gas or electricity; the nearest telephone and gas services are in Salisbury. Starling is considering setting up a small power station to serve the manor and the village, but the costs of shipping in coal seem prohibitive. The adventurers should arrive in mid-afternoon. Various servants take bags, trunks, and other belongings, while ‘Harry’ drives the carriage round to the stables, asks for the “Jakes” (lavatory), and slips away through the shrubbery. He sheds his disguise and prepares to meet the adventurers. Meanwhile the new guests are taken to meet Starling in the manor’s library. He offers refreshments then discusses the details of the case:

“It all began towards the end of last year. I was still at Imperial then, but apparently it started off as an occasional moaning noise. Gradually things got louder, and by the time I came home at Christmas we could hear it from the house. Well, I poked around then; I couldn’t find anything that might be making the noise, but really there wasn’t time to do much; I had rather a lot of studying to do! It was the same at Easter. The strange thing is that it only seems to be really loud when I’m here; the rest of the time they hear it occasionally, but it doesn’t last so long.”

If the adventurers ask for more details, he describes it as “low moaning. Very odd, and I can’t think why a ghost would want to make that sort of noise. It’s fairly loud, especially inside the folly.” He would like the adventurers to deal with it, but from the outset wants to make it clear that he won’t agree to any plan which involves damaging or destroying the folly.

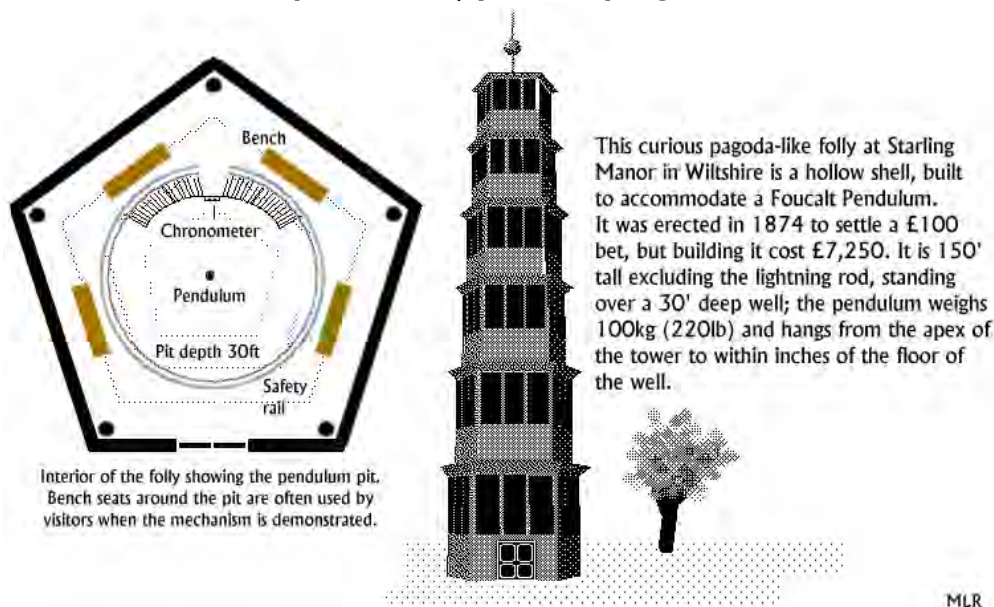
Some other topics of conversation that are likely to come up include the history of the folly, questions about the Reverend Green, Starling’s father, etc. Lord Ethelred answers their questions while he shows them the folly. Base his answers on the following information:

In 1874 the Reverend Stephen Green, new vicar of Upper Poolford, preached a sermon in which he claimed that God’s dominion extended to the four corners of the Earth, “which Our Lord laid out by rule and measure so that all would forever be in his sight”. After the service Lord Alfred Starling asked a few questions, and realised that the vicar believed that the Earth was flat and immobile, and that the sun moved around it. Lord Alfred immediately bet a hundred pounds that he could prove that the Earth is spherical and spins; when the vicar declined, he offered to pay out a thousand pounds, then ten thousand,

with the vicar only paying a hundred if he lost. When offered twenty thousand pounds the vicar accepted the challenge.

Lord Alfred immediately commissioned the construction of the pagoda, containing a huge Foucault pendulum. It was built by workmen from one of his railway engineering companies, who had a good deal of experience with stations and other large structures. When it was completed in 1875 Lord Alfred explained the theory to the vicar, showed him the results of Foucault's own experiments, then had the vicar set the gigantic pendulum in motion. It performed exactly as expected, producing results that could only be explained if the Earth were rotating. It took several trials to convince the vicar, but eventually he gave Lord Alfred a cheque for £100. Lord Alfred immediately tore it apart, saying that he wanted nothing if the vicar would "only promise to stop telling fairy stories"; the Vicar agreed, and admitted that the Earth was round in his next sermon. Both remained good friends until Lord Alfred died; the Reverend Green carried on as vicar until he died last year. Starling believes that seeing the pendulum, and listening to his father's explanation of it, encouraged his own interest in science.

In telling this story Starling naturally refers to his father as "father", not Lord Alfred. While talking he takes the adventurers out to the pagoda, through splendidly landscaped gardens. Even at close range it's difficult to grasp the size of the building; the placement of the windows makes it appear to have six stories, but in fact the lower storey is thirty feet high, with the others successively smaller. At 150 ft, excluding an ornamental lightning conductor (a globe of the Earth, made of tarnished green copper), it's taller than many churches. The walls are yellow brick, pierced by high windows.



Inside the building is brightly sunlit, with white walls and a marble floor. Ornate iron beams form an inner framework supporting the building. They are held up by pillars at the corners of the pentagon; the pillars are hollow, and one is the source of the sound (see above) but they are so thick that this isn't obvious - when tapped, they sound solid. Climbing vines grow up the framework from tubs beside the pillars; they bear a good crop of grapes. There is a railed

pit in the floor, thirty feet deep and fifty wide; the bright wire cable of the pendulum stretches down from the highest point of the roof to a huge brass bob (weighing two hundred pounds) hanging a foot above the pit floor, over the exact centre of a circle with degrees marked out by brass strips inlaid in the marble. The whole length of the pendulum is only visible from near the rail, or from the floor of the pit; from either viewpoint something about the way that the wire disappears into invisibility, and the successive layers of the pagoda narrow inwards, draws the adventurers' gaze upwards and causes an overwhelming feeling of vertigo. They must use MIND versus Difficulty 5 to avoid a sudden urge to hang on to the teak railing or hug the walls of the pit. Even if they resist the urge, the effect is still noticeable as a feeling of disorientation and dizziness which might easily be attributed to some Ab-natural force. It fades after a few minutes.

In brief, the interior is subtly worrying to anyone with experience of the Ab-natural. The pentagonal layout of the building should cause concern, while its size and odd shape creates an unsettling illusion of slightly distorted dimensions; adding the vertigo described above, most adventurers are likely to think that there is something very odd about the place.

The only furnishings are four comfortable wooden benches overlooking the pit, stairs down into the pit on the side away from the door, oil lamps hanging from wrought-iron brackets on each pillar, and a two-dialed chronometer on the pit wall near the ladder. One dial shows the correct time, the other is a stop clock accurate to a few seconds over a forty-eight hour span. A hook let into the East pit wall is used to tether the pendulum before releasing it to swing. The only noise to be heard is the faint tick of the clock.

If the adventurers want to see the pendulum working, Starling is happy to oblige; he's very proud of it. Despite its weight, it isn't very difficult to move; two or three adventurers working together can easily manoeuvre it to the hook, where Starling tethers it using a piece of thick cotton-like rope taken from a drawer in the clock case. When he is sure that nobody is in the pendulum's path, he sets fire to the end of the rope, which is actually made of gun-cotton. It quickly burns back to the knot, releasing the pendulum, then the remaining pieces fall off as the pendulum starts to swing.

The movement is eerily impressive, taking approximately thirty seconds per complete swing; the only noise is a faint "swish", made by the wire moving through the air. Careful observation shows that the plane of its swing moves through about a degree in five minutes, exactly as theory predicts.

Anyone stepping into the path of the pendulum is extremely foolish; although it is apparently easy to move, raising it to the hook gives it a lot of energy, which it carries as it swings. Being hit is roughly equivalent to being hit by a small car:

Pendulum Impact                      Effect 5; A:F, B:I, C:C/K

Naturally Starling warns everyone of the danger.

At some stage someone may think of cutting the cable, despite a total lack of evidence that the pendulum is involved in the haunting. This is an extremely bad



move. The cable has BODY [10], and is under enormous stress; if cut the ends fly apart at (literally) supersonic speed. If anyone is stupid enough to stand close while cutting the wire, it ‘attacks’ as an immensely powerful whip with skill [4]:

Wire Whiplash                      Effect 10, A:F, B:I, C:C/K

The pendulum bob falls off and bounces in a random direction: imagine a clock with the adventurer cutting the wire at 6; roll 2D6 and use the result to determine the direction in which it bounces. Anyone in the way is hit by the ball, as described above. Finally, as shock-waves travel up the wire they hit the support plate which holds up the cable, and reverberate through the building, breaking one of the windows. 1D6 shards of glass fall down, attacking with skill [4] against randomly-selected adventurers;

Falling Glass                      Effect 4, A:F, B:F, C:I

Glass breaks even if the wire is cut by remote control; for example, by shooting it until it breaks. Replacing the wire and rehanging the pendulum will cost approximately £450. Unless the adventurers have a really good reason for their actions, Lord Starling will expect them to pay.

Someone may suspect that the pendulum is somehow producing the noise; for example, that the taut wire is acting like a guitar string. Starling knows the answer to this; even with the load it bears, it is so long that it vibrates at only 2 to 3 cycles a second, producing a note that is far too low to hear. Adventurers can easily verify this for themselves, by hitting the wire with a stick and listening for any notes. Every time they do this they will feel uneasy and a little queasy; subsonic vibrations have that effect, a fact that is not appreciated in 1910.

There is no obvious access to the upper reaches of the pagoda from inside, although it is possible to climb up the ornamental girders (Difficulty 6). Each “step” takes the walls in by approximately 3 ft, so that anyone climbing far will soon find himself dangling very precariously. The grape vines sometimes get in the way of handholds and footholds, adding an extra hazard (Difficulty 8) in the first ten to fifteen feet. In the past scaffolding and ladders have been erected whenever the building was painted or the windows cleaned; the architect included anchorage hooks to make it easy to set them up safely.

Whether or not the adventurers want to see the pendulum in action, daytime observation of the folly shows absolutely nothing unusual, and there are no odd noises. Tapping the walls, floor, columns, etc. gives no odd results (as described above). There are no odd inscriptions or mystic symbols. Mediums feel nothing unusual. Lord Ethelred watches throughout, and will not be pleased if the adventurers start to take the place apart, but at this stage careful examination, possibly involving photography, is more likely. At four a footman comes out and says “Tea will be ready in thirty minutes, sir.”

Starling says “Perhaps we should stop for a while; I’d like to introduce you to my other guests, and I’m sure that you could do with a wash and something to eat.” He leads the way back to the house.

## The Vanishing Coachman

Afternoon tea is a relaxed affair, giving Starling's guests a chance to meet the adventurers and explain how "awful" the noises are. There are four guests; Alan Longbaugh, his 'fiance' Amanda, and two of Starling's friends from college; their details are included in the Characters section below. They arrive for tea in the following order:

Alan Longbaugh is Starling's second cousin, an American businessman born in Wyoming, now resident in London. He arrives wearing tennis clothes. Regarding the ghost, he's heard of "some really weird stuff in Indian country", but has seen nothing himself; certainly nothing to match the noise he hears from the folly. He has had a bath since impersonating 'Old Harry', and removed his false teeth and beard; there is nothing to remind the adventurers of his former disguise.

Madeleine Danvers-Smythe knows Starling at college, and is husband-hunting; she sees him as the ideal rich titled mate. She appears in an expensive frock and a fur (it's a warm day) and says that she is "too, too frightened for words!", then tries to worm blood-curdling stories from the adventurers. Any unusually famous or handsome (and rich) men will receive extra attention; if she doesn't get anywhere with Starling, another string to her bow might be useful.

Madeleine's aunt, an elderly lady with no small talk, is staying at the manor to chaperon her, and arrives moments later. She is almost completely deaf and can't comment on the ghost, since she has never heard it.

Robert Harrison, another friend of Starling, arrives reading a book, 'Higher Mathematics for Engineering', and reluctantly puts it aside to eat. He takes care to find a seat near Madeleine. It's notable that he blushes and stammers slightly whenever he talks to her. If asked about ghosts, he says "Ummm.... m.maybe there's a n.natural explanation. I'm not sure that I b.b.believe in g.g.ghosts. Could it b.b.be the wind?"

Last in is Amanda Anderson. She also arrives wearing tennis clothes. She is extremely pale, and gives the impression that she is very tired. If asked about the haunting she changes the subject; if pressed, she 'admits' that it has given her nightmares, but can't describe them. At an appropriate moment she will pretend to go into a light trance while touching an adventurer, or something owned by one; she describes something she 'shouldn't possibly know', based on information that Longbaugh has obtained from various enquiry agents. See below for her technique. Afterwards she pretends to recover, without any knowledge of what she said, and says that she 'felt faint for a moment'. Adventurers should be encouraged to suspect that she is psychic. Hopefully these reactions convince the adventurers that something strange is going on; if they seem unimpressed, more study of the folly or the noises of the night may help to convince them.

At the end of the meal Starling says "Oh, by the way, your driver seems to have disappeared somewhere, and my groom wants to know if he's to stable your horse. Are you taking your carriage out again today?"

A few questions reveal that Starling didn't send 'Old Harry'; he sent another driver, who arrived at the station to find that the adventurers had already left.

Nobody admits to knowing anything about the ‘mystery driver’; they assumed that the adventurers had hired him. Nobody saw him leave. The horse and carriage are both old and fairly poor quality; there are no brands or marks on the horse, tackle, or carriage to reveal their true ownership. In the unlikely event that the adventurers are equipped to test for fingerprints, they’ll find that ‘Old Harry’ didn’t leave any; like most coachmen, he wore gloves. This extra mystery has been concocted to distract the adventurers and keep them off-balance. It serves no other purpose.

If the adventurers ask the police for help, they will eventually learn, after several days, that someone meeting the description of ‘Old Harry’ purchased the horse, carriage, and tack in Salisbury a week earlier. He paid in cash; gold sovereigns. The subsequent movements of the carriage can’t be traced.

After tea the adventurers may wish to go back to the pagoda and spend more time examining it, or setting up wires, ribbons, and other ghost traps. There still seems to be nothing overtly Ab-natural about the place, but as it starts to get dark it feels increasingly unsettling.

The sun sets a little before eight, and dinner is served at eight-thirty. It’s a formal meal of eight courses; while Starling doesn’t expect the diners to wear evening dress or decorations, casual clothing is frowned upon. Conversation is slow; as the meal progresses, all of the guests seem to be listening for something.

As coffee is being served, a low moan is audible through the dining room windows. Starling glances at his watch and says “Hmm.. about the same time as last night, I think.” He looks at the adventurers and says “Well, there it is. What do you make of it?”

The folly performs as expected; a series of deep moans, at intervals of three to five minutes. It is extremely loud; it’s audible from the house, about a hundred yards from the folly. The sheer volume is impressive; inside the folly it’s almost painful, and the whole building seems to shake at the lower notes.

If adventurers are aware of Carnacki’s exploits and the hazards of Saiitii manifestations (see [WR]) they may be reluctant to venture inside. Unless the adventurers made other arrangements, no lamps have been left inside the folly; if lit from the outside it seems dark and forbidding. If lamps are taken inside, the occasional flickers of their flames make the shadows seem to shift threateningly; this is especially noticeable when looking up towards the roof of the pagoda. An uneasy adventurer might easily get the idea that something was moving there...

If shots are fired up the tower, use Marksman skill against Difficulty 6, with the following results:

- A. Ricochet. The bullet hits a girder or wall and bounces back towards the adventurers, attacking with skill [4] against a randomly-selected adventurer. The Effect is half that normal for the weapon, results of a hit are the same. Note: This result should be ignored if a shotgun is used; the only result of a ricochet is a harmless shower of shot and paint particles.
- B. Broken windows. 1D6 shards of glass fall down, attacking with skill [4] against randomly-selected adventurers as described above.
- C. Shots hit the roof or walls, but are absorbed harmlessly.

Kind referees may wish to consider warning adventurers of the possible results before they start using guns inside this building.

Nothing that the adventurers do with guns or shotguns will do serious harm to this BODY [80] building; even explosives are unlikely to do more than blow out the windows and weaken the walls, leaving the iron and concrete framework intact. Needless to say, Lord Starling will NOT be pleased if the building is damaged.

‘Sensible’ adventurers will probably hesitate to go inside, confining themselves to an examination of the surrounding area. There is no obvious source for the noise, such as a hidden phonograph or an aeolian harp, and there isn’t enough wind for that to be the cause.

If the adventurers want to try testing with a phonograph or a microphone, they’ll find that it can be recorded like any other sound. This rules out many types of Ab-natural force; even Saiitii manifestations usually produce illusory sound, not real noise. This test should be an important clue, if interpreted correctly. Burying microphones around the pagoda is an even better idea; they will pick up the noise of the cistern that is making the noise.

While the adventurers are studying the situation, watched by Starling, Alan Longbaugh comes out to say that he thinks that there is something wrong with Amanda; she seems to be in some sort of trance.

Amanda is sitting slumped in her chair, and has knocked over her coffee. If she isn’t disturbed, she’ll pretend to recover after a few minutes, apparently unaware of the passage of time. If anyone tries to talk to her, or move her, they’ll find that she appears to be completely limp. If touched she mutters “Cold... so much pain...”, then says something about the person touching her which she should not know. After this she pretends to faint. If the adventurers don’t already believe that she is a medium, this episode may convince them.

Sooner or later the noise stops; the exact timing depends on the movement of the adventurers. Fergusson hides in bushes near the bridge until nobody is nearby, then slips down into the tunnel and switches the tap off.

On subsequent evenings Amanda can be ‘persuaded’ to try to contact whoever, or whatever, is haunting the folly. She has been primed with full details of the late Reverend Green and the bet, and the following explanation for the haunting:

Although Green had to accept that Lord Alfred Starling had proved his case, he could never really forgive him for shattering his faith in the flatness of the Earth, and secretly harboured resentment. As a result he was not in a state of grace when he died, and has been condemned to haunt the folly until a member of the Starling family grants his soul forgiveness.

It should take several seances to extract this information from Amanda; on the first night she will simply say that she senses that something resents the Starling family, on the second she will say that it desires forgiveness, and so forth. Even if the adventurers guess where she is heading, she will not immediately confirm their suspicions; it’s more plausible if it takes time for her to contact the ‘spirit world’, especially since she is supposed to know nothing of mediumship.

Any real medium accompanying the party will not contact the ‘spirits’ Amanda describes; this may be attributed to unusual sensitivity on her part, or explained by the fact that she stayed at the manor for several days before ‘picking up’ anything. Since mediumship is somewhat dangerous in this setting, a genuine medium may be reluctant to pursue the matter after one or two initial failures.

