

Dumnonni Chronicles



THIRD EDITION GUIDE

For Hux and Ruth

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Dumnonni Chronicles – Foreword

"Well," said Cathbad the druid, "today has this merit: he who bears arms for the first time on this day will achieve fame and greatness. But his life will be short."

"That is a fair bargain," Cúchulainn said. "If I achieve fame I am content, though I had only one day on earth."

Cúchulainn's Boyhood Deeds

"Cattle die, kinsfolk die, you yourself too soon must die, but one thing never dies, -- your good name, if you have earned it."

The Hávamal

Dumnonni Chronicles is a live role-playing game set in the world of Celtic mythology. The players are the heroes of an endless saga of warriors and wyrd-weavers in a land of myth, magic and monsters. They will struggle to defend their lives or their kinsfolk, to defeat their enemies, perhaps even to amass power for themselves and their people but ultimately heroes are judged on the reputation they can build through their honour, wisdom and courage.

Guidebook ethos

The game is in essence about interaction between characters, the people of the game-world. It is about narrative, and action.

We want this action to be governed by three guiding principles:

- 1) Drama: it should look good.
- 2) Pathos: It should effect you emotionally
- 3) Jeopardy: There must be real risk of failure.

The skill of crew and players as actors is largely responsible for ensuring the first two; drama, and pathos are created through improvisation. The third, jeopardy is harder to determine or resolve by improvisation alone: *How do I know whether I will succeed at this task? Who wins the contest? Will they beat me?* And so on. Because of this we have a framework of game rules to provide guidance in resolving such questions.

The Dumnonni game system has developed over a long period and is rules-lite compared to many other systems. Our goal is simply to have just enough rules to enable players to understand what their character is capable of, and to allow contests to be resolved, but not so many rules that the game-mechanics get in the way of the heroic story.

Skills

We want it to look cool when a character does something in the story. So because we value atmosphere and believability, for your character to be good at doing some particular skill, then you, as a player, have to be good at it.

If you want your character to be a great warrior, then you have to be good at fighting. If you aren't good at fighting, and yet you want your character to be a great warrior, then you simply have to make that your quest, aim to become a great warrior "in character". (Such a motivation could be a great character concept). If you want to be a great scout, and be really stealthy, then you have to be able to do that. We don't expect Wyrd users (Magic Users) to be able to do actual magic, but you do need to be clever, wise, imaginative and a great actor. More than any other role, that of the Wyrd user is all about creating a great show (which is why it is the most difficult kind of character to portray really well).

In lots of live-action roleplay this is known as a "Hard Skills" system. It is demanding, and it is hard to do really well. Some people are put off by it. However, we make no apology, as we feel it is one of the things that makes Dumnonni excellent. We want to challenge you and push you to your 'A' game. This attitude is applied to everything. If you don't fight well you will be defeated, if your Wyrd deeds are lacklustre they will not work, if you break your honour code the gods themselves will shaft you.

Our rules take as their guiding principles the excellent German system which has only three rules.

- 1) If you can do it then you can do it.
- 2) If you do something to someone, be it hitting them with a sword or casting a spell at them, you should expect them to react, but should not expect or know what their reaction will be.
- 3) If someone does something to you it is your responsibility to react appropriately.

The areas where we feel it necessary to expand upon this and provide more developed rules as mechanisms to allow the judging of success or failure are combat and Wyrd use. These will be covered in detail later.

The look and feel.

Dumnonni strives to have a consistent look and feel for the costume, weapons, props and set dressings. This look is late Prehistoric to Dark Ages with just a smidgen of fantasy. We want it to look as though the character live, eat, sleep and *ahem...* do everything in the kit, not behave as if it has just come out of a fancy dress shop. Distressed, aged, worn in, worn out or dirty kit looks best. Layering old and newer kit softens that glaring "just off the peg" look.

If you are a history buff, war gamer or re-enactor you may have no trouble understanding this, but if you are used to other more cosmopolitan larp systems or fantasy tabletop, you may find Dumnonni costuming a bit of a culture-shock, and you will need to think carefully about making sure that what you wear fits in.

In the land of Dumnonni Chronicles, in isolation from "the real world", the tribes and peoples have secured their cultural identities with distinctive cohesive styles and 'looks'. Thus it would be most unusual to catch Iceni without their faces woaded blue or Saxons without their peculiar head-gear.

As should be apparent from this, Dumnonni Chronicles is not a living history group though we like to bring many real world skills into our games. We are not re-enactors though we expect things to at least look 'in keeping' with the periods of history in which our game is set.

A look at our web site will give you the idea. See also our Right/Wrong illustrations at the back of this book. In general, if you are not sure please ask advice and we will happily give it. New styles of costume and kit will need to be 'passed' by the ref team before use, so if in doubt, consult us before investment! If you are not sure who to ask then kit queries can be answered by emailing kit@dumnonni.com.