If Starling agrees to forgive Green the haunting will, of course, end; once Starling believes that ghosts exist, Alan has won. He knows that Starling would not lie about his beliefs to inherit the money, since he’s scrupulously honest and is already rich.

## House and Garden

If the adventurers don’t immediately fall for Alan’s plot, they should eventually look around the manor and the rest of the estate. The manor itself is large, but its exact physical layout is unimportant. There is nothing extraordinary to be found there. Starling won’t allow the adventurers to search his guests or their luggage, go through his private papers, or do anything else that invades anyone’s privacy. Otherwise the place is entirely at their disposal, and Starling will have a footman assigned to show them around as they wish.

If the adventurers disobey Starling and search the guest’s luggage, they won’t find anything amazingly unusual. Madeleine’s luggage includes some books that imply a higher IQ than she pretends to possess, while Robert’s bureau contains some unfinished (and extremely bad) poems “to dearest Madeleine”. Alan’s bags hold normal clothing; the only unexpected discovery will be a complete vicar’s costume. If questioned about this, he’ll be very annoyed that his luggage has been searched, but will eventually say that it’s a fancy dress costume; he thought that Starling was going to have a large house party with such entertainments. This is untrue; he intended to impersonate the late Reverend Green if he could get away with it, but has decided that it could lead to problems. His costume for the role of ‘Old Harry’ was dumped into the stream South of the house, and is now about a mile and a half downstream; if adventurers search in that direction they will eventually find it. The false teeth, fake beard, pipe and glasses have been hidden down a rabbit hole, and will only be found if the adventurers use tracker dogs.

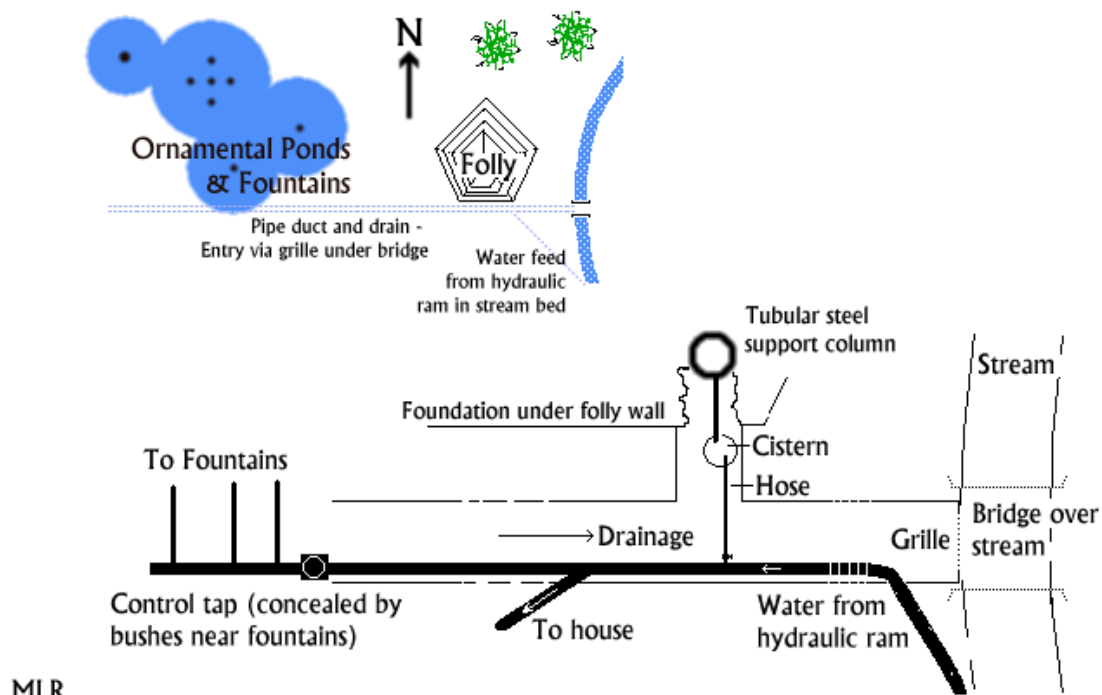
Adventurers may think of questioning the servants; there are more than thirty, including grooms and ground staff, and most believe that there’s a ghost. The exceptions have a variety of theories. The boot boy has read many penny dreadfuls, and thinks that “a Camorra” (a secret society, later called the Black Hand or the Mafia) is somehow making the noise to get revenge on “the master”. He has no idea why they want revenge, or how this might be made to work. One of the parlour-maids thinks that it might be pigeons, another suspects witches. The general consensus is that the folly is haunted.

If questioned about Old Harry, the servants all deny any knowledge of the man, apart from one groom who was present when he left the horse and carriage. All he knows is that the “old geezer asked for the Jakes, then ‘e walked

orf round back of the stable, and never came back”. There are a few footprints, leading back to the drive, but the soil is hard and even detectives won’t learn anything useful from the tracks. It isn’t even possible to find the exact shoe size.

Only Perkins the butler and one of the older footmen remember the construction of the folly; they claim that nothing unusual happened while it was being built. If asked about subsequent construction or repairs they can’t remember anything, but suggest that the adventurers might talk to Fergusson, the estate manager. They should give the players the impression that they don’t much approve of Fergusson, who (to quote Perkins) is “rather inclined to get above himself when dealing with the other ground staff”. He is rarely seen at the manor, except when Lord Starling checks the estate’s accounts.

The rest of the estate covers several hundred acres including some woods, a small farm, and a water-mill (upstream from the manor, to the North of the area shown on the map) which grinds oil-seed for cattle food. There are a dozen tied cottages dotted around the estate, occupied by farm workers and gamekeepers. Lord Starling will not give permission for a search of these buildings. One of them belongs to Gordon Fergusson, Alan’s co-conspirator, but there is nothing incriminating there, apart from nearly £200 in sovereigns, all minted in the last three years, Alan’s first payments for his help. This is a sizeable fortune for someone of Fergusson’s class. There are also numerous outbuildings, barns, sheds, etc., none of them containing anything suspicious.



The grounds around the manor and the pagoda are likely to receive especially close scrutiny. Their most distinctive feature, apart from the folly itself, is a cluster of four ornamental ponds with several fountains, jetting water up to 30 ft into the air. It isn’t up to the standard of Versailles, but it’s still impressive. Eventually someone should realise that the water must be pumped somehow,



and ask a few questions about the system and any underground pipes. Again they will be referred to Fergusson. If questioned, he says that there are dozens of them, but nothing especially near the pagoda (a lie). There is no water supply to the pagoda. Adventurers may ask about water pumps; Ferguson explains that there is a hydraulic ram in the stream, which supplies the fountains and the house. He isn't really sure how it works, but thinks that it has something to do with water pressure and valves. If it goes wrong an engineer is called from Salisbury, but it hasn't broken down in eight years.

If the adventurers start to try to trace drains and other pipes, they should soon find the drain from the pond; it's simply a grilled opening at water level on the East side of the pond, with water gurgling away to some subterranean destination. It isn't possible to see where it goes, but dye thrown into it will come out under the bridge near the pagoda, and lead the adventurers to the drainage tunnel. Simple geometry should show that it must run near the pagoda. If questioned about this, Fergusson pretends to be very surprised, and claims that he didn't know that it was there and hasn't got a key. This isn't really tenable and he knows it; the estate manager is supposed to know EVERYTHING about the estate, that's his job. While the adventurers are getting inside he'll quietly slip off and arrange an 'accident' for Lord Starling; if he isn't stopped see End Game, below.

If adventurers find their way into the tunnel they will soon realise how the haunting was faked; if Fergusson is stopped this solves the case and ensures that Starling inherits. Again, see End Game.

## Upper Poolford

The village (and nearby Lower Poolford) don't hold any immediately obvious clues to the mystery, but adventurers may wish to find out more about local opinions of Lord Starling and the ghost, or about Reverend Green. They may also wish to shop, send letters or telegrams, or use other services.

Most of the locals think that Lord Starling is a good man; he employs most of them directly or indirectly, which may help to explain this attitude. They are uneasy about the haunting, and there is a popular theory that Green is the ghost; Alan has tailored the story described above to fit this theory.

The new Vicar, the Rev. Holt, still has all Green's old papers. He personally thinks that the noise is probably the wind, certainly not Green's ghost, since there is nothing in Green's diaries or letters to suggest that he was unhappy about the old bet. A diary entry made on the day he admitted defeat is especially illuminating:

*"Today Lord Starling finally convinced me of the roundness of the Earth, and of the great subtlety with which its rotation may be proved. I gave him a hundred pounds as previously agreed but he refused to accept it, saying that he cared only for the truth. I have determined to give the money to various charities.*

*"Although I was at first mortified that I had been mistaken for so many years, I have now realised that it is only by such disappointments and mistakes that we may*

*learn and grow. I shall preach on the subject next Sunday, and confess this error; not simply because it was a term of our bet, but as an example to my flock."*

Later entries make frequent references to Starling, always in terms of friendship and approval. It seems very unlikely that Green resented him.

The village shop is also its post office, but does not have its own telegraph; the nearest instrument is at the station in Lower Poolford. Telegrams may still be sent and received, since the postmistress's son has a bicycle and can get them to the station in half an hour or so. The shop sells a range of canned and bottled food, sweets, cigarettes and tobacco, patent medicines (some containing surprising quantities of morphine and other opiates), domestic items such as scrubbing soap and bleach, and a few popular newspapers. Post and copies of *The Times* (or any other newspapers requested by the adventurers) are delivered to the manor at noon. There is a post box in the hall of the manor, and any letters left there are stamped by the butler and dispatched when the post is delivered.

The village pub is called *The Starling Arms*; it's owned by the Starling Brewery, which in turn is owned by Lord Starling. For some peculiar reason the landlord doesn't have a bad word to say about the Starling family. It stocks an average to good range of beers, wines, and spirits.

The village constable is PC George Waverley; he's not sure what the ghost might be, but is absolutely sure that he has no intention of going anywhere near the folly at night. There is a larger police station in Lower Poolford, with three constables; all have heard of the ghost, and would also prefer to have nothing to do with it.

## End Game

There are several possible outcomes to this situation: the adventurers can fail completely and be taken in by the deception, or they can unmask one or more of the conspirators. In the latter case Starling may be murdered.

If the adventurers accept the 'ghost' as real, they have to decide how to get rid of it. Amanda's 'spirit contact' suggests a simple answer, but it's always possible that they will think of much more elaborate solutions, such as exorcism, protective rituals, etc. Whatever they try will appear to work, provided that it seems to offer Lord Starling convincing proof that the Ab-natural exists. If nothing happens to change the situation, Alan will eventually inherit, give Fergusson his cut, and return to America a very happy man.

If the adventurer discover the hydraulic organ, they won't necessarily know why the haunting was faked or who was behind it; Alan doesn't intend to talk, and will do his best to persuade Fergusson to keep quiet. Naturally, it is likely that the adventurers will try to learn who might profit if Starling believes in ghosts; the will, and its odd definition of insanity, inevitably lead them to Alan. If confronted with their suspicions he will deny everything, keep calm, and hope that they have no proof: "Me? Make fake ghosts? That'd be dumb!"

If Alan is the only suspect, Fergusson has a clear field for an attempt on Starling's life; since he will only be paid if Alan inherits, he will take great care to

ensure that Alan isn't a suspect in the murder, attacking Starling when Alan is with several witnesses who can swear that he wasn't involved. Naturally he will do his best to cover his own tracks too; see below for details of his method.

If Fergusson is caught faking the ghost, he will pretend that he has "just found" the mechanism, after remembering that the tunnel runs close to the tower. This isn't likely to fool anyone, but he will do his level best to pretend that he is wrongly accused, and appeal to Lord Starling: "Sir! I know circumstances are against me, but I'm innocent..."

Starling's decision will depend on the exact circumstances, but if he decides that Fergusson is guilty he will give him a week's notice. Whether or not Starling believes him, Fergusson knows that he is running on borrowed time; there is plenty of proof that he helped fake the ghost. For example, he purchased the hose pipe at the shop in Upper Poolford. In the days before dismissal he will attack Starling, and try to disguise his involvement. If he succeeds in killing Starling and makes it look like an accident, he will wait until Alan inherits, then try to blackmail him. This will end with Alan going to the police; he saw the ghost story as a huge joke, but doesn't want any part of murder or the tainted money it brings.

Amanda knows that the ghost is a fake and that Alan is behind it, but she does not know his motive, and has been paid well to keep up her cover. Even if the deception is uncovered, there is no proof that she was consciously aware of faking her trances; she knew the story of the bet, and perhaps it "affected my dreams and made me think I was hearing ghosts..."

She is less likely to be suspected than Alan or Fergusson, but her story won't stand up to a huge amount of scrutiny; her parents don't live at the address she gives, the exclusive school she names has never heard of her, and so forth. If she is unmasked as an impostor, there is a strong supposition that Alan is in on the deception. Amanda is known to the police; she has been arrested twice for offences under the Vagrancy Acts of 1824 and 1838, which do much to limit the activities of spurious mediums. Whatever happens, she will only talk if Starling is murdered and she is arrested as an accomplice.

Fergusson's murder plan is very simple, if used; Lord Starling often visits the pagoda, and Fergusson intends to push him into the pit:

4-storey fall

Effect 5: A:B, B:I, C:C/K

If Starling isn't killed, he will at least be dazed, and Fergusson will climb down and do his best to break his neck. This will undoubtedly be noisy, and will probably leave evidence (in the form of footprints, scuff marks, etc.) which any competent detective can trace. If possible give the adventurers a chance to intervene; if not, give them a good opportunity to solve the murder. If caught, Fergusson will try to frame Alan, claiming that he was responsible for the haunting (true) and paid him to kill Starling (false). More detective work should uncover the truth. If Starling has been killed this won't save Alan, since he was engaged in a criminal conspiracy; under British law he would also be found guilty of murder and possibly executed.

If Fergusson is caught in the act but escapes, a useful (rigged) ending to the scenario is a final confrontation between him and Alan, with both of them armed. Alan kills Fergusson but is mortally wounded, and confesses before he dies.

## Rewards

The following points should be shared amongst all characters:

Starling is convinced of the existence of ghosts before inheriting*	-4
Starling is murdered	-4
Folly is destroyed	-3
Folly is badly damaged	-2
Fergusson is caught	+3
Alan is exposed	+3
Amanda is exposed	+2

\* There is no penalty if he becomes convinced of the existence of the supernatural *after* inheriting – by the definition of the will he will have been sane *at the time he inherited*, it says nothing about returning the inheritance if he becomes “insane” at a later date.

Additionally give points for all the usual reasons; good roleplaying, humour, logic, etc. etc.

Whatever the result, Starling may possibly be impressed by the team’s handling of the case. He is a rich man (richer if the truth is uncovered) and owns an expanding group of companies with expertise in chemistry, engineering, mechanics, and electrical engineering; he could be extraordinarily useful if the adventurers need some odd piece of equipment building, or want someone to bankroll them for an expensive expedition.

If the adventurers didn’t convince him that the Ab-natural exists, he will need a lot of proof before he will come over to their point of view, but that won’t necessarily stop him helping if they propose a project that appeals to him.

## Further Adventures

If the adventurers were fooled, there are many reasons why something might make them doubt their original conclusions. They have several months to find the truth. Possible leads might include accidental discovery of the tunnel (for example, the folly might start to collapse into it), Amanda’s arrest as a fake medium, or something that makes Alan look less convincing. Any of these could lead the adventurers back to Upper Poolford, and a final solution of the case.

The folly has a pentagonal shape; if the adventurers tried to use magic or summon Ab-natural forces to stop the haunting, it might be sensitised, and start to act as a portal to real Ab-natural forces. A portal nearly 200 ft high could let in some really alarming entities...

Amanda could be a useful introduction to the world of professional and fake mediums, and could teach adventurers the tricks of her trade. But what if she somehow acquires real mediumistic powers along the way? It could be horribly confusing.

## Characters



### **Lord Ethelred Starling (Postgraduate Student age 24)**

BODY [3], MIND [4], SOUL [3]

Artist (technical drawing) [6], Babbage Engine (applied maths) [7], Drive [5], Marksman [6], Ride [8], Scientist (chemistry) [7]

Equipment: A mansion with a workshop, stables, various firearms, a motorcycle, a small chemistry laboratory, etc. etc.

Quote: *"I'm sure that there's a rational explanation..."*

Notes: Starling is a postgraduate student at Imperial College in London. He is concerned about the odd phenomena, but reluctant to believe that there is any sort of supernatural explanation. He won't agree to any plan that involves demolishing the folly. He likes Madeleine, but doesn't love her. He is scrupulously honest.



### **Alan Longbaugh (Shipping Agent age 28) - alias Old Harry**

BODY [6], MIND [5], SOUL [4]

Actor [8], Athlete (Rowing, American Football) [7], Business [6], Drive [6], Marksman [7], Ride [6], Scholar (Economics, Law) [6]

Equipment: Various disguises (only one will be used), .45 revolver in luggage.

Quote (as Old Harry): *"'Tis the work of Satan, and he has come to claim it. Take my advice, and get ye back to Lunnnon [London] afore it be too late..."*

Quote (as himself): *"Yup, heard of some mighty strange things out West but nothing like this."*

Notes: Alan Longbaugh is a second cousin of the Lord Starling, and a third cousin of the late(?) Sundance Kid, "the black sheep of the family". He works in London as an agent for an American passenger steamship line. The adventurers will meet him twice; once as "Old Harry", the mysterious vanishing coachman, afterwards as himself.



### **Madeleine Danvers-Smythe (Student, age 23)**

BODY [3], MIND [5], SOUL [4]

Athlete (Tennis) [6], Linguist (French, Italian, Russian, Norwegian) [8], Ride [6]

Equipment: Four trunks of clothing, copies of various fashion magazines, make-up, etc. There are several books by modern French intellectuals in her luggage; they suggest more intelligence than she pretends.

Quote: *"Ah, snookums darling, be an angel and pass me another plum..."*

Notes: Madeleine is the daughter of one of Starling's neighbours, a language student at Girton. She has a small inheritance, but not enough to keep her in the luxury she would prefer, and sees Starling as a potential husband. She is an expert at looking languidly beautiful, swooning dramatically, getting in the way, screaming piercingly, and appearing to be totally brainless. She gives everyone pet names, usually wildly inappropriate. Her long term goal is marriage to Starling (Snookums); he's a rich and extremely eligible bachelor. She should be played as a totally self-centred, spoiled clothes-horse; if players seem to be going out of their way to see her fall into mud, spill drinks on her, or push her into the ornamental pond, you are running her correctly!

She is theoretically chaperoned by an elderly aunt, Bernice Smythe, who appears only at meal times, is extremely deaf, and is otherwise occupied with knitting; Bernice is a small, colourless, instantly forgettable woman who plays no active part in this adventure.



**Robert Harrison (Student, age 22)**

BODY [2], MIND [5], SOUL [3]

Athlete (tennis) [5], Babbage Engine (applied maths) [6],

Drive [6], Mechanic [7], Scientist (Engineer) [7]

Equipment: Access to tools etc. in mansion

Quote: "Hmmm... p.p.perhaps it's the w.w.wind..."

Notes: Robert is a college friend of Starling. He is in love with Madeleine, but too shy to show his affection, and too poor to attract her attention. It's notable that he's always the first to leap to her aid when she pretends to swoon. He knows that Madeleine has set her sights on Starling, but doesn't realise that he isn't responding; he would like to break up the "romance" without upsetting either of them. Throughout this adventure he will act as a sceptic, ready with endless mistaken explanations for the haunting. An excellent role model is the character "Brains", from Thunderbirds.



**Amanda Anderson (Medium, age 22)**

BODY [3], MIND [4], SOUL [3]

Actress (conjurer) [6], Linguist (French, German, Italian)

[5], Thief (pickpocket) [7]

Equipment: None relevant

Quote: "I feel a little dizzy..."

Notes: Amanda is a professional (fake) medium, but pretends to be Longbaugh's girlfriend. She can fake an upper-class accent, and finds it easy to pose as one of the smart set. If asked about her family, she says that her parents are dead; she was educated privately and in Switzerland, and met Longbaugh soon after she returned to England, when she went to his company's offices to complain about damage to a trunk. She adds that it was love at first sight. She is not accompanied by a chaperon, which is somewhat scandalous in this era and social class. She pretends that she is just becoming conscious of psychic powers; she is confident that she can do so



without the use of mechanical aids, since faking a trance or producing authentic ghostly knocking is easy if you know how. She has been well-briefed on all the adventurers, so can apparently “pick up” facts about them by touching them, or something they own. For example:

Amanda: *“This watch was given to you by.... a woman...”*

Player: *“Is she right?”*

Referee: *“yes, it was a gift from your sister Eliza.”*

Amanda: *“....a woman whose name begins with a vowel, I think an E...”*

The referee should bolster this deception by pretending to make Medium rolls as appropriate. She pretends that her “newly-discovered mediumship” is unwelcome. See *Forgotten Futures III* for more details of the tricks of fake mediums.



**Gordon Fergusson (Estate manager, age 38)**

BODY [5], MIND [3], SOUL [1]

Brawling [7], Business (estate management) [5],

Marksman [6], Melee weapon [7], Riding [5]

Equipment: Various shotguns, rifles, etc.

Quote: *“Happen we’ve more poachers in top wood. Set out the man-traps again...”*

Notes: Fergusson is an unfeeling brute, hated by most of the estate staff and the area’s poachers. He’s good at his job, and Starling is at home so rarely that he isn’t fully aware of his shortcomings.

## Foucault’s Pendulum

John Bernard Leon Foucault (1819-1868) was a 19th century French physicist, notable for many important experiments in optics and mechanics. The pendulum that bears his name was the first direct proof that the Earth rotates; earlier proofs relied on observation of the stars and other indirect evidence. Briefly, pendulums tend to swing backwards and forwards in a flat plane, even if their support is twisted in mid-swing. If a very long pendulum with an extremely heavy bob is set up at the North or South pole, and left swinging for 24 hours, the plane will not rotate with the Earth; if it was started off swinging backward and forward over longitudes 0 and 180 degrees, after 6 hours it would be swinging over 90 and 270 degrees. In 24 hours the plane in which it swings rotates through 360 degrees.

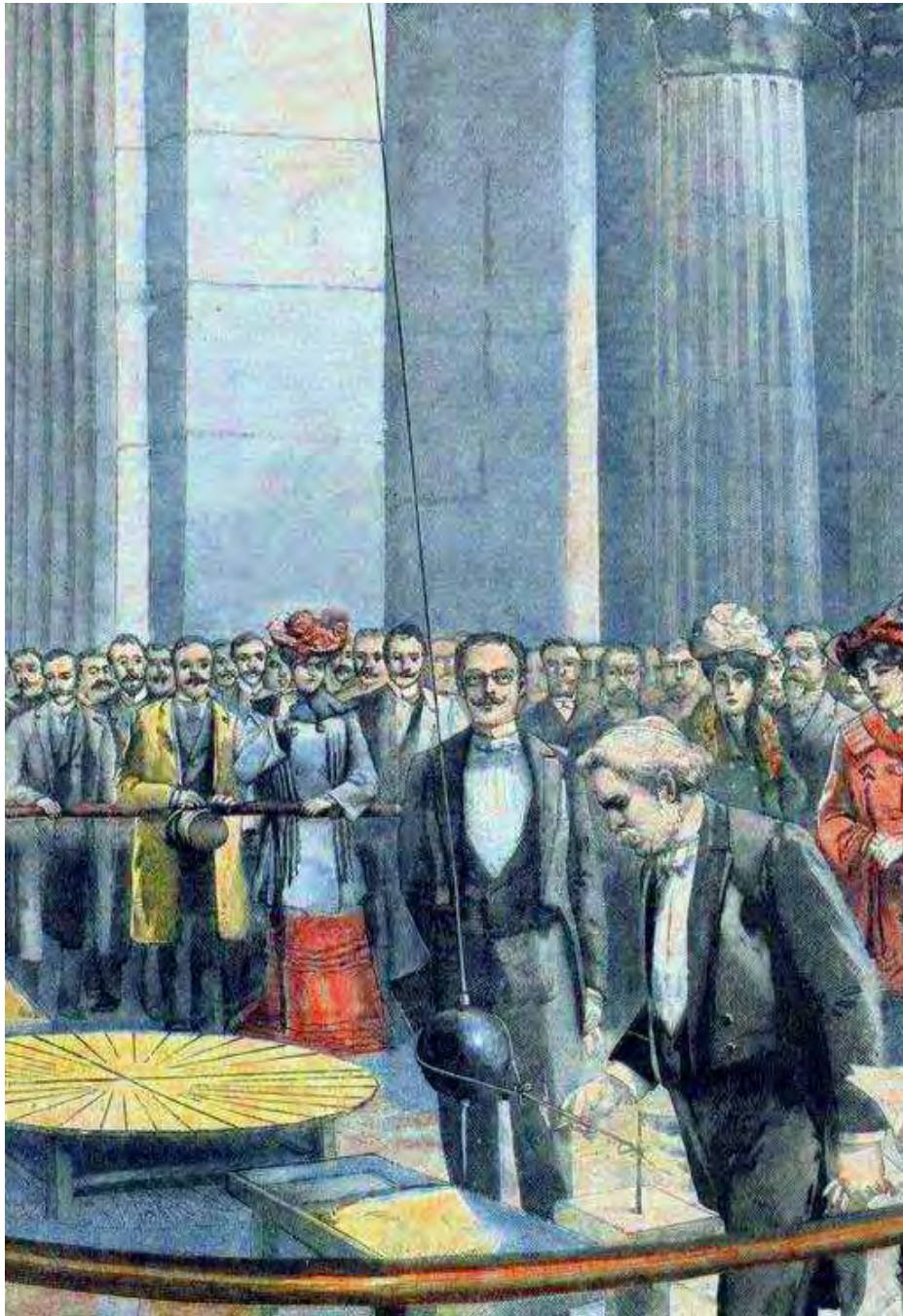
Further away from the poles the situation is more complicated; for example, Foucault’s first pendulums took 31 hours 47 minutes to complete the circle in Paris. At the equator the plane of a pendulum doesn’t rotate at all. The mathematics are not important in this adventure.

Since this is an extremely delicate process, which can be upset by the twisting of a rope or any unevenness when the pendulum is released, it’s customary to

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hang the pendulum for months before using it, to stretch the rope or cable, and start the pendulum moving by pushing it a few feet to one side, tying it back, then setting fire to the cord that retains it. The cord should eventually break and let the pendulum swing. One of the length described in this adventure would take more than half a minute for a complete swing. The weight of the pendulum bob described in this adventure is unusual, but not unique; errors caused by twisting forces and air resistance are greatly reduced if the bob is very heavy.

See Wikipedia and other sources for more on the physics of this device.



A 1902 demonstration of Foucault's pendulum to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his initial experiment.

## Adventure 3: Sussex Belle

Something strange is happening in Brighton, a popular holiday resort on Britain's South coast and the centre of Britain's fledgling film industry. A studio is haunted, and its proprietor seems curiously embarrassed about the ghost. Are the adventurers prepared to learn the truth...?

This adventure is set in spring 1911, but can easily be adjusted for any other year from 1909 to the 1920s. Background details for later eras can be found in the novel *Bride of the Rat God* (Barbara Hambley 1994), and in two of Leslie Charteris' "Saint" stories; *The Beauty Specialist* (in *The Ace of Knaves*, 1937) and *The Art Photographer* (in *The Saint Intervenes*, 1934). A map is available from Alan Godfrey (see the *Forgotten Futures* rules): Sussex map 66.09 shows Brighton in 1930, but the town's rapid growth means that some of the buildings it includes did not exist in 1910.

Referees are **STRONGLY** advised to read their briefing before starting to run the adventure. You may also want to print out the building plan and newspaper stories in later sections, and possibly the business card below.

### Players' Information

"Might I have a word, please?"

The little man seems curiously out of place in your club. He's obviously not a gentleman, you can tell that from the cut of his suit alone, and the card he hands you isn't even engraved, just printed pasteboard:



Assuming that Tanfold isn't immediately rebuffed he continues:

"If you can possibly spare a few minutes, I have a problem that you might find interesting." He hesitates, then says "The studio is haunted. Yes, definitely haunted. It's really most embarrassing. Extremely embarrassing. Can you help?"

## Referee's Information

Tanfold's studio really is haunted, and he wants to get rid of the ghost. Unfortunately there are others who would prefer it to stay; his partner has thought of a cunning way to make money from it, which will only work if an authoritative source will vouch for its authenticity. To make matters more complicated, both are also trying to conceal the true sordid details of a tragic death. The adventurers must unravel their lies to find the truth behind the situation.

Tanfold's company, Sussex Belle film studios, is based on the outskirts of Brighton, a popular seaside resort South of London. The studio specialises in short entertainment films, typically starring two or three comedians in a simple story of harmless mayhem, which are usually shown in music halls between acts. Copies are also available for home use, to hire or buy by mail order. However, there is another side to their business.

Since the late 19th century erotic films of various types have been available by mail order from Europe; making and selling them via the mails is illegal in Britain. In 1907 the company was losing money and Tanfold decided to go into the business for himself. He looked into the possibility of importing films, but eventually decided that he could earn more money by making his own and marketing them illegally, via a French post office box and bank account.

For obvious reasons he couldn't do it alone, but his junior partner, cameraman Andrew Radden, was also aware of the company's problems and equally unscrupulous. Tanfold recruited Beatrice Avery, a young actress with loose morals, while Radden persuaded Fred Higgins, a handsome but stupid stage-hand, to co-star. They intended to make the film over several evenings, after the normal work of the studio was over.

Unfortunately things went wrong soon after filming began. Radden was taking care of all the technicalities of the operation, including lighting, and accidentally left one of the spotlights loose on the lighting gallery. Somehow the cable was pulled and the spotlight fell nearly fifteen feet, killing Beatrice instantly.

All three knew that a police investigation could lead to serious problems; at worse they might be charged with her murder, at best they would face a prosecution for obscenity. Tanfold and Radden gave Higgins a bottle of Scotch to keep him quiet, then waited until the early hours of the morning to dump the body into the sea.

The plan worked perfectly at first. When the body was found, some way down the coast, the official verdict was that she must have died while taking a midnight swim. There were no clues linking the corpse to the studio. Then the haunting started...





Beatrice had always sought immortality, on the stage and on film; in the moment of her death she somehow achieved it. The sudden shock created a psychic recording of the last few minutes of her life, impressed on the fabric of the building. Unfortunately it shows her shadowy form performing a series of extremely explicit sexual acts (which for reasons of decency, and in a desire to avoid censorship, will not be described in detail); Higgins does not appear, although it is obvious that a man must have been present at the original event. Like most ghosts it can only be seen at night, but in the course of two years its presence has become common knowledge at the studio. Nobody else knows the ghost's identity, they simply know that something strange is there.

Meanwhile the studio's financial status hasn't improved, and a serious scandal could ruin it. Although they are short of funds, Tanfold and Radden don't want to try pornography again; if they were caught, there might be a closer official investigation of Beatrice's death, and they aren't sure that they could hide their tracks. To make matters worse, rumours of the ghost have reached the press, and there are already several reporters interested in seeing it. Tanfold has decided that something must be done to get rid of it with the minimum of publicity; he has read accounts of the adventurers, and thinks that they might be able to help. Naturally he has no intention of admitting that he knows anything about the ghost's origin.

Radden has his own ideas; since news of the ghost is already out, he wants the adventurers to see it and confirm that it is genuine. He has kept the film he made before Beatrice was killed, and intends to use the negatives, retouched to remove Higgins and suitably bleached and processed to give an appropriate ghostly effect, to create a convincing "spirit film". With the adventurers to verify that the studio is really haunted, and some skilful publicity, he should be able to sell hundreds of prints. Since they are supposed to show a ghost, not a human, and are thus of immense scientific importance, they should evade any possibility of prosecution. He hasn't told Tanfold yet, since he thinks that he will behave more naturally if he is unaware of the deception.

Finally, Higgins has somehow convinced himself that Beatrice really loved him, and that the haunting proves her love. To him the studio is a shrine to her memory, and the intrusion of the adventurers is desecration, especially if they try to drive her away. He will take drastic steps to stop the adventurers parting him from his "love".

As the adventure begins Radden is retouching and editing the negative, making sure that no trace of Higgins or the background remains. It is slow painstaking work that will take some time. When he is done, he'll make a copy of the negative and treat it chemically to give the final print a ghostly appearance. Over several stages of copying and processing he hopes to obliterate any sign of retouching. Once he is ready, he intends to put an undeveloped copy of the negative in a camera and pretend to film the ghost, double-exposing the film to include the real studio background. To everyone's surprise (except his) the result will be a success.

This is not a dangerous scenario, and the referee is strongly advised to use it to develop the investigatory skills and personalities of the adventurers.

## On The Waterfront

Tanfold explains that three years ago his studio was fitted with electric lighting (which is true), which meant that it was possible to carry on filming after sunset. He tends to stay on for an hour or so after filming ends, to take care of paperwork and other business. He first noticed the ghost eighteen months ago, on a November evening when he stayed especially late to take care of a big order. Since then he's seen it several times, as have some of his employees. It doesn't seem to do anything; it just appears, moves around for a while, then disappears. It can only be seen in dim light or darkness. While it hasn't done anything, word seems to be getting out; recently two reporters have asked about it, and he's worried that one day he'll find it splashed all over the front pages.

If the adventurers express an interest in Tanfold's story, he uses a good deal of circumlocution to describe the haunting. His clearest description is that the ghost is "a woman.. yes, definitely a woman" and (with reluctance) "doing something that I wouldn't like to describe with ladies present." Eventually they should get the idea.

Tanfold won't make the mistake of trying to pay amateur adventurers; he simply offers them every facility, and expresses his hope that they'll find it interesting. Professional ghost-finders are offered their usual fees and expenses; Tanfold will later haggle over every penny.

He suggests that the adventurers come down to Brighton within the next 2-3 weeks; after that hotel rooms may be difficult to find. The studios are in use by day, and the ghost is only visible at night, so it would be most convenient if they could schedule their first visit for the evening. If the adventurers have other ideas (such as wanting to see the studio by daylight before viewing the ghost) he will agree, suggesting that they visit on Saturday afternoon or Sunday, when he isn't filming. Once he has their agreement, he returns to Brighton, leaving the adventurers to follow in their own time.

If the adventurers seem to need some additional motivation, reporter Thomas Conway (see Adventure 1) should start to take an interest in their activities and the case. If they still don't follow up on this lead, Tanfold finds someone else. The film is eventually exposed as a fake by Carnacki.

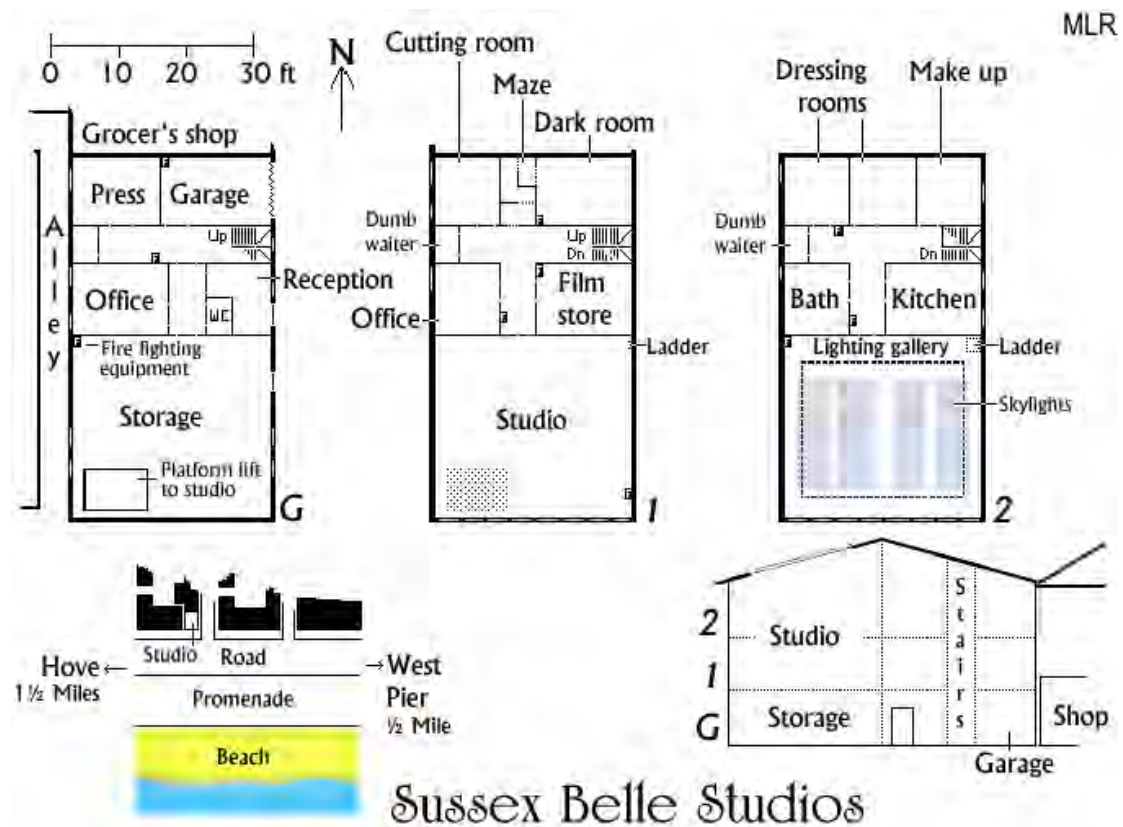
The journey to Brighton from London takes about an hour by train, the luxurious "Sussex Belle" Pullman service for which the studio is named. Mention (but don't comment on) the fact that it is considerably better than the slow uncomfortable trains that used to run on the line. If the adventurers check, they'll learn that it first entered service in 1909. This can be a useful clue later in the adventure.

Brighton has for many years been London's most popular resort; in the 18th century it was a spa, popularised by the Prince Regent, and has been growing ever since. In 1911 it is a respectably sized city, with 128,000 inhabitants. In the holiday season it is packed, but at this time of the year things are quieter, and hotel rooms are readily available. The town's seaside facilities include two entertainment piers, a wide esplanade (with putting green, boating pond, and numerous ornamental gardens), and a clean (if somewhat pebbly) beach.