1. What is the land of Dumnonni?

Dumnonni is a realm like the Irish “Otherlands”, an island in a sea of mists and wyrd.

Some Sidhe (fae, or fairy-folk) claim that it is they created Dumnonni by weaving the Mists into a place of refuge that the ‘lesser folk’ could live in.

Or maybe it was created by the gods themselves as a place where their worship can continue safe from the ‘civilising influences’ of the Abrahamic religions.

Or is it a place heroes might dream of? If so: is it just the dreams of the dead?

1.1 Dramatic geography.

Dumnonni is not geographically stable. If it is important for the plot, it *may* be possible for someone to make the journey across Dumnonni and back again in one weekend. Other times it takes weeks. Places do have directions (Maeve’s lands are East of Culhaven for example), but not proper distance. Just as stories are variable if never written down so the geography fits to the needs of drama.

Some locations, particularly wyrd or otherland ones do not fit even this simple geography. The same place can be found in different direction and can sometimes be easier to find than others. Note that this is not the same as the place moving, though this is only a philosophical difference. Examples of such places are; the Black Marsh, home of among others the Matu and the Fen Picts, which can be found in almost any direction from Culhaven, and, The bronze doors to the Moonlit City which have been found in many place, most recently under Conuaght and outside Culhaven.

Travel is adventure. A hero who goes on a journey can expect to encounter challenges around every corner.

Dumnonni is rooted in Ancient Ireland. It is roughly the shape and size of Ireland and the geography reflects Ireland in many respects. In fact some parts of Mythical Ireland have arrived in Dumnonni intact, for instance Conaught, Ynys Mon, Almu of the White Walls, Tory Island, the Hollow Hills and the Moonlit Cities of Donn. Indeed it is possible that the plains of Moytura are the same as those that surround Culhaven.

However, the land does mirror the worlds of the newer arrivals as well. The North has Scotland-like mountains where the Picts live and its coast is cut by great fjords, where the Norse have settled. The far northern sea is dotted with islands similar to the Orkneys and Shetlands. The south-east shore is the flat and ever moving home of the Saxons. There are great plains where until recently the Tribes of Albion held sway.

Many of the Mystic places, the Otherlands, that could once be found all around Ireland can now only be contacted from Dumnonni. The fae gates are the most common way of traveling to these places, but they can also be found by sailing West, or searching into the mists.

1.2 Culhaven

Culhaven, originally called simply Haven, is the very centre of Dumnonni. It is the dramatic centre in that it is where important events take place. Heroes stumble upon it and wandering armies find their way to it with almost monotonous regularity. It is the seat of the Ard Ri, and where the Druid's Circle meets, therefore it is a political centre as well. Finally it is also the mystic entre. The leylines of wyrd power criss-cross it, stones of power throb near it and it is of supreme importance to the Fae who claim it is a sanctuary.

1.3 The Mists

The Mists infuse and encircle Dumnonni. They are the borderlands between the worlds. Between Dumnonni and The Otherlands. They are not stable. This is the domain of the Fae. Time and space become completely flexible. A child might be stolen from its parents by the Fae and return a fully grown man days later, as happened to Bull's son. Every sane man fears the mists for they are where the nightmares live.

Although they normally manifest as a thick swirling mists, (hence the name), they can also be darkness, or even completely unseen until you have fallen into them and find yourself somewhere very different.

Only the Fae, Fir Bholg and great Wistmen can safely travel in it, as to be in The Mists is to be lost. Normal folk often go mad there, and it is common for people to be taken blindfold by a guide if they must travel through the mists at all.

Power is of the greatest importance, as while in the mists a person strong in the wyrd can shape the world around them to some extent. Wyrd users, even those who are not used to The Mists create an armour like effect which protects them. Conversely; normal physical armour provides no barrier against the powers and weapons of the denizens of The Mists. Generally The Mists linger in isolated, Wyrd places away from settlements, but they do occasionally move to some other intent. When the Mists move of their own volition they can cause terrible destruction, literally unmaking places and people. What may cause The Mists to move can only be speculated upon, but their movements often have a seeming deliberate purpose to them, as if guided by some unseen hand. Some of the Fae may know, but they are not telling.