Further inland there is everything that might be expected of a town of this size, including a cricket field, cemeteries, and a large station. If the adventurers choose their own rooms, the best hotels are the Metropole and the Grand, both about half a mile East of the studio; they even have a few rooms with private bathrooms. If Tanfold is paying, he will expect them to stay in a boarding house.

The studios occupies a modest three-story brick building at the South (esplanade) end of Wellington Avenue, a row of undistinguished shops. From the outside the only sign of its use is a small brass plate next to one of the doors; since adventurers will probably be looking for a much larger building, or even a complex of studios in the later Hollywood style, they may pass it several times before they notice. It was built in 1902; prior to that, the site was occupied by a cab stable which stood for about 70 years. Before that it was a meadow. The referee may be able to introduce a red herring, if adventurers look at old maps, by suggesting that the studio floor is probably at about the same height as the hay-loft of the stable. The O'Brien case, described below, may also be misleading.



The ground floor (US 1st) consists of a reception room, Tanfold's office, a large store room, a garage, a room containing a small printing press, and a lavatory. The studio itself is on the first (US 2nd) floor, with a railed lighting gallery on the second (US 3rd) floor. The dark-room, cutting room, film store, and Radden's office are also on the first floor, while dressing rooms, a make-up room, a bathroom, and a kitchen are on the second. Stairs and a small dumb-waiter goods lift link all three floors. The building has electric lighting. Because celluloid film burns extremely easily, there are several fire fighting points around the building; each has a bucket of water, a bucket of sand, and a fire axe.

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Unless stated otherwise, picking any lock inside this building is Difficulty 5, the outside locks are Difficulty 7. All ground floor windows have ornamental bars, BODY 7. Apart from Tanfold, three other NPCs have been given keys to the building, a fourth has an illicitly copied key.

When the adventurers visit the studio Tanfold has seven permanent employees; actors and actresses are hired as needed, and the current film uses four. Not all of these NPCs will be present at all times:

Gilbert Tanfold *	Owner, producer, director, etc. +
Bert Thyme	Porter +
Arthur Wells	Printer, handyman, driver
Fred Higgins *	Props, scenery \$
Andrew Radden *	Cameraman, technician, partner +
Vernon Bryant	Apprentice technician
Gladys Shirley	Part-time typist & clerk
Mrs Ida Maggs	Cook, cleaner +
Mrs Eileen Shaw	Make-up, costuming

\* Described in detail at the end of the adventure

+ Carries a key to the building

\$ Has an illicitly copied key to the building

Miss Eliza Ball	Child actress
Miss Jenny Tate	Actress
James Gordon	Actor
Thomas Lake	Actor

The normal schedule of the studio is to begin makeup and costuming early in the morning, start filming as soon as there is sufficient light, and continue until dusk. Electric lighting can be used to extend the usable light, but the arc lamps are expensive to run and smell of ozone. Tanfold prefers to limit their use whenever possible. If the adventurers arrive in May, natural light filming can begin at about 7.30 AM and continues until 6.30 PM. The studio usually works this schedule on Monday to Friday, continuing into the evening with lights if shots haven't been finished or the day is dull, with a half day on Saturday. Tanfold aims to produce a new film every two to three weeks.

The reception room is usually the only unlocked entrance. It is presided over by Bert Thyme, a laconic porter who spends most of his time behind a rickety desk, reading the racing pages of various papers. Bert knows everyone who works at the studio, and has strict instructions to let nobody else in without Tanfold's permission; Tanfold wants to be told about tax officials and other problems before they get to his office. The room has a telephone, wired to extensions in two offices and the studio. Bert has worked for Tanfold for four years, and has seen the ghost several times. He doesn't know the truth about Beatrice. He is a bare-knuckles boxing champion, BODY [5], Brawling [8]. He

looks (and is) extremely tough. Anyone trying to force their way in will probably regret it. If he is needed elsewhere in the building he locks the street door.

Tanfold's office is small, furnished with two untidy desks, three filing cabinets, and a threadbare carpet. Visitors won't usually be admitted if Tanfold isn't there. The filing cabinets contain records of accounts, customers, actors and actresses, and the other minutiae of the business. If studied for several hours they reveal that the company isn't making vast profits, but isn't actually running at a loss. There is a file on Beatrice Avery amongst those for the other actors and actresses, but without additional information there is nothing to distinguish it from the other records. There is a small wall safe (lock Difficulty 12, BODY 8), concealed behind a print of the Sussex Belle locomotive; it contains £38 4s 6d, a .32 Colt revolver (as Small Handgun), a box of 50 rounds, and a pair of earrings which belonged to Beatrice. They are a distinctive silver triple tear-drop design, about an inch and a half long, kept in a match box labelled "Lost Property".

The gun has never been used, and there is still packing grease in the barrel. Anyone trying to fire it without cleaning it first will get a nasty surprise as it explodes:

Exploding handgun

Effect 6, Radius 6", A:F, B:I, C:I

Gladys Shirley works in the office on weekday mornings. She never stays late, and has not seen the ghost, but has heard that it's "very rude". She is in her forties, a spinster who is somewhat overweight and not particularly attractive, but still hopes to appear in films. Tanfold has used her as an extra in a few crowd scenes, but she would like a starring role. Tanfold takes advantage of her ambition; she has not had a pay rise in three years. She is aware of the company's financial state; modest but steadily falling profits, which will start to come out as a loss some time in the next six months to a year.

The printing room contains a small hand-cranked letterpress, which can produce a few hundred pages an hour, and a sewing machine for binding catalogues. The press is run by Arthur Wells, a Welshman who also packs the films, drives the company van, and helps with props and other chores around the building. He hasn't seen the ghost; even when other people tell him it's there, he can't see it. Some otherwise normal people are completely immune to such visions. This room also holds the electricity meter and fuse boxes for the building. When the adventurers arrive Arthur is setting up the lead type of a flyer advertising the company's forthcoming films: *A Tour of Brighton Pavillion* (a documentary), *Bananas* (a slapstick comedy), and *Dog Soldiers* (an animal act). The catalogue lists a hundred or so similar films, available for public performance, rental, or sale. The film currently in production is *Bananas*; the others are already finished.

The garage houses a Ford van which is usually used for deliveries, but has a strengthened roof which can accommodate a camera, tripod, and cameraman. Occasionally it is used for outdoor filming when there is a special event in Brighton. The studio cat, Socks, is also based in the garage, sleeping in a basket

in one corner. He's a friendly black tom with white paws, a good mouser. If the adventurers regularly spend time in the studio at night, Socks will start to bring them the mice (and occasional rats) he catches. Pick the most squeamish character to be the recipient of these gifts. Socks avoids the patch of studio floor where the ghost appears, but otherwise seems to ignore it completely.

The ground floor store room is a dingy stockpile of old props, chests and crates, scenery flats, and other lumber, with several dozen mice living in odd corners. A platform lift, of the type used in theatres, can raise material to the studio. The floor of the studio above is supported on several sturdy beams and pillars. Fred Higgins can usually be found here, building scenery or demolishing it. If questioned he admits that he has seen the ghost, but refuses to discuss it, and gives the impression that he is uneasy about it.

A dumb waiter links all floors; it's muscle-powered, with a recommended capacity of a hundred pounds, but like most lifts can actually support much more. It is mostly used for moving cans of film and other goods. The compartment is a 2ft 6in cube, reached through a hatch 3 ft above each floor level. The safety lock system is rudimentary, and it is possible to open a door when the lift is on another floor and climb up and down the shaft. It is also possible to open a door, lean in, and find that the lift is about to strike your head. It isn't possible to ride inside the compartment and simultaneously operate the lift.

The adventurers will probably be most interested in the first floor, which houses the studio and technical facilities. If the adventurers want to know more about the technology of film-making, Tanfold will be delighted to hand them over to Radden for a guided tour. He introduces him as "Andrew Radden, my cameraman and junior partner."

If questioned, Radden says that he has seen the ghost "a few times", and doesn't think it's dangerous, then starts to ask questions about ghost-hunting.

The studio is simply a high-ceilinged room with a sloping roof, illuminated by several windows and four long skylights. All are covered with muslin to diffuse the light; normally the windows are also curtained, to stop the cameraman and others casting shadows onto the set, and the bulk of the lighting comes from the skylights overhead. A railed gallery (accessible via a ladder, and from the second floor) supports three carbon arc spotlights. Another two spotlights are fixed to stands on the studio floor. Since electricity is very expensive, and the lights release choking ozone, Tanfold prefers to do most of his filming by day. The lights are usually operated by Vernon Bryant, aged 15, an apprentice who spends the rest of his time in the dark-room. Bryant has seen the ghost twice, and turns bright red and stammers if he is asked about it. He has worked for Tanfold for six months.

The studio owns two cameras, both hand-cranked wooden Lumiere Cinematographs, a popular continental model which has the advantages of light weight and portability, but only holds enough film for a minute or so of work. The cameras must be loaded and unloaded in the dark-room, or in an opaque rubberised cloth changing bag, so filming tends to require frequent breaks. The

cameras are mounted on heavy wooden tripods, and stored in Radden's office or the dark-room when not in use.

When the adventurers visit the studio, it is set up to film the comedy *Bananas*; the floor has been covered with oil cloth patterned to look like a marble floor, with scenery and furnishings to give the illusion of a stately home. The plot is simple; a young member of the aristocracy (Eliza Ball) eats a banana, throws the peel at a waste-paper basket, and misses. Her governess (Jenny Tate) comes to take her to a lesson, and slips on the peel. It flies across the room. A footman (James Gordon) rushes to help the governess, and in turn slips on the peel. Another servant (Thomas Lake) comes to help him...

If the adventurers see the set while filming is in progress, they should gradually realise that the actors and actresses have no faith in the film; it's just another "cheap Tanfold quickie", like a dozen others they've made before, instantly forgettable and old-fashioned. None of them have seen the ghost, although all of them have heard that it's there. They think that it's a sign of good luck if someone sees it. All wear green make-up, which looks better than normal cosmetics on black and white film, but is very bizarre if the adventurers don't expect it.

Any medium visiting this room in daylight will detect a slight feeling of "dreeness"; an impression that something Ab-natural might be present. It isn't possible to get a clearer impression while filming continues. An appearance by the ghost is described (with a tasteful minimum of detail) in the next section.

Radden's office is mainly used as a workshop for camera repair. Equipment stored here includes an elderly hand-cranked cine projector, spare electrodes for the arc lights, models of sets, and tools. A locked drawer holds a film retouching kit (bleaches and dyes, brushes, special knives, and a mixing palette) and the negative of the film of Beatrice. The last few feet of film, showing her death, have long since been destroyed. If the adventurers make it obvious that they are looking for it, or some other evidence on film, Radden will put the can into one of the fireproof cupboards in the film store room, making sure that the adventurers don't see him hide it.

The film store has a steel door secured with heavy bolts and padlocks, thick walls reinforced with an extra course of bricks, and an inner lining of asbestos. Tanfold and Radden have the keys. Six massive fireproof cupboards, also locked, hold the (explosively flammable, see below) celluloid film; five hold developed negatives and prints, the other houses unexposed film. Tanfold will be VERY annoyed if adventurers ruin it. If Radden has hidden the film here, it is labelled as "Brighton Station - Train departing - Negative - June 1907", and there is nothing to distinguish it from the other 627 cans of exposed film stored here. He will make sure that the adventurers don't see him concealing it, and it will only be found if the adventurers unwind the first foot or so of every film. Referees can probably find a random way to decide if any particular can examined by the adventurers contains the film; the author suggests that it should be the last can in the last cupboard, and that the examination of each can should be described in excruciating detail. A medium might be able to dowse for the can, if its presence is suspected, but it shouldn't be easy. Generalised attempts at

psychic location, on the lines of “I’ll use my Medium skill to see if there’s a clue somewhere”, should not be allowed, or should lead to possession or worse.

Cellulose film is flammable, and can deteriorate to an explosive form of nitrocellulose if it is poorly handled. If cans of processed film are handled, roll 2D6; on a 12, the film has deteriorated. It still won’t explode unless it is handled carelessly; careless handling includes dropping or banging the can, pulling film out from the reel quickly (creating an electrostatic charge which ignites the film), or holding it anywhere near a hot object (such as a cigarette or an electric light). Once lit, it starts to sizzle and burn, the fire quickly getting brighter as it takes hold. A round later it explodes:

Exploding Nitrocellulose Film    Effect 6, Radius 1ft, damage A:F, B:F, C:I

Any unstable cans inside the blast radius ignite on 8+, +1 Effect for each additional can that explodes. New unused film does not suffer from this problem.

There is a small maze between the corridor and the dark-room, used to exclude light, with sliding doors at several points. If the adventurers want to go inside, they are asked to go through one at a time, and shut each door before they open the next. The dark-room holds steel tanks for developing film, a contact printer (used to print projectable films from negatives), an enlarger and developing dishes for stills, and drums of various chemicals. The room is generally kept completely dark while negatives and film are being handled, or illuminated by dim red light while printing. It stinks of various chemicals. Nothing of interest to the adventurers is usually left here; although Radden will eventually process and copy his films in this room, all of the work takes place inside light-proof machines, and there is nothing obvious to show that he is not working on a legitimate project. He will take care to ensure that nobody sees his doctored negatives and prints.

The cutting room has a peep-show film viewer and basic equipment for editing film. Most of the room is taken up by dozens of hangers for short lengths of film, and a drawing board, pen, and stencils used to make title cards. When the adventurers visit, the card last worked on has the name “Bananas” in the top left-hand corner, the words “Tee hee, how clumsy of me!” in larger type in the middle, and “Sussex Belle Studios” in small type at bottom right. If examined, the negatives hanging up are also from “Bananas”.

The top floor has two dressing rooms, one for actors and one for actresses. There is nothing noteworthy about them. There is a bathroom, equipped with running cold water and a coal-fired water heater which grudgingly produces a trickle of lukewarm water.

A small room for make-up and costuming is run (with a rod of iron) by Eileen Shaw, a dour Scots widow who thinks that actors don’t have enough sense to come in out of the rain. She is a skilful seamstress and competent make-up artist. She has seen the ghost twice but won’t admit it to any man; a lady NEVER sees that sort of thing! She might admit more if questioned by a woman.



The final room on the top floor is a comfortable kitchen run by Ida Maggs, who also cleans the studio. She is a plump matronly woman and a good plain cook. Depending on the time of year and the filming schedule, she makes two or three meals a day and numerous cups of tea, for everyone at the studio. She has seen the ghost many times, and thinks that it looks “A bit sad, like she didn’t really love him.” This is actually a psychic impression; she has SOUL [5] and could easily learn to be a medium.

Mrs. Maggs has one vital piece of information; she can establish that the ghost has been present for more than eighteen months. If she is asked when she first saw it, she thinks and says “Oh, the day before our Walter’s birthday, two years ago, on June the fourth. I stopped late because I had his cake in the oven, and saw it when I went to mop out the studio. I was so surprised I spilled the bucket.” She’s sure of the date. This is considerably earlier than Tanfold claimed; he was trying to avoid linking it to the time of Beatrice’s death. If questioned about the discrepancy, she says “Well, I’m sure that I told him the very next day”; Tanfold doesn’t remember it at all, or so he says, and adds that she must be making it up.

The door to the lighting gallery on this floor is kept locked, unless someone is working on the lights. It has only 2’ 6” wide with a low railing, and anyone smashing through the locked door will go straight over. One of the lights has a couple of deep dents, which will only be noticed if the adventurers say that they are examining them. It was thoroughly cleaned after Beatrice died, and no traces of blood etc. remain. If anyone is asked about the damage, Radden will eventually ‘remember’ that it was dropped by “that moron Peter, what was his last name... umm... Jarvis” about a year ago; Jarvis was Vernon Bryant’s predecessor for a few months, and is now working as a waiter in Newcastle. If he is somehow traced, he admits that he dropped all sorts of things; he doesn’t remember a light, but he supposes it’s possible. He is tall, gawky, and extremely clumsy, which supports the story.

A Medium setting out to examine this light (not the room in general), and making a Difficulty 7 roll, will sense the same feeling of “dreeness” as in the room below. It isn’t possible to pick up anything clearer.

While the adventurers are examining the studio, Radden shoots a few feet of film, enough to establish that they are investigating the ghost. If questioned about this, he says that it might be interesting to make a film about ghost detection; possibly a comedy, with some unfriendly poltergeists throwing pies... He just wants to get a “feel” for what’s involved in a ghost hunt.

## **Seductive Visions**

Eventually the adventurers should set out to see the ghost. They may at first believe that there is some pattern to its appearances, but questioning the studio staff should rule this out; it seems to be possible to see it on any night, even if there is moonlight, provided that it isn’t very bright.

The adventurers may wish to take elaborate precautions before observing the ghost, such as setting up ribbons and wires across the floor, checking for

concealed projectors (there aren't any), or erecting an electric pentacle and other defences. Everyone who has seen the ghost will be amused by these precautions; they are sure that it is real but harmless. They all agree that the ghost appears in the approximate centre of the studio floor, and that it is usually visible for a minute or so. It has never been seen more than once a night, but that may simply be because people rarely stay very late.

Unless the adventurers request something else, the set still has the marble hall decoration and stately home backdrop from *Bananas*, which looks surprisingly convincing in the dark. Once the studio is quiet, and darkness sets in, the feeling of "dreeness" is a little stronger, but still unclear. For each hour that passes roll 2D6, +2 per hour, +2 if a medium is present; on 12+ the ghost appears.

At first the effect seems to be a darkening of the room. Any lights that the adventurers are using, such as electric pentacles, become dimmer, then seem to radiate blackness. If it is a moonlit night, the rays of moonlight also seem to be dark. The shadows at the centre of the room seem to swirl, black upon black, then suddenly take on a dim form... a naked woman, seemingly composed of shadows, kneeling and straddling something. The apparition floats about two feet above the floor. From its movements it is apparent that it is making uninhibited love to an unseen and invisible partner. This continues



for approximately a minute and a half, with several changes of position. It's intensely erotic, and at the same time oddly sad. Eventually the shadows seem to break up, and light and darkness return to normal as the ghost disappears.

It isn't possible to tell much about the ghost's appearance; the face isn't seen, except as a dim shade, although the swirling darkness around it suggests long hair. The body seems beautifully proportioned, but again this could simply be a trick of the shadows.

Mediums who try to contact the ghost will feel very little; the same "dreeness", and (on a Difficulty 8 roll) a feeling that the vision depicts an act of sex without love. Mediums will not be able to tell who the woman was, or how long the ghost has been there.

If the adventurers wait to see if it appears again, check for every hour as above but add +3 per hour since the adventurers are now attuned to its presence. If it does appear, its movements are identical. The room starts to brighten with the dawn at about 6 AM, after that the ghost will not reappear. By the second or third appearance the adventurers should realise that they are probably dealing with some sort of psychic recording, rather than an active Ab-natural entity. There is no response to any attempt at mental contact.

It is likely that the adventurers will try a few experiments to eliminate the possibility of trickery. To ensure that it isn't a projected image they might

surround it with screens, fill the room with smoke (which would reveal the light beam from a projector), or cover the skylight and/or windows. None of these methods have any effect. While trying this the adventurers should notice that if they can see any part of the ghost, they can somehow “see” its entire body, even if it is partially obscured by screens etc. This is typical of Ab-natural visions, which seem to involve looking “outside” the normal physical world. If wires or ribbons are criss-crossed through the area, to rule out any possibility that it is a physical object, it appears in exactly the same spot. If anything material is thrown through the ghost while it is visible, there is no effect.

In this setting it is likely that the adventurers will think of filming the ghost, or taking a photograph. Initial attempts will fail; the lights needed for filming are too bright for the ghost to appear, while a flash simply blinds the adventurers, without recording the ghost’s image. By the time that the adventurers recover their night vision the manifestation has ended. When Radden has prepared his negative he’ll suggest a way of filming the ghost.

Anyone trying to touch the ghost feels the same “dreeness”, a slight chill that is entirely mental, not physical. Thermometers and other instruments show nothing.

Attempts to use magical defences or an electric pentacle to stop the ghost appearing will not work. This is again typical of psychic recordings, which become an inherent “property” of the place where they appear.

Whatever the adventurers do, Tanfold makes it clear that he can’t afford to have the studio out of action; they and their equipment must be cleared up before filming begins each morning.

If “ghost traps” are left unattended, Higgins will do his best to sabotage them. This might involve snapping a few wires or ribbons, exposing film to light, and so forth. Since he isn’t particularly clever he’ll probably leave clues such as footprints, especially if the adventurers have spread flour about the place. He wears size 10 boots, nobody else in the studio has feet that large. If he is confronted with evidence of his sabotage he gives a feeble excuse, such as claiming that he got lost in the dark and fell over the adventurers equipment. Whatever pressure is brought to bear, he will not budge from his story; if Tanfold hears about this, he’ll rebuke him for his “clumsiness”. If the adventurers seem to want to keep pressure on Higgins, Tanfold moves to protect him, on the grounds that he’s “a good worker and as loyal as they come, just a bit simple and skittish about that ghost. Thinks that it’s unlucky.” In reality, he wants to keep Higgins quiet, and is afraid that he might talk if he loses his job.

After several appearances of the ghost and a few experiments, the adventurers should be convinced that it is genuine. They are probably also making enquiries in an attempt to identify the ghost; see below.

Tanfold waits patiently (within reason) while the adventurers learn its exact nature, then asks if they can do anything about getting rid of it; if he knows that the adventurers are checking details that might lead to an identification of Beatrice (which could endanger him), he will try to convince them that disposing of it is the important thing. If he is paying for their time, he will refuse to pay a penny more until they “do something useful”.

Since Radden knows little of ghosts, he'll assume that anything the adventurers suggest to get rid of it has a chance of working. Unlike Tanfold, he doesn't want to destroy the ghost until he has had time to "film" it. Since he owns 10% of the studio he can legitimately object to the costs and disruption of lengthy repairs or building work; Tanfold will also have reservations about such solutions. Less drastic suggestions will be strenuously resisted; for example, he thinks that exorcism is "Popish" (regardless of the religion of the person conducting the exorcism), will find similar excuses to block other forms of religious purification, doesn't want to put magical signs or lines on the walls or floor because they would "show up on film", and so on. In fact nothing short of demolishing the building will get rid of the ghost, and it will reappear if another building is erected on the site, although nobody should know this at this stage.

If the adventurers seem to be getting nowhere, this might be a good time to re-introduce Thomas Conway (from *The Cutting*) and other reporters. If they are busy investigating the background, continued opposition from Tanfold and Radden should be their main problem. This could eventually lead to an argument which ends with Tanfold barring them from the studio. Radden won't be entirely happy, since he would prefer the adventurers to see him "filming" the ghost, but he can still make his fake without them. He will be ready ten days after the adventurers first visit the studio. See the next section for details.

## Local Enquiries

Having seen the ghost, the adventurers should quickly think of trying to trace its origin. Since the recorded history of Brighton and its surrounding area is lengthy, they'll need to plan their research or waste time on dozens of red herrings.

Tanfold has told them that he first saw the ghost 18 months ago; this is untrue, but may lead to the Bailey case described below. Ida Maggs claims to have seen the ghost on June 4th, nearly two years ago; Beatrice Avery's body was found a few days earlier, and the inquest is briefly mentioned in the local newspaper for that week. Finally, an enquiry into the previous history of the site should lead them to the case of Molly O'Brien.

Molly O'Brien (1860-1875) was a local girl who was found hanged in "the hayloft of a stable on Wellington Avenue", to quote a newspaper report of the day. At the time she was pregnant, and it was widely assumed that she committed suicide to atone for her "sins". The father was never identified. There are no living relatives.

The adventurers may think that they have found the source of the ghost, but this theory falls apart if they check maps of the period, and look beyond the superficial similarities. In 1875 Wellington Avenue ended two blocks further North; the seaward end of the road was called Fishyard Street. The name wasn't changed until 1900-02, when most of the area was redeveloped and the studio was built. Maps of the period show two other stables on Wellington Avenue; one still exists, and the owner remembers his father talking about finding the body. To make the connection even more tenuous, nobody at the stables knew

her; she apparently saw an open door and a rope hanging from the roof, and used it to kill herself. Contemporary photographs show a short pudgy girl; there is reason to believe that ghosts look something like their mortal selves, and the spirit seems to have an extremely good figure.

The Bailey case is another red herring, which just happens to have been a major news story eighteen months ago. Charles Bailey, a Brighton ice cream vendor, came home to find his wife Abigail making love to William Pope, a window cleaner. He murdered them both with a hammer, then gassed himself. Neighbours smelled the gas and rescued him before he died, and he was subsequently tried and executed. The murders took place about a hundred yards from the studio.

Again, the circumstances of the case don't really fit; there is no reason whatever why her ghost should end up in the studio. Mrs. Bailey suffered from arthritis, and it is unlikely that she could have assumed some of the positions shown by the ghost. This is not conclusive proof, since a spirit may be able to do things that its mortal body cannot, but it is certainly indicative. Mrs. Maggs' evidence also weighs against this idea; she is absolutely certain that she saw the ghost months before the Bailey killings.

If adventurers concentrate on cases that are about two years old, they will eventually find three stories about the death of Beatrice Avery (**see next page**).

Which is seen first depends on how they look; if they begin by looking back exactly two years, then working forward, they will be seen in the order given. If they start on June the fourth, two years ago, they will see the third story first. While the film connection is striking, there is still nothing obvious linking the story to Sussex Belle studios. A little digging makes the connection clear; Sussex Belle Studios was registered as a company, and named after the new Pullman train service, in 1909. Previously Tanfold owned Brighton Biograph Pictures, which went into liquidation in 1908 with debts of hundreds of pounds. Most of the company's assets were sold to Andrew Radden for a fraction of their real value before the company folded. A few weeks later Tanfold and Radden set up the new company, and they were soon back in business with most of the debts written off. Essentially Brighton Biograph and Sussex Belle Studios are the same company. Tanfold and Radden don't advertise the fact, but older telephone and trade directories show Brighton Biograph Pictures at the same address.

If Tanfold is confronted with the story, he readily admits that Sussex Belle and Brighton Biograph are the same company, explaining it as a "re-launch of the company to give us a more modern image", and says that he remembers Beatrice's death; the police came round all the studios when her body was identified, but he hadn't seen her in a couple of years when she died. He "probably" has a file on her somewhere. When found, it lists the two films as her only work for Brighton Biograph; for obvious reasons he didn't keep records of his experiment in pornography. A cardboard folder which once held some photographs is empty; he genuinely has no idea what has happened to the photographs; possibly the police took them, although he doesn't remember it.

*Continued page 58*

From The *Brighton Herald*, a weekly paper, dated 20th May 1909:

**BODY FOUND ON BEACH**

The body of an unidentified young woman was found on Brighton beach, South of the West Pier band stand, on Tuesday morning. Police believe that she was in her twenties, about 5ft 8in tall, with blue eyes and black hair. She was naked, and had apparently drowned. It is expected that an inquest will be held early next week.

From the *Brighton Argus*, a daily paper, dated 27th May:

**BEACH DEATH MYSTERY**

Brighton Coroner's Court today heard that the young woman found dead on the 18th of May was killed by a skull fracture.

Dr. A.L. Worthing FRCS testified that he found evidence of a single blow to the upper cranium, which caused instantaneous death. There was no evidence of foul play; the wound was not consistent with any ordinary weapon, and its location was wrong for the most common types of attack. He estimated that death took place at least two days before the body was found, and that the body entered the water some time after death.

Dr. Worthing speculated that the woman might have intended to swim in the dark, tripped, and fallen against one of the groynes on the beach. The body washed out to sea with the tide, washing back again two or three days later. There were no other injuries.

The Coroner asked if there was any evidence of drowning; Dr. Worthing stated that there was not, adding that this would be consistent with a major head injury of the type described.

Inspector Prendergast testified that the woman had been tentatively identified, but that the identification had not yet been confirmed; he expected to obtain proof later this week, when a relative could travel from Scotland to view the body. The clothing that she was wearing had not been found, but it might have been washed out to sea by the tide. He had no reason to suspect foul play.

The Coroner recorded an open verdict, suggesting that this unfortunate death might well be linked to illegal nude bathing. He appealed for witnesses who might be able to trace the woman's movements.

From the *Brighton Argus*, dated 1st June:

**BODY IDENTIFIED**

A woman found dead on Brighton Beach two weeks ago has been identified as Beatrice Avery, aged 27, an actress resident in Stockwell, London. She was last seen by her landlady on the 15th of May, and was reportedly looking for work in the Brighton area at the time of her death. The body was identified by her sister, Mrs. Harriet Carson, of Dumfries in Scotland.

Miss Avery had previously appeared in the theatre, in pantomime, on the music-hall stage, and in two short moving pictures, 'Saved By Rover' and 'A Nice Day Out', both produced by Brighton Biograph Pictures in 1907. She was generally considered to be one of the more promising younger actresses.

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In fact Higgins has the photographs. Tanfold sums up Beatrice as “Beautiful, and a lovely voice, but she couldn’t quite get the knack of acting for the camera. Some people just can’t do it.”

Despite this obvious connection with his company, Tanfold’s attitude is best summed up as “so what?”; yes, someone who once worked for him was found dead a few months before the ghost appeared, but that doesn’t prove that she is the ghost. Why should someone who died in the sea come back to haunt his studio in this particular form? It doesn’t make much sense. As far as he is concerned, Mrs. Maggs is mistaken and the studio has only been haunted for eighteen months.

If the adventurers have made this connection, Tanfold redoubles his efforts to persuade them to remove the ghost as quickly as possible, regardless of its origin; from now on he will be a real nuisance, continually pestering them for a quick fix for the problem.

If the adventurers check the current film catalogue, they’ll find that both of Beatrice’s films are still available for hire. In *Rescued By Rover* she is the owner of an isolated farm, held prisoner by two thugs who threaten to hit her if she doesn’t tell them where “the valuables” are hidden; Rover, a sheep dog, runs for help and returns with the police in the nick of time. Although the role doesn’t give much scope for her dramatic talents, she seems no worse than the actresses in any of Tanfold’s other films. *A Nice Day Out* follows a group of ‘typical holiday-makers’ (Beatrice and three other actresses) on a day trip to Brighton. In one scene they put on bathing dress and venture onto the beach; Beatrice and another girl make an elaborate sand castle while the others bathe. Despite the voluminous bathing clothes, this scene shows Beatrice’s excellent figure; at one point she takes up a kneeling pose that is very reminiscent of a position adopted by the ghost. Beatrice wears the same ear-rings in both films; a distinctive triple tear-drop design, about an inch and a half long.

If questioned, several studio employees remember Beatrice’s 1907 work at the studio. Bert Thyme and Arthur Wells only remember her if they see a photograph. They remember the face, but that’s about all. Fred Higgins mutters “she was nice”, but won’t say any more; questioning him about Beatrice naturally tips him off that the adventurers are interested in her, and makes him much more determined to stop their interference. Andrew Radden sums her up; “A lovely girl, but she couldn’t act for the camera; I wasted a lot of film on her.” Gladys Shirley doesn’t remember her face, but does remember the ear-rings; “They were really nice, I spent weeks trying to find something like them in the shops.” Ida Maggs remembers the face, and says that she didn’t like her much; “She always seemed a bit hard, somehow.” She can’t explain why, it was just “a feeling.” Finally, Eileen Shaw comments that she had “Lovely bone structure, a really classic face and a perfect figure. Although I have heard stories....”; she refuses to elaborate.

If it is suggested, all of them agree that the ghost could be Beatrice.



None of this is particularly helpful, apart from emphasising things that the adventurers should already know.

The full autopsy report is an obvious source of clues. Doctor Worthing retired to Canada a year ago, but his report is still kept by the police and on file at the Coroner's Court, and available to anyone with a legitimate reason to see it; most groups include at least one person with medical or legal qualifications, which is all that is really needed to gain access. While most of it agrees with what was printed in the paper, some additional points are mentioned:

Blood was clotted normally around the wound, suggesting that it might have been inflicted on land, and the body dumped into the sea some time after death. Post-mortem lividity (pooling of the blood in the back and legs) also suggests this. Inspector Prendergast asked Doctor Worthing and the coroner not to emphasise this aspect of the case, since he wanted to make more enquiries without alerting a murderer. Beatrice was not a virgin but was not pregnant. Her ears were pierced, but there were no ear-rings or studs. There was a small smear of green grease in the corner of her mouth, which was never satisfactorily explained.

Inspector Prendergast still has files on the case (including a copy of the autopsy report). It was treated as a murder investigation and was never closed, but nobody is now working on it. The files add a few extra details: Beatrice checked in at the Metropole hotel on the day she was last seen, went out an hour later, and never returned. She was reported missing the day the body was found; the delay in releasing the details of her identity was caused by the need to bring a relative from Scotland. There are dozens of statements on file, from hotel staff and the proprietors of every theatre, music hall, and studio in Brighton; they confirm that Beatrice had minor roles in several plays and shows and six films in 1907, but returned to London at the end of the year. Tanfold was the only director to give her a starring role in films. Nobody questioned knew that she had returned to Brighton at the time of her death. The dossier contains several photographs of Beatrice; all show her wearing the same ear-rings. The last is dated only a few weeks before her death. Every jewellery shop and pawnbrokers in Brighton was circulated with a description of the ear-rings, but they were never offered for sale.

Prendergast's files include some gossip which suggests that Beatrice may have used her physical charms to secure some of her roles. Put bluntly, she slept with directors, producers, and anyone else that might be able to help her. Prendergast checked on this aspect of the case, and can confirm it. He won't mention any names; all of those concerned were checked, and none were in Brighton when Beatrice died.

Prendergast doesn't believe in ghosts, and won't accept that a ghost is evidence, however bizarre its behaviour; a good deal of persuasion will be needed before he even comes to look at it. He is not aware of the significance of one important clue; when checking the studios he spoke to the management, and never visited a set whilst filming was in progress. Accordingly, he never learned that green grease paint is used for filming. If he learns this he will

immediately think of the green grease on Beatrice's lips, and take an intense interest in the studios, especially Sussex Belle.

By now the adventurers should be reasonably sure that the ghost is Beatrice, and may guess that she died in the studio, although there is no real proof. If they have shared their suspicions with the police, Inspector Prendergast will also be taking an interest; at this stage he would prefer to let the adventurers carry on with their own enquiries, since they have access to the studio, while he can't go in without prematurely alerting anyone who might have something to hide.

## **The Phantom of the Studio**

While the adventurers are studying the ghost, they are stopping Higgins from being alone with his "love". If the adventurers leave equipment unattended, he will sabotage it as described above. If they are in the studio every night, Higgins will try to find a way to see "Beatrice".

First he will volunteer to help with their experiments; if possible he intends to sabotage their equipment, but his main priority is to be near Beatrice. If he has to spend a few hours sitting in an electric pentacle he won't object, but will "accidentally" break it, or do something else to disrupt the experiment. It is likely that adventurers will soon decide that he is more trouble than he is worth, and exclude him from the studio.

If the adventurers don't allow him to stay, he'll try to find a way to see Beatrice secretly. This might involve sneaking up to the lighting gallery and watching from above, hiding behind the scenery or inside a prop, or even climbing to the roof and peering through moth-holes in the skylight blinds. Gradually the adventurers should become aware of the mysterious watcher, but should not catch him immediately; try to give them a vague impression of a watcher, then a fleeting glimpse, without revealing his identity. Make it difficult to catch him; for example, he might evade the adventurers by climbing down (or up) the dumb waiter shaft, or hide in a room and take the stairs when the adventurers think he is using the lift shaft. Socks the cat might also be used to lead them astray.

After the second or third sighting the adventurers should be laying traps for this mysterious intruder, and should eventually close in on him. By now Higgins is desperate, and determined to be with Beatrice; as the adventurers move in to capture him, he shouts "You won't keep me from her!", draws a straight razor, and tries to cut his own throat. By the time that the adventurers reach him he is bleeding profusely and critically injured. He has cut his windpipe but missed the major arteries in his neck; with prompt first aid (Difficulty 8) and hospital treatment he will survive, although he will never talk again. If he isn't helped he will suffocate in his own blood, bleed to death, or both.

If he dies, the adventurers may think that his suicide is the answer to the mystery; "obviously" Higgins killed Beatrice. There is a key to the studio in his pocket, which explains how he (and she) must have got in without anyone else knowing, her photograph is in his boarding-house room (which will be checked by the police, if not the adventurers), and he was strong enough to kill her with

a heavy blunt weapon. Inspector Prendergast will put this theory forward, and Tanfold will enthusiastically support it. Any attempt to contact Higgins' soul via a medium will fail, and Beatrice's ghost won't change in any way. Adventurers may suspect that some psychic influence from the ghost caused the suicide; this isn't true, but there is no need to tell players that if the idea worries them. Carry on to the next section.

If he lives, all happens much as above, except that the police eventually charge him with Beatrice's murder. Despite this, he still refuses to help reveal the true story of her death. He's simply too frightened and confused to help.

It will be several days before Higgins is in any condition to communicate; he can't talk and is illiterate, but can nod or shake his head (very gently) in response to questions. He denies killing Beatrice, but refuses any other answers. Persuasive adventurers should eventually get more out of him, but this should only happen at the end of the adventure, as confirmation of their suspicions. Meanwhile he is arrested and charged with her murder.

## In Camera

While it is possible that the adventurers will save Higgins, it is more likely that he will die, leaving them with a messy corpse and an apparent solution to the mystery. There are still a few loose ends, but the police (and Tanfold and Radden) are very happy with this answer.

If the adventurers don't like this solution, there are still a few clues that might be followed up; in particular, they could look for the ear-rings. The adventurers may have guessed that they are somewhere in the studio. One possibility is that a medium might dowse for the jewellery, or for Beatrice's photographs, or a magician might attempt to use a spell to locate them. This should be Difficulty 4 for the ear-rings, which are unique, Difficulty 8 for the photographs, since there are many other copies and many other photographs.