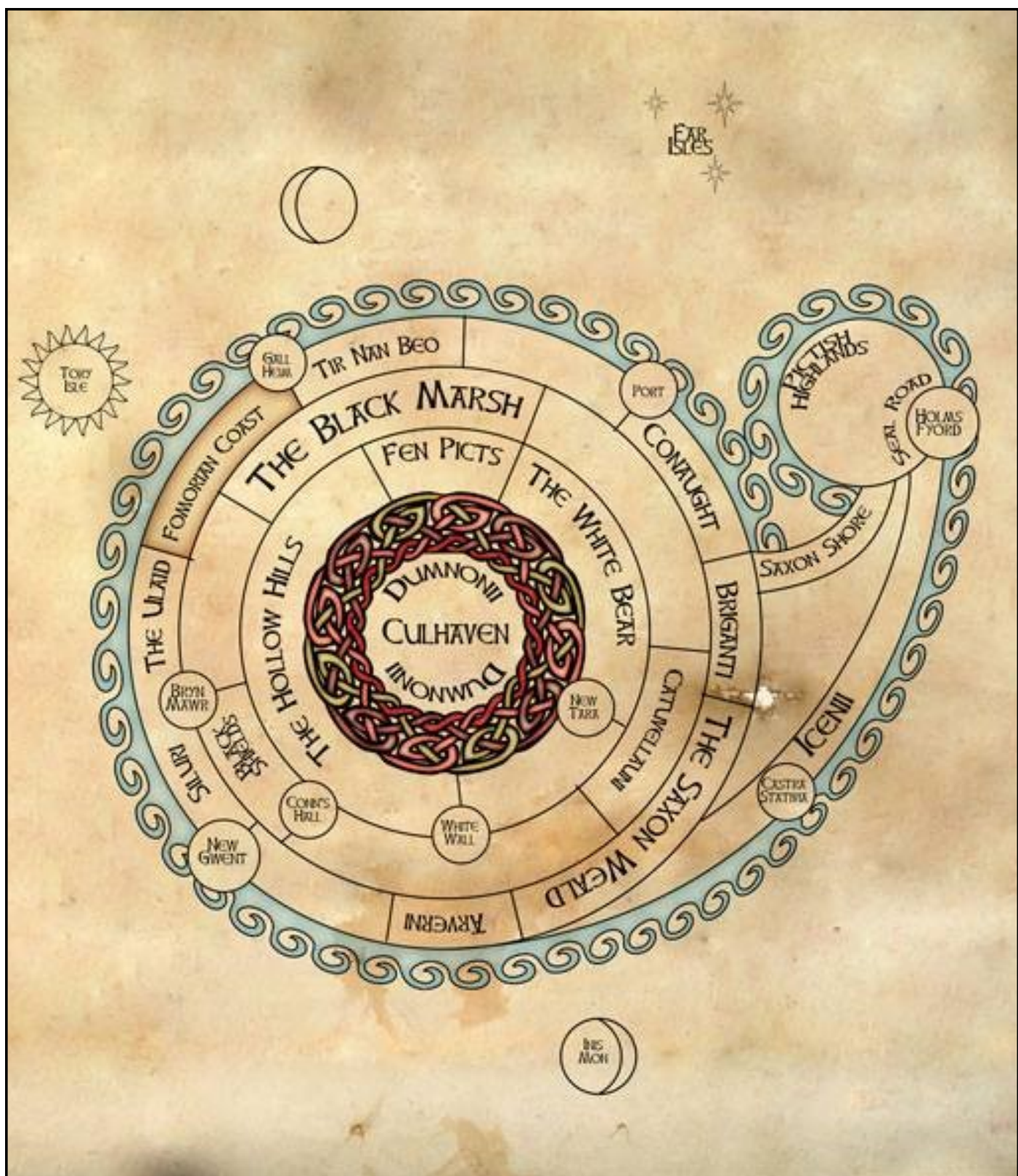
---"*Meeting a powerful creature in the mists is like being in their dreams*"

1.4 Maps

When a story becomes written down, it is fixed. Maps are the equivalent of written stories in that, if they are made with enough wyrd, they fix the geography for the person owning it. This is very powerful as it defines and delineates direction and distance. A hero can get from A to B without having distracting adventures on the way.

Many of the fae are particularly upset by maps as they regard the 'mundaning' of the world, the same evil that has been done in the world outside the mists.

Non Map



2 The Celtic Paradigm

Dumnonni works on Mythic Celtic rules. Anyone from any other culture is an outsider and has to adhere to these metaphysical laws. Breaking any of these laws will have terrible outcomes (see below). Everyone must stick to the letter of these laws, but honourable Celts will stick to the spirit of these laws as well.

2.1 Oaths

People can lie and cheat as much as they like, but if they make an oath they are bound by it. An Oath is more than a promise; it is clearly defined by what is said – "I swear by the gods that ..." or "I give you my oath." etc.

2.2 Hospitality

Any guest who accepts hospitality is bound to do no harm during his stay. He is likewise safe from harm from his host and any others who are under hospitality. For those looking to get around this it is possible to see a boundary to hospitality: anyone who leaves