Even without these exotic methods, the adventurers may simply guess their location. Tanfold's safe isn't hidden very well, and most of the studio staff know that it is there; if the adventurers still have the run of the place at night, and are good with locks, they can probably get it open. Unfortunately finding the ear-rings doesn't prove much; Tanfold will simply claim that they've been in the safe "for ages", he really can't remember how long. He thinks that "Higgins handed them in."

A better but more subtle approach is to find the ear-rings but leave them in place, then tell Tanfold that the adventurers are looking for them, and give him an opportunity to dispose of them. With careful timing he might be caught en route to dumping them in the sea. His story, in this case, will be that he suddenly remembered that they were in the safe, and was "frightened that someone might think that they proved something against him"; he then tells the same story about Higgins handing them in. This time he is much less convincing, especially if the police are involved in the trap, but even now there isn't enough evidence to arrest him.

Meanwhile the studio is still haunted, and Tanfold is still anxious to get rid of the ghost, while Radden wants to film it. At this point he is ready to fake his “experiment”.

One evening, as the adventurers are setting up to watch the ghost, and possibly experimenting with ways of driving it away, Radden brings out his camera (loaded with the pre-exposed film) and a wooden box fitted with a pane of red-tinted glass and several light bulbs, and suggests that it might be possible to film the ghost. He knows that it doesn't appear if there is much light, but he's “heard that red light doesn't drive ghosts away”; while normal films and plates aren't sensitive to red light, high-speed cine films respond slightly, if over-developed correctly. The box plugs in to one of the sockets normally used for arc lights, and fills the room with dull red light when it's switched on.

It's likely that the adventurers will go along with this idea; it sounds plausible, and they have nothing to lose by trying it. Radden sets up his camera to cover the point where Beatrice appears, taking great care to use the same tripod position and camera angle as in the original film, and prepares to start turning the crank.

Four hours later the ghost finally starts to perform, and Radden turns on the light; the glow is seen as another patch of darkness, flooding towards the ghost. Since it doesn't vanish, he starts to film it.

As soon as the ghost vanishes and the light returns to normal, Radden heads for the darkroom, and starts to process the film. If anyone insists on accompanying him they will see him prepare a film tank, exactly as for any other film, then switch off the lights before opening the camera. If anyone is especially suspicious, Radden will let them touch the film (in total darkness) as he opens the camera, to feel that it is going straight from the camera into the tank. If anyone switches on a light, of course, the film will be ruined. Once development is under way it's possible to put on the light, but since everything takes place inside a lightproof tank there isn't much to see.

After about twenty minutes Radden takes the film from the tank and washes it, then puts it through methylated spirits {industrial alcohol} to dry it. Although the negative looks very under-exposed, it's just possible to see the pattern of the oil-cloth on the studio floor, and any equipment used by the adventurers, with a vaguely humanoid form above them. It's apparent that the background is visible through the figure. Radden smiles, and says “If I can get decent prints, these are going to be worth their weight in gold!”

At this point the adventurers should realise that Radden's motives aren't necessarily entirely founded in scientific curiosity. Any suggestion that the negative should be handed over to the adventurers will be very firmly rejected; he'll gladly give them a print, and/or stills, once he's ready to make them, but there is no way he is going to part with the original. Before he leaves for the night, he locks it in one of the fireproof cabinets inside the film store, and padlocks the room.

It's possible that the adventurers will decide to do something drastic, such as breaking in to the film store overnight and removing the negative. If so, Radden simply pretends to film the ghost again, with another prepared negative.

Naturally he simulates extreme anger, and threatens to have the adventurers barred from the studio, without actually doing so.

In the morning Radden makes a print. It shows a shadowy human form, moving in exactly the same way as the real ghost. It's blurry, and its outlines seem to waver erratically. This is the first that Tanfold has heard or seen of the film, and his surprise is genuine; he immediately realises what Radden has done, and isn't happy about it. They start a furious argument, with Tanfold saying that he wants to get rid of the ghost quietly, not start a publicity campaign, while Radden points out that he owns a share of the company, and would rather like to see a profit occasionally. Despite their anger, neither mentions their real interests in the ghost while the adventurers are around, but in private the argument will be very bitter. Eavesdropping will give the adventurers the impression that both men know more than they are telling, but won't reveal much more of the story.

Unless the adventurers are very naive, they are likely to have some reservations about the film, and careful viewing will reveal two flaws. Radden put the film into the camera one sprocket hole from the correct position, so that the image of the ghost seems to hover near the top of the picture, about 3 ft above the floor, not 2 ft as the adventurers have seen. The lighting is also subtly wrong; Radden set the red lights up to the left of the camera, but the image seems to be lit from above. While neither flaw is conclusive, it does suggest the possibility of trick photography, which implies the existence of another film. If it is examined with a lens, on a frame-by-frame basis, the adventurers will eventually notice that part of another person's foot is visible in two consecutive frames, and appears to be much more sharply in focus, although the background is still visible through it. This is almost conclusive proof that the picture was faked and is a good cue for a quick search of the studio, or the film store, as described above. Radden won't dispose of the original film until he is sure that he won't have to fake another.

Cunning adventurers may think of "accidentally" destroying the faked negative, then trapping Radden as he is preparing another. It takes about thirty minutes to run the original through the printing machine, and Radden must take it to and from the darkroom. This should give the adventurers plenty of scope to catch him in the act.

If the adventurers don't spot the fake, and have somehow failed to uncover the true story, the adventure ends here. Tanfold and Radden eventually settle their differences and agree to shoot a documentary around the "ghostly footage". Their film (starring the adventurers, or actors if they don't agree to take part) is a smash hit, especially at gentlemen's smoking clubs, stag nights, etc. They eventually use this success to upgrade the studio's reputation, and by the 1920s are pillars of the British film industry, with huge studios on the outskirts of London, and become major players on the international film scene. They always think fondly of the adventurers, and invite them to all their premieres...

## It's A Wrap!

Once the film is exposed (sorry) as a fake, Tanfold and Radden realise that discovery is inevitable; rather, Radden makes it clear that he will take Tanfold down with him if he doesn't tell the truth.

If the police are not yet involved in the case, they confess the truth and ask the adventurers to keep silent about Beatrice's death; they promise that they will destroy the film and make no further attempt to exploit the ghost. They will even close down the studio if it will stop the adventurers from taking the matter to the police. The adventurers may hesitate, or agree immediately, but if they don't call the police in immediately, they are making a big mistake. Tanfold and Radden close down the studio and take their money (including bank loans that will never be repaid) to Paris, where they set up a studio and start a mail order business specialising in continental pornography. One of the films on offer, a year or so later, is "Ghost", an erotic tale in which several "scientists" (the adventurers at first, later some actors and actresses) study an erotic ghost, and eventually take part in its activities. Strangers with an interest in this sort of material (most notably His Majesty's Customs) start to take an unusual interest in the adventurers... In the light of their absence, and the adventurers' discoveries, Higgins eventually agrees to answer questions, and the truth gradually comes out. If he has been arrested, he is eventually sentenced to a year's hard labour; this seems harsh, but there is nobody else handy to punish. The adventurers will not be popular with the judge or the police, since the real criminals will have escaped.

If the adventurers follow a harsher line, or the police are involved in trapping them, Tanfold and Radden will be tried on conspiracy and obscenity charges, and will eventually be sentenced to five years hard labour. The judge decides that Higgins was led astray by them, and gives him a year's suspended sentence.

Once the adventurers know the truth, they still have a haunted building to deal with, but there is simply no easy answer. So long as the building exists it will be haunted by its erotic ghost; it will return if another building is erected on the site. See *Further Adventures*, below, for more on this theme. The banks that take possession will not agree to the destruction of the building, and will take a very dim view of arson and other unauthorised attempts to get rid of it. The studio is closed, and the building is eventually auctioned; if any adventurer is interested in buying, the referee should run the auction with several NPCs bidding, and let it go for about £2500, far more than it is worth. The bare site, without any buildings, is worth £300 at the end of the adventure, £2000 in the late 1920s, and hundreds of thousands in the 1990s.

## Rewards

This adventure isn't particularly dangerous, unless the adventurers somehow goad Higgins into violence; the characters should be trying to uncover the unpleasant truth, and points are awarded mainly for their success.

Ghost is identified as Beatrice Avery	+ 3 points
The ear-rings are found	+ 1 point
The photographs are found	+ 1 point
The film is exposed as a fake	+ 3 points
Tanfold and Radden are arrested	+ 2 points
Tanfold and Radden are exposed but escape	+ 1 points
Adventurers don't identify the ghost	-3 points
Adventurers don't spot the fake	-2 points
Higgins dies	-1 points
Higgins is assumed to have killed Beatrice	-2 points

Points should also be given for acting in character, good dialogue, and anything else that seems appropriate. Bad movie cliches and puns should be rewarded (or punished) as the referee prefers.

### Further Adventures

The studios have a ghost that won't go away. Even if the building is no longer used for filmmaking, the supernatural presence will remain. It also happens (by the whim of the author) to stand on a patch of ground that is unusually conducive to Ab-natural phenomena, and will be haunted long after most ghosts have disappeared. If the adventurers don't buy it, it will eventually fall into the ownership of others who would like to exploit the ghost. The timing that follows is suggested purely as an example, and can easily be changed):

After a brief period as a cheap restaurant, and use as an Army recruiting depot during the Great War, the building is sold to fake medium Boris Deal, who uses it as a temple for "psychic healing", accompanying Beatrice's manifestations with an orgiastic ceremony. The ghost is identified as his "spirit guide" Petra, an Egyptian priestess of Bast. Deal's "ceremonies" suck in someone close to one of the adventurers (for instance a relative, fiancée, or friend), and it should gradually become clear that he is using the sessions to gather material for blackmail, or for some other illicit purpose, possibly leading to a magical or Ab-natural secret. Exposing him should not be easy; he's careful, clever, and completely unscrupulous.

Once Deal is out of the way, the building (or whatever has replaced it) has many owners. In the 1960s it is occupied by a hippie religious organisation, the Church of Nature, whose founders have decided that Beatrice is a manifestation of their Mother Goddess. Repeated attempts to invoke her more fully eventually open a gateway to the Ab-natural; but for once it's a positive manifestation. One of the worshippers becomes the Goddess incarnate; her body is possessed by one of the Raaee, who takes an innocent (but devastatingly powerful) approach to life in modern Britain. The adventurers are contacted by the other members of the cult, who are a little overwhelmed by the results of their prayers, and must somehow persuade a supremely powerful being that humanity should be left to solve its own problems. This is best run as a comic interlude;



given the immense power of the Raaee, anything that actually annoys her could have catastrophic consequences.

Further adventures during this ghost's gradual escalation from psychic recording to a powerful Ab-natural and erotic force are left to the referee.

## Characters



### **Gilbert Tanfold (Movie Mogul, age 40)**

BODY [2], MIND [4], SOUL [2]

Actor [4], Artist (Writer, Director) [4], Business (Producer) [5], Drive [5]

Equipment: The resources of a film studio, inoperative .32 revolver (in office safe), keys to all parts of studio

Quote: *"Places everyone... get rid of the knitting, love... let's have bags of emotion please... ...and action!"*

Notes: Tanfold is an unimpressive figure, of the type that might later be described as a spiv. His suit is almost fashionable, but badly fitted, and he wears evening shoes by day; not the mark of a gentleman! He likes to think of himself as an artist, but his scripts are desperately uninspired; this is one of the reasons why the studio usually has financial problems.

Good role models are Flash Harry, from the St. Trinians films, and "Throat" Dibbler, from Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels.



### **Beatrice Avery (Ghost, age 27 at death)**

BODY [-], MIND [-], SOUL [-]

Light Resistant [4], Suppress Light [6], Visible [5]

Equipment: None

Quote: -

Notes: Beatrice's ghost is a psychic recording, not a normal Ab-natural entity. She desired nothing more than immortality on film, and the unusual circumstances of her death have indelibly placed her imprint on the studio as described above.

The haunting will occur as long as the building exists, or in any other building erected on the site. It appears regardless of any magical or technological defence that might be used, including demolition of the building. The ghost is not filmable, its appearance is described in more detail in the main text.



### **Fred Higgins (Props Man, aged 28)**

BODY [6], MIND [2], SOUL [2]

Athlete (weight lifting) [8], Brawling [8], Mechanic (carpentry only) [5]

Equipment: Key to studio (store room entrance, illicit copy), tools, straight razor

Quote: *"Uhh.. I'm not sure."*

Notes: Fred is good-looking and impressively muscled, but

not very bright. He is illiterate, but has basic carpentry skills and can handle a paint brush reasonably well if someone else explains exactly what he is to paint. He has no acting talent whatever.

Despite the wholly mercenary nature of his relationship with Beatrice, her death in his arms was extremely traumatic, and he has begun to think of her as the lost love of his life. He sometimes returns to the studio to see her ghost, using an illicitly copied key to get in. He is horrified by Tanfold's attempts to get rid of her, and will do anything he can to block the investigation and sabotage the adventurers.

Higgins has stolen four publicity photographs of Beatrice Avery from Tanfold's files. They are framed and kept on the bedside table in his room at the "Seaview" boarding house, a few hundred yards from the studio. He has nothing else of any significance in his room. If he dies he will NOT return as a ghost.



**Andrew Radden (Cameraman, aged 28)**

BODY [3], MIND [4], SOUL [3], Artist (Cinematography, film editing, processing, retouching, lighting, etc.) [8], Mechanic [6]

Equipment: Two Lumiere cinematograph cameras, dark room equipment etc., keys to studio including film store.

Quote: *"We'll shoot this one at f16. Give me a focused spot on her face... not that close, Vernon, you'll burn her!"*

Notes: Radden is an extremely good cameraman and technician who is wasted on Tanfold's lacklustre scripts. He has noticed that spiritualists seem to be prepared to believe in almost anything, and there's no denying that there really is a ghost; if he can pretend to film it, copies should fetch a good price. Most of his savings are tied up in the company; his plan is risky, but might make enough money to keep the studio from bankruptcy.



**Inspector Albert Prendergast (Plain clothes policeman, Age 44)**

BODY [4], MIND [3], SOUL [4]

Brawling [6], Business [5], Detective [7], Marksman [4], Melee Weapon (truncheon) [7], Psychology [5], Thief (study of criminal methods) [6]

Equipment: .38 revolver (not normally carried), truncheon, handcuffs, resources of Brighton police force.

Quote: *"I've been wanting to close the books on this one for a long time..."*

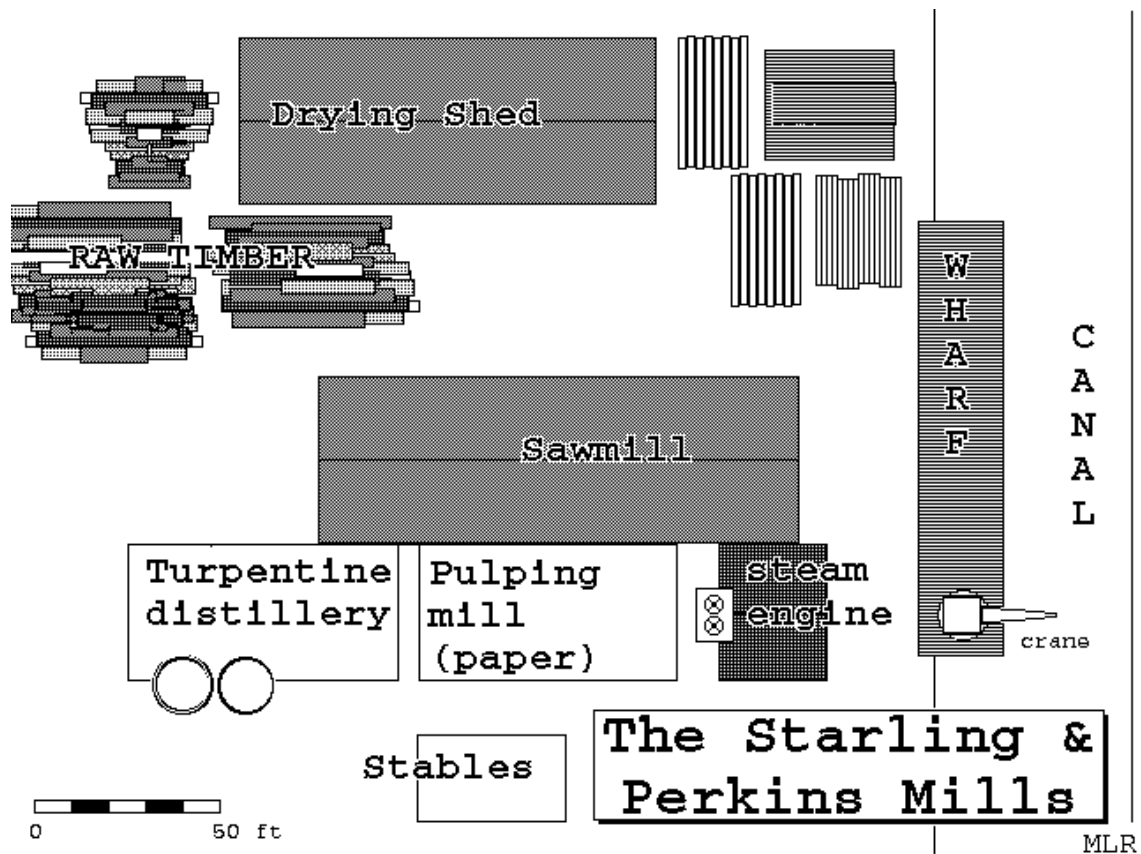
Notes: Prendergast is a moderately successful detective who is somewhat old for his rank, and would like another promotion. Closing the files on the Avery case would certainly help. Despite this motive he's a good and honest policeman who may occasionally bend the law slightly, but is unlikely to break it.

## Adventure Shorts

This section contains two adventure outlines which are much longer than those in the worldbook, or in the brief “further adventures” sections of previous adventures, but will still require considerable preparation by the referee.

### Something Nasty In The Wood-Shed

The adventurers are contacted by Lord Starling (see Adventure 2), or by his heirs if he did not survive, and asked to look into a peculiar series of accidents at a timber mill one of his companies owns in Scotland. The timber, mostly pine logs, is converted into planks, paper pulp, and turpentine; the products are shipped to the coast by barge, then by ship and rail to customers around the UK. There are approximately fifty employees at the site.



Several months ago the boiler of the mill’s steam engine burst, killing two stokers and beginning a long sequence of serious accidents. One worker lost a hand to the sawmill blade soon after the new boiler was installed, others have been hurt stacking timber, burned on steam pipes in the drying shed, run over by a timber wagon, crushed by a barge swinging at its moorings, poisoned by chemicals used in the turpentine plant, and hit by a loose axe head. There is no obvious (or obscure) pattern to the timing of the accidents, except that most of them have occurred on cloudy days (this should only be found by checking weather records) or on late shifts. Most of them seem to have been caused by

carelessness, usually that of the victim; for example, the boiler explosion was caused by one of the stokers hanging his coat on an escape valve. The police and factory inspectors have already checked the yard, but can't find anything to explain the sudden spate of incidents. Now the workers at the yard are claiming that there's something "unnatural" about the incidents, and threatening to walk out. Productivity is suffering, and the yard may lose its biggest contract, to provide timber for the decks of the Navy's new battleships.

Eventually the adventurers should discover that there is an Ab-natural explanation for the incidents. When the yard got the Navy contract, its wharf was rebuilt to take the extra work. Some of the timbers used came from a tree which contained a wood spirit.

Wood spirits are unusual Aeiirii manifestations which develop symbiotic relationships with trees. Briefly, the tree acts as a portal for the manifestation; the manifestation uses its power to protect and nourish the tree. Wood spirits are not benevolent, except to the tree they inhabit; like most Aeiirii manifestations they are hostile to life, especially animals and humanity, and seek to destroy it at any opportunity. For instance, a spirit might perceive that its tree was about to be chopped down, and use its Psychic Suggestion power to make the woodsman "accidentally" cut his own foot. It might sense that the tree needed more nutrients, and obtain them by making a rabbit panic and flee a non-existent fox, only to impale itself on a sharp root. If the tree is safe, the spirit roams further afield, and might lure victims into danger (such as quicksand or swamps), cause hunting accidents, etc. It has a maximum range of a few hundred yards. Spirits have some light resistance, but are generally only found in the darkest parts of forests, where there is rarely enough light to affect them. Unfortunately the surrounding area was cleared before the spirit's tree was reached in midsummer, and it was unable to manifest to protect itself; if it had, the tree would probably not have been cut.

The spirit's portal is one of the larger support beams of the wharf; if it is burned or rots, the spirit will be free to find another tree, but in the meantime it is simply causing as much trouble as possible, hoping that it will somehow lead to the destruction of the wharf.

Discovery of the real cause of the accidents should follow more deaths and involve several false leads; for example, there might be a suggestion that someone is illegally using the turpentine distillery to make alcohol, with the injuries due to drunkenness or criminal violence. A useful source for this red herring is the film *Outland*. The adventurers will probably spend a good deal of time at the site, and may also fall victim to the attacks before the problem is resolved.

### **Wood Spirit**

BODY [12], MIND [3], SOUL [7]

Brawling [8], Light resistant [6], Materialisation [6], Psychic Suggestion [9]

Brawling (only when materialised), Effect 12, Damage A:F, B:I/C, C:K

Notes: This spirit rarely materialises, and can only do so at its portal, the tree it "inhabits"; when materialised it appears to be an amorphous mist, but is very

solid when it strikes. Victims are crushed with enormous strength. Once the remnants of its tree are destroyed the spirit cannot materialise, but is free to start the long process of occupying another tree. This begins with a seedling, BODY [1], with the spirit also BODY [1] and gaining BODY as the tree grows.

## Cold Sweat

This adventure should be run for a team of experienced adventurers.

One of the adventurers notices that his suit has an odd smell, a faint rotting miasma like meat gone bad. When he (or a servant) checks, a hard lump is found in the lining; the dried remains of the first two bones of a human finger.

The suit was recently sent out for repairs and cleaning (bullet wounds are hell on good clothes), and it seems plausible that the finger somehow got there while it was at the tailors. Discreet enquiries should lead to the following information:

Most tailors do their own repairs, but for the last six months a company called Prometheus Garment Repairs, based in a factory in Whitechapel, has offered a cut-price cleaning and repair service that is cheaper than in-house tailoring. Their terms include unconditional guarantees and 24-hour delivery. It sounds almost too good to be true, but on the two or three occasions when suits have been returned damaged, Prometheus Garment Repairs has paid out the full cost of replacements.

Nobody really knows much about Prometheus Garment Repairs, except that it isn't a Jewish firm; it trades on Saturday. This is extraordinary in this industry and area. With the prices charged most customers have guessed that the plant is either heavily automated or uses sweated labour, cheap immigrant workers who are paid far less than a normal working wage. Visitors aren't allowed inside the factory; the reason given to customers is that the company uses cleaning methods that are a trade secret.

In fact Prometheus Garment Repairs is owned by Captain Randolph Black, an initiate of the Golden Dawn and a practising magician. Several years ago Black visited Haiti, and stole the secret of creating zombies. To acquire this knowledge he kidnapped a houngan (a voodoo priest) and five members of his family, tortured them to extract the information, then killed them.

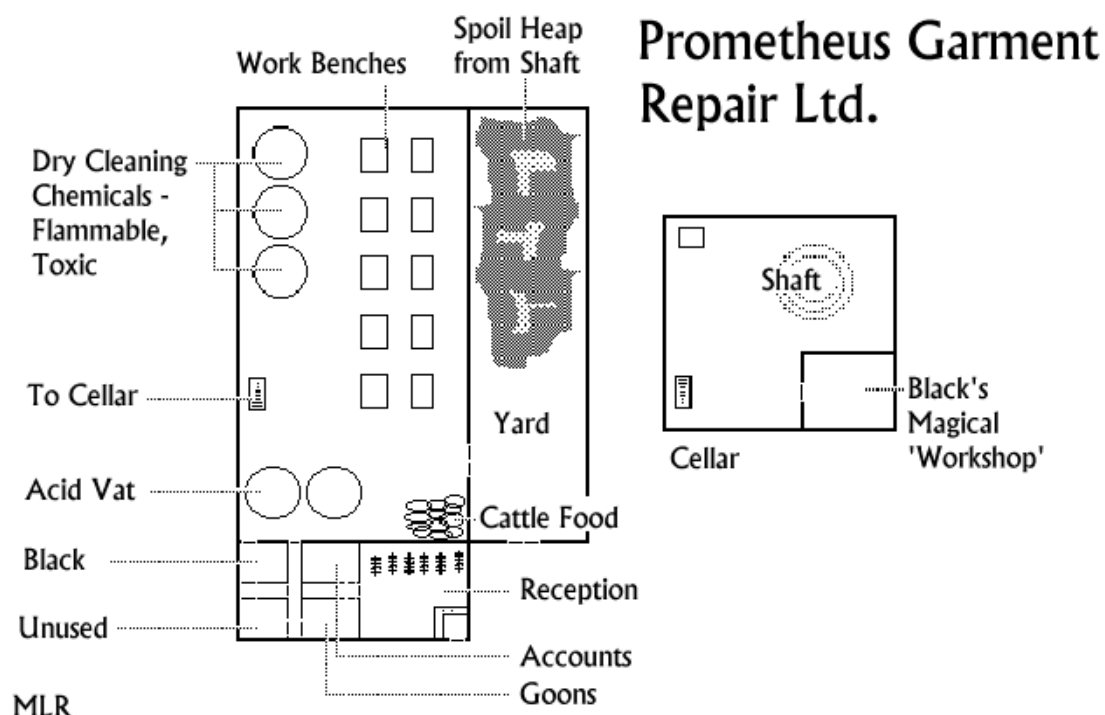
As should perhaps be obvious, Black is insane; he believes that the world is hollow, and contains Atlantis. Roughly half of the zombies he has created are building a shaft, which is currently nearly 100 ft deep. The remainder work in the factory, which is a convenient cover and source of funds for the materials and tools needed for this project. Although zombies are clumsy, the simple repetitive tasks involved in cleaning and garment repairs are within their capabilities. Unfortunately zombies are a little more fragile than normal people, and occasional accidents happen. If they are fixable, parts are sewn back on; if not, Black has an acid bath for disposal of the bodies.

The factory has a staff of nine humans and 28 zombies; Black, four hypnotised office staff who are completely incurious about the factory, and four

“porters”, typical goons who were Black’s accomplices in his previous crimes and know better than to disobey him.

The procedure Black has learned is deceptively simple; poison a victim, then use a spell which summons a weak Saiitii entity to animate the corpse. By the time that the victim dies the entity is bound by the spell, and must obey the orders of the magician. The spell takes several hours to cast, and is Difficulty [10]; surprisingly, Black has cast it nearly thirty times without problems. Or so he thinks...

The spells are extremely dangerous; when used in a religious context, the minds and souls of dozens of worshippers add their power to that of the houngan. Under normal circumstances each zombie would be controlled by a separate (and relatively weak) Saiitii entity, magically bound to do nothing but obey orders.



Black believes that he has succeeded in duplicating this process, but he is mistaken; all of the zombies are under the control of a single entity, which intends to use them for its own purposes, and is using its powers to compel Black to find more victims. When it accumulates thirty victims the controlled flesh of the zombies will unite to form a hideous monster, which will devastate as much of London as it can reach. As more victims are killed, the monster will become stronger and more powerful, incorporating new bodies into its flesh and spreading out as a hideous plague of death and destruction.

Meanwhile the soul of the houngan has somehow survived death, and seeks revenge on Black and his followers. It has slowly followed him to London and will try to possess the next zombie he creates, and wreak a horrible revenge.

Ideally the adventurers scout the factory and discover that only a few people in and out, discover that the only materials entering the factory are dry cleaning

chemicals and sacks of cattle cake (used to feed the zombies), break in and see a little of the zombie production line, then are caught by Black, who decides to create more zombies. As the poison is administered the first victim is possessed by the soul of the houngan, which uses his powers to break free and attack Black, and gives the other adventurers a chance to escape. The controlling entity sees that Black is on the verge of failure, and starts to combine the zombies into a horrible composite creature. At first it may seem that they are trying to help the adventurers, but quickly it is apparent that they are intent on killing everyone, and adding them to the rapidly-growing mountain of decaying flesh. Escape should not be easy, but most dry-cleaning chemicals of the period are flammable, which may give the adventurers some useful ideas.

For less experienced characters the additional complication posed by the Saiitii entity should be omitted, and the zombies should simply lose their controlling spirits as Black dies. This leaves the adventurers with at least 29 corpses to explain, but is somewhat more survivable. In either case, Black's goons will surrender as soon as he is killed.

### Optional End Credits Scene

For use if this adventure is run *before* When Hell Freezes Over (or if you want to worry the players).

The fight is over, and the monsters are defeated. The adventurers have gone to do whatever they need to do afterwards; arrange a mass cremation, take a long bath, find psychiatric help, or get very very drunk. All seems still.

At a conveniently dramatic twilight moment (late evening works best) the earth in the spoil heap in the yard stirs very slightly, and a severed half-rotted finger emerges and starts to wriggle down the side of the slope toward the building. It's nearly reached the cobbles when a raven swoops down, seems to inspect the finger, then flies off with it in its beak.

Cue final title "The End" to be followed after a few seconds by three more words "...or is it?"



**Captain Randolph Black (ex-naval officer, magician, age 57)**

BODY [4], MIND [6], SOUL [4]

Acting (disguise) [8], Brawling [6], Business [7], Marksman [7], Melee Weapon (sword stick) [7], Military Arms [7], Psychology (hypnosis only) [9], Scholar (Magic) [8]

Sword stick, Effect 8, A:F, B:I, C:C/K

4-shot .32 Derringer, Effect 4, A:F, B:F, C:I/C & coated with poison.

Poison (neurotoxin), Effect 5 + 1 per minute, A:I, B:C, C:K

Equipment: Chalk, string, various packets of incense, matches, 18 doses of poison, hypodermic, 1 phial of antivenim

Quote: "I don't think that you are taking me seriously..." [shoots someone]

"...now, as I was saying..."

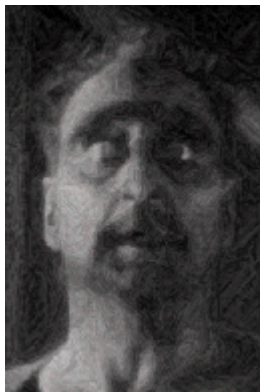
Notes: Black is a charismatic lunatic with a warped sense of humour; for instance, the company name derives from the subtitle of the novel *Frankenstein*,



“The Modern Prometheus”. He doesn’t feel any need to justify his actions, although he may talk while he is waiting for someone to die. A good role model is Lex Luthor, as portrayed in the TV series *Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*.

Black’s poison is a lethal fish venom; without medical treatment it attacks at Effect 5 when it is injected, at Effect 6 a minute later, and so on until the victim is either dead or critically injured; without medical treatment death occurs a few hours later. The antivenim is supposedly an antidote for the poison; it doesn’t work, and Black only carries it to reassure his henchmen. His bullets are also coated with the poison.

If Black suspects that someone is investigating the factory, he’ll disguise himself in some way, find an innocuous excuse to meet one of the adventurers on his own, hypnotise him, find out what they are doing, and arrange his plans accordingly. If the adventurer doesn’t respond to hypnosis, Black will kill him instead. Otherwise the hypnotised adventurer will be “programmed” to report any developments without alerting the others. Typically he will pretend to be a policeman, a priest, or some other authority figure.



#### **Typical Zombies**

BODY [4/8], MIND [1/10], SOUL [1/12]

Brawling [6]

Equipment: shovels, pick axes, etc.

Notes: Statistics are with and without the controlling power of the Saiitii entity. Usually the zombies are left on “autopilot”, with only a tiny fraction of its power, produced by its Division ability, animating them. If something interesting is happening it will take control of at least one zombie. There is no outward sign of the change. They do not talk.



#### **The Houngan (vengeful spirit)**

BODY [-], MIND [6], SOUL [8]

Possession [9]

Quote: “Don’ fight me, mon, I am helping you”

Notes: The picture shows his original human form prior to his death. This spirit aims to destroy Black; anything else is of secondary importance. To do this it will merge with the mind of his next victim (by force if necessary) and help him to break free and attack Black. It can do this most easily AFTER the poison has been administered, but before the victim dies. Once the Houngan is in control, it adds +6 to the victims BODY for 2D6 rounds, +3 for another 2D6 rounds, then +1 for another 1D6 rounds. Skills related to BODY, or which get their Effect from BODY, are also modified. Since Black uses ropes and chains which are designed to withstand normal human strength, it is likely that the victim will be able to break free.

After strength drops back to normal the poison attacks, but with modified results:

- A. Poison thrown off completely, with no bad effects.
- B. Poison has temporary effect, -1 BODY for 1D6 days
- C. Victim dies and immediately becomes a possessed zombie

Once Black is defeated the possessing spirit goes, never to return. If it possesses someone who dies without defeating Black, it will possess the next victim and try again.

**The Zombie Flesh Monster (ridiculously powerful Saiitii entity)**

BODY [100], MIND [15], SOUL [16]

Brawling [10], Infection [17], Light resistant [15], Psychic Suggestion [18], Division (x2 variant) [10]

“Punch”, Effect [15], A:I, B:C, C:K

Notes: This grotesque monster is somewhat less than the sum of its parts; it has difficulty moving and coordinating its attacks. It forms quickly, with arms and numerous legs composed of the once-living bodies of the zombies, merged as a solid mass of flesh. An occasional human face is visible on its skin, its eyes showing an apparent expression of mute horror. It looks vaguely like a crab, but has six legs and two arms, each composed of several corpses; it can attack with both arms simultaneously. It can't talk.



## Bonus Adventure: When Hell Freezes Over

By ALEX STEWART

### Editor's note

The adventure that follows has some similarities to the adventure outline *Cold Sweat*, above, most notably in its location in London's East End and the nature of some of the creatures that will be encountered. It probably isn't a good idea to run one directly after the other, unless things are modified so that there is a causal link between them, and a gap of at least a year or two in game time. The link can easily be retconned after the first adventure has been run – the adventurers simply didn't notice things that were going on in the background.

**If *Cold Sweat* is run first:** Use the optional end credits scene. The last remnants of the monster disappear into the sky with the aid of a crow – one that is soon under the control of the Saiitii entity that gave the adventurers problems, and is clinging desperately to the finger, its last foothold in our world. Later that evening it senses another source of power – the weak emanations of the Aiirii entity trapped under a warehouse in Hobbs End – and has the crow take it down to investigate. This turns out to be its last mistake; the Aiirii entity is now more powerful, and its magic overwhelms and consumes the life-force of the crow and the magic trapped in the finger. The entity in the warehouse is weakened, but has gained some knowledge from the Saiitii entity; knowledge of zombies and the way to control them. Eventually, when it has gathered enough power, it starts to put its knowledge to use...

**If *When Hell Freezes over* is run first:** Captain Randolph Black is in the area recruiting some old shipmates for a “salvage operation” (e.g. piracy and murder) in the Caribbean. If the adventurers are allowed to notice him they get the impression that he's a very dangerous man, more likely to kick a homeless person than help him. Make it clear that he's on his own business and has no interest in their affairs “unless you force me to take an interest, of course...” and that he expects them to stay out of his affairs. Period. He's occasionally seen in pubs talking to the local criminal classes, eventually leaving around the time the adventurers finish. All that they can find out is that he was discharged from the Navy in the late 1890s under circumstances that are still an official secret. Much later they will learn that he is an associate of Crowley and other mystics. What they don't know is that he learns about their investigation and finds the story very interesting. Since he's headed for the Caribbean anyway, he adds another goal – recruit a houngan and learn how to control zombies, then use them to find Atlantis. Years later he sets up his East End base and starts to create zombies. This implies that he will know exactly what the adventurers are up to when they arrive, which probably makes him more dangerous...

A useful source for both adventures is *The People of the Abyss* (1903) by Jack London, a disturbing illustrated account of East End life.

## When Hell Freezes Over

This is a relatively straightforward investigative scenario for Forgotten Futures, using the Carnacki the Ghost-Finder worldbook, which leads the adventurers to a confrontation with a powerful and dangerous Aerii entity. With a little bit of forethought they should be able to overcome it; but groups which neglect basic precautions, like staking out the site without setting magical defences, will find themselves in deep trouble alarmingly fast! Adapting it for other systems, like Gurps Horror or Call of Cthulhu, should be relatively easy if you prefer.

The adventurers will become involved in the case at a fairly early stage, but how they're drawn into it will depend on their motivation. Students of the Abnatural may take it upon themselves to intervene as soon as they realise something strange is going on, perhaps from newspaper reports, or might be called in as expert consultants if they've already established cordial relations with local police officers, journalists, or someone else with legitimate reasons to be investigating. If the group includes a reporter or a detective working on the case they'll naturally turn to their friends for help, especially if they've had previous dealings with abnatural entities, since no one else is likely to believe their "far-fetched theories." As a last resort they can be hired from the outset by Walter Bellingham, a major NPC, although this does make it harder to use him as a red herring!

### The Restless Dead

However the adventurers are called in, the first major incident which attracts their attention is the apparent theft of a body from a morgue. The facts appear simple enough; Joe Sykes, a well-known local tramp, was found dead by the night-watchman at an empty warehouse in Hob's Lane, a run-down commercial district in the East End of London. The body was removed to the morgue at the local hospital, but when the pathologist went to examine it a couple of hours later it had vanished.

Interviewing the hospital staff will be a complete dead end. The porters who carried the body to the morgue left it on the slab at about 5.30 AM; the pathologist who was supposed to perform the post mortem found it missing at about quarter past seven. No one else was seen to enter the room in the interim, although no one was keeping a particularly close eye on the premises either.

If the investigators ask whether anyone was seen acting suspiciously in the vicinity of the hospital they'll be out of luck; the whole city was blanketed by one of the famous London pea-souper smogs, so even though it was theoretically broad daylight outside no one could have seen a thing.

Checking the paperwork will reveal that the preliminary cause of Sykes' death has been listed as hypothermia; astute investigators, assisted by a MIND roll if necessary, should find this strange given that it's the middle of August and that the night in question was almost unbearably sultry.

From this point on the progress of the investigation will depend almost entirely on the actions of the PCs; accordingly, most of the rest of the scenario



has been presented as a series of self-contained encounters and locations which can be brought into play in whatever order the party decide to visit them. It's likely they'll want to visit the warehouse and its immediate environs more than once; in this case be careful to pace the information they get.



### The Warehouse

The warehouse is a typical early Victorian structure, enclosing several hundred square yards and standing three stories tall. All the ceilings are high, around twenty feet, and vaulted in red brick, the primary construction material. Thick brick pillars support the ceilings and upper floors. The upper floors are empty, but the ground floor is still broken up by racks of shelving, some of which contain tools and materials for the refurbishment project. These include tools, paint, solvents, stacks of lumber, and a number of blowtorches:

Blowtorch      Effect 10 + 5/round. A:I, B:C, C:C/K

Careful examination of the upper floors will turn up evidence of one or more people having slept rough there in the past, but a relatively easy Detective roll (difficulty 4 or 5) will be enough to realise that no one's done so recently.

Characters with appropriate expertise, such as Scholar (Civil Engineering), might notice that the thickness of the pillars and the wall buttresses indicate the foundations are unusually deep, which in turn implies that the ground beneath isn't particularly solid.

The warehouse is guarded by two watchmen. Jack Taylor, the older and more senior, is surly and suspicious of the investigators, while the other, Tertius Duggan, appears friendly and eager to please. A simple Psychology roll (difficulty 2-3) will be enough for the adventurers to realise that they don't particularly like each other, but it will take a little digging to work out why; and the right direct questions, or a much harder roll, to realise that Duggan's

apparent openness is an attempt to deflect attention from something he wishes to hide.

Questioning either or both of the watchmen will quickly establish that it was Duggan who found Sykes' body and ran to fetch the local police constable, who was on patrol in the area at the time. He'll point out the spot where the body was lying, out of sight behind one of the shelves.

Anyone with Medium skill may sense some kind of presence at this location, manifesting itself as a sudden chill only they can feel; difficulty 7 in daylight, or 3 if it's after dark or still foggy.

Determined questioning of the watchmen, or talking to some of the other locals (See Hob's Lane, below), will allow the investigators to ferret out Duggan's secret. He's been turning a blind eye to some of the local homeless taking shelter in the building, and is afraid of being sacked if he's found out.

### Hob's Lane

Hob's Lane is a run-down area in the East End, consisting mainly of commercial premises surrounded by slums. Most investigators will stick out like sore thumbs, but might get some answers from the locals by using sufficient tact or intimidation depending on temperament. Bear in mind, though, that it's a tough neighbourhood, and anyone throwing their weight around too much is liable to end up provoking a fist fight or worse. Buying a few drinks in the local pub, or getting Duggan to introduce them to the local residents if they've already met him, will glean the following information:

The warehouse had been standing empty for a long time before being purchased a couple of months ago by Walter Bellingham, a well-known property speculator. He's been employing local workmen to refurbish it in the hope of letting it out at a profit; although grateful for the work, most of them think he's throwing his money away.

The warehouse is reputed to be haunted. According to the local gossip eight workmen were killed in a trench collapse while the foundations were being dug, and the bodies never recovered.

Duggan and Taylor are both well-known in the area. Duggan is widely liked and respected, and people are quick to praise his easy-going and generous nature. Taylor is a bully and a thug who fancies himself an intellectual and hangs around with the local Anarchist group, who tolerate him because he's handy with his fists; local rumour has it he only took the watchman's job because it allows him to beat up the local tramps with impunity. The only local indigent who wasn't afraid of him was Sykes, who was more than capable of taking care of himself.



Sykes had a lady friend, Sylvia Herrick, a local streetwalker. It's likely that the investigators will want to talk to her, but she'll be hard to track down during the day; at night she'll be found easily, working her usual patch.

## **Read All About It**

Checking the archives of the local newspaper seems to confirm the stories about the warehouse site. Eight workmen were indeed killed during construction. There's nothing to either confirm or refute the idea that the bodies are still buried on the site, however, although there is a report of a memorial service at St. Barnabas, the local parish church, the following week. There are occasional reports over the years of alleged supernatural activity in the area, but the tone of the paper is sceptical to say the least; a typical report concludes that "If spirits were indeed involved they are more likely to have hailed from Scotland than from the Realms Beyond."

Anyone thinking to check out the local church will find a heavily overgrown memorial stone in a forgotten corner of the graveyard, listing the men's names, but no graves. Checking the parish records will show a memorial service took place, but no burials. In fact the men, all Irish Catholics, were returned to Ireland for interment; St. Barnabas is Church of England, but was the only church in the area large enough to accommodate the number of navvies wishing to pay their last respects. Sufficiently determined ferreting through the archives should eventually discover this, but if the Investigators jump to the conclusion that they're dealing with vengeful ghosts and run off to exorcise them, let them find out they're wrong the hard way!

## **A Man of Property**

If the investigators don't think of approaching Bellingham he'll eventually come to them. He's a self-made property magnate, and a well-known philanthropist who funds several charities. As such, most players will probably distrust him on sight! Nevertheless, he's exactly what he seems; a genuinely good man, who feels an obligation to use the wealth he's accumulated to make the world a better place. He's deeply disturbed by the Hob's Lane incident, and wants the matter cleared up as soon as possible; he'll therefore co-operate fully with the investigators. (Which will probably make them even more suspicious of him!)

He's heard the stories of ghosts and hauntings, but doesn't believe them; he knows the full story of the accident, including the fact that the bodies were all recovered and accounted for. If he brings the investigators into the case by hiring them from the outset he'll expect them to debunk the rumours, and flatly refuse to believe anything they tell him about the abnatural unless he sees it for himself.

He didn't know about Taylor's dabbling in radical politics when he hired him, but doesn't feel comfortable with the idea of sacking him just because of that.



(“Of course I disapprove of the fellow’s politics, but this isn’t Russia you know. He has a right to his own opinions.”)

If some, or all, of the investigators are available for hire he’ll engage them for a large fee to resolve the matter as quickly and discreetly as possible, and place the full resources of his company at their disposal.

## Strangers in the Night

At some point the trail will lead the investigators back to Sylvia Herrick; either because they want to question her about Sykes, or because she just happens to be working the street near the warehouse when they return to Hob’s Lane. They should encounter her after dark; if the players somehow force the pace of events so that this is impossible the fog has returned, blotting out every vestige of daylight.

Whether or not the investigators are actively looking for her, their attention will first be attracted by loud voices. She’s being harassed by Taylor, who is warning her to get out of the neighbourhood; there’s no place for “her sort” in a decent community, and it would be a shame if “something unpleasant” were to happen now Sykes isn’t around to protect her. If the PCs seem reluctant to intervene, make it obvious that she’s in real physical danger.

When the investigators get involved Taylor will slink off, after some token threats and bluster. He knows he’s outnumbered, and, like most bullies, is reluctant to pick on someone his own size.

It’s clear that Sykes’ death has hit Sylvia hard; she blames herself for the fact that he was sleeping rough that night because she couldn’t offer him a bed herself. (“I was workin’ see.”) She’ll confirm that Sykes often used the warehouse to sleep in when Duggan was on duty, but since Taylor was hired the other local homeless have been scared off. Only a few of them would use the premises anyway, because of the ghost stories, but “Joe weren’t afraid of anything.”

The conversation is interrupted by a scream; a man’s voice, in great pain or mortal terror. If they run to investigate they’ll stumble over Taylor’s body, lying in a nearby alleyway. His neck has been snapped, apparently with great force. A shadowy figure is standing nearby; before anyone can react it disappears into the darkness. Sylvia, who has stuck with the investigators for protection, dissolves in hysterics, convinced that the figure was Sykes.

Whatever the investigators do now, they’ll lose the body. If they all attend to Sylvia it’ll be gone when they turn back. If they chase after Sykes they’ll lose him, and the body will vanish before they return. The same thing will happen if they go for the local constable.

If, against all the odds, they manage to get the body into the hands of the proper authorities it will simply vanish en route to the morgue, along with the driver of the van transporting it; the panicked horses will suddenly appear out of the night, galloping at full speed until an investigator or an NPC manages to catch and calm them. Examining the van will show that the rear doors appear to have been ripped away bodily.

## The Chill of the Grave

By now the investigators should have realised that whatever's going on is somehow tied to the warehouse, and will probably want to stake it out. It's also quite likely that they'll have realised whatever forces are involved, like most Abnatural phenomena, are at their most powerful in the absence of daylight.

If they set up magical defences, such as electric pentacles, these will offer the usual amount of protection. If they set them up in the exact spot where Sykes' body was found the entity's gateway will be inside the defences with them, with potentially fatal consequences; kindly Referees may wish to dissuade them by pointing out that they'll have to move several of the shelves to clear enough floor space, or letting characters with the MEDIUM skill feel a powerful malign presence there. If they still insist, let them go right ahead; there's no helping some people!

The entity will begin by using its SUPPRESS LIGHT/SOUND power to wear the adventurers down, hoping to impair their ability to intervene or fight back. It may then go on to use its FREEZE ability to attack them directly. If their defences are sufficiently strong to repel these attacks it will concentrate on Animating Taylor's corpse, and those of any other NPCs who may have been killed by this point, to take them on directly. Any investigators who die will also be Animated and used against their former friends if the entity has time to do so.

To Animate a corpse it must be placed directly over the gateway, on the spot where Sykes died. The entity must then succeed in using both its DIVISION power, hiving off part of itself to control the corpse, and ANIMATION power to successfully possess it. Every point of BODY, MIND, and SOUL the entity puts into Animating a particular corpse cannot be used for other purposes, so the more cadavers it tries to control the less powerful they are as individuals, and the weaker its other abilities become. Astute Investigators may deduce this, and find ways to use it to their advantage.

Given the number of inflammable materials to hand, the adventurers may be tempted to use fire as a weapon. Torching the warehouse is a bad idea, though, as the paint, solvents, and paraffin canisters for the blowtorches will explode violently, preferably at a suitably dramatic juncture.

## Can You Dig It?

Eventually the Investigators should deduce that the gateway the entity is using to manifest itself is directly below the spot where Sykes died. Persuading Bellingham to get the floor dug up here shouldn't be too difficult, although they'll get further with him by making up something plausible about gas leaks or some similar excuse than babbling about gateways and zombies!

About four feet down is the rusted remains of a shovel, buried since the construction accident in which the eight navvies died. Over the years the local belief in the haunting of the warehouse allowed the entity to use this relic of the tragedy as a gateway to manifest itself, but only in the immediate vicinity.

Its big chance came a few nights ago when Duggan let Sykes sleep in the warehouse; rather than dosing down upstairs, as usual, the tramp went to sleep on the ground floor, using the shelves to hide from Taylor's inspection. This let the entity kill him with its FREEZE power, then Animate the corpse, allowing it to roam outside the warehouse for the first time. Since then it's been collecting fresh bodies so it can subdivide itself and range more widely.

If the shovel is melted down, the gateway will be sealed. Simply torching the warehouse won't be enough to do this, as the shovel will be insulated from the cleansing flame by four feet of earth.

If the investigators manage to destroy all the zombies, but fail to discover the gateway itself, the entity will be thwarted but will remain able to manifest within the warehouse. It will be many years, if ever, before it's able to find another victim obliging enough to fall asleep on the premises for long enough to be frozen to death, but it will continue to grow in power; eventually the investigators, or their successors, will be faced with a full-blown Saitii Manifestation, which will prove a great deal harder to dislodge!

## Characters



### **Walter Bellingham, Property Tycoon and Philanthropist**

BODY [3], MIND [4], SOUL [5]

Brawling [3], Stealth [2], Business [8], Psychology [6]

Quote: *"I want facts, Gentlemen, not fairy stories. A man's dead, and someone's responsible!"*

Notes: A self-made man, Walter Bellingham takes a quiet pride in both his achievements and his humble origins. Believing that his wealth imposes a moral responsibility to use it for the betterment of others he supports many charities, as well as arranging his business affairs with the general welfare of the community in mind; hence his decision to hire local labour in Hob's Lane, in the hope that the boost to the local economy will lead to improved conditions in the area. His philanthropy goes hand-in-hand with a practical and pragmatic outlook, to which he attributes his success, and he will simply refuse to believe any reports of ab-natural activities which he hasn't seen or experienced for himself.



### **Jack Taylor, self-aggrandising bully**

BODY [4], MIND [3], SOUL [2]

Brawling [5], Stealth [2], Scholar (Politics, Economics) [2], Thief [2]

Quote: *"Wait 'til the workers own the means of production. Won't be so high and mighty then, will yer?"*

Notes: Taylor is a coward and a bully, whose commitment to half-understood radical politics stems as much from a desire to belong as from any real ideological fervour. He has no real

friends, but the Anarchists at least tolerate him, which is more than anyone else will.



**Tertius Duggan, nervous nightwatchman**

BODY [3], MIND [3], SOUL [5]

Brawling [3], Stealth [2], other skills at the GM's discretion.

Quote: *"Well what could I do? He had nowhere else to go..."*

Notes: Duggan likes people, and has an open and trusting nature; in turn, many of the Hob's Lane locals like and respect him. He's afraid of losing his job if anyone discovers he's been letting the local homeless sleep in the warehouse; but if Bellingham does find out he'll actually be impressed by his compassion, and offer him a better-paid position with one of his charities.



**Sylvia Herrick, Lady of Negotiable Virtue**

BODY [2], MIND [3], SOUL [3]

Brawling [2], Stealth [5], Thief [5].

Quote: *"Joe was always a real gent to me..."* (breaks down and cries).

Notes: Sylvia is a slightly pathetic figure, but still clings to what dignity she can. Her relationship with Sykes was complicated, but founded on a genuine mutual respect, and she's devastated by the loss of her only real friend.

**The Hob's Lane Locals**

BODY [3], MIND [3], SOUL [3]

Skills at the GM's discretion.

Quote: *"I am a bit thirsty, now you mention it... Ta very much. Now what was it you were askin'?"*

Notes: Mostly hard-working and honest, despite lives of grinding poverty; liable to be suspicious of the Investigators to start with, but will open up if approached with tact, or introduced by someone they already know.



**The Anarchists**

BODY [3], MIND [3], SOUL [2]

Quote: *"Questions ain't healthy."*

Brawling [4], Melee Weapon (pick axe handle or crowbar) [4], Stealth [2].

Only encountered if the Investigators go looking for them, or if the Referee feels the need for a couple of extra pieces of zombie-bait to push events in the right direction. They're acutely paranoid, and will react violently if anyone seems to be taking an interest in their affairs. Alternatively, use the generic thugs from the rulebook.



### The Aerie Entity

BODY [25], MIND [10], SOUL [12]

Animation [6], Division [12], Freeze [6], Suppress Light/Sound [12]

A powerful and dangerous entity, manifesting through the shovel buried beneath the floor. When Sykes fell asleep above the gateway it seized the opportunity to kill him and animate his corpse, allowing it to move freely in the wider world. It will continue to kill, collecting more bodies to animate, until either the gateway is closed or all its host bodies are destroyed, once again confining it to the warehouse in an incorporeal state. To animate a zombie it must put at least one point of BODY, MIND, and SOUL into a corpse; if for some reason it reduces any one of these to zero the link is broken, and the Animation process must begin again from scratch.

New power: FREEZE. (Base S/2). Opposes the BODY of the target, modified by the Effect of any defences, lowering its temperature if successful.

Damage: 1 + 1 per round. A:F, B:I, C:C



### Zombies

BODY [2-10], MIND [1-10], SOUL [1-12]

The entity can vary the number of points it's putting into a particular zombie from round to round, depending on what else it's trying to do at the same time; so the adventurers never know if the one they're facing is relatively fragile or something resembling the Terminator. Or, for that matter, whether it's going to be equally tough (or fragile) the next time they hit it!

## The Ab-natural in the 21st Century

It's easy to forget that, although they appear to us today to be quaint period pieces, when the Carnacki stories were first published a great deal of their impact came from being set in the contemporary world, and Carnacki's use of what was then cutting-edge technology. In the same spirit, presenting a group of Investigators with an Abnatural encounter in modern-day London can be an interesting and challenging experience!

Adapting this scenario to a 21st Century setting is easy enough; the main differences are that Bellingham intends redeveloping the warehouse site for a shopping mall, Duggan and Taylor work for a private security firm, Taylor is a neo-Nazi rather than an anarchist, and Sylvia may be a teenage runaway or a small-time dope dealer rather than a hooker.

## Illustrations

All illustrations in these adventures are either by the author or are artwork which is believed to be in the public domain. Character portraits are usually cropped from larger pictures and may be manipulated in other ways.

### Page

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6, 9	Maps put on line by the The National Library of Scotland
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	(2nd) Art by William Stevens, <i>Pearsons Magazine</i> USA 1911
	(3rd) Art by E.S. Hope for <i>The Outlaw of the Air</i> 1900
39	(top) Art by Walter Tittle, <i>Pearsons Magazine</i> USA 1911
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42	Unidentified 1920s film, various effects filters
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66	(top) Advert from <i>Pearson's Magazine</i> 1906, artist unknown
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67	(top) One of the Lumiere brothers, source unknown
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72	Advert from <i>Pearson's Magazine</i> 1906, artist unknown
73	(both) Stills from the film <i>White Zombie</i> (1932) with art filters.
75	Generated by MidJourney AI beta with art filters
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79	Bethnal Green slums circa 1900, photographer unknown.
82	(top) <i>Pearson's Magazine</i> 1896, artist unknown
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83	(top) Jack London self-portrait 1902 from <i>People of the Abyss</i>
	(2nd) <i>The Strand Magazine</i> , 1905, artist unknown
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84	Still from <i>The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari</i> , 1920, art filters
Back cover	Cover of the 1920 printing of <i>Carnacki the Ghost Finder</i> , artist unknown, source Internet Speculative Fiction Database isfdb.org

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Cover of a 1920 printing of *Carnacki the Ghost Finder*

## Forgotten Futures IV The Pentacle Files

Role Playing Adventures  
for  
William Hope Hodgson's  
*Carnacki The Ghost-Finder*

by Marcus L. Rowland  
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*"...I bent towards the landlord, and whispered to him that I had a queer feeling that something was about to happen, and to be ready with his lantern; at the same time I reached out towards mine. In the very instant I made this movement, the darkness which filled the passage seemed to become suddenly of a dull violet colour; not, as if a light had been shone; but as if the natural blackness of the night had changed colour. And then, coming through this violet night, through this violet-coloured gloom, came a little naked Child, running. In an extraordinary way, the Child seemed not to be distinct from the surrounding gloom; but almost as if it were a concentration of that extraordinary atmosphere; as if that gloomy colour which had changed the night, came from the child."*

*The Searcher of the End House* – William Hope Hodgson 1910

This is the second of four PDF books which together are a revised and expanded version of *The Carnacki Cyinders*, a role playing supplement for the *Forgotten Futures* RPG, first published in 1993. This volume contains three adventures and two adventure outlines for this setting, updated and with extra art, plus a new adventure by Alex Stewart.

The first book describes the setting. The third is a collection of the Carnacki stories with illustrations from their original publication where available. The fourth is devoted to the iconic Electric Pentacle, and includes more history, operating instructions, and floor plans.

For best results print the front and back covers single sided, on card if possible, and the rest of the book double-sided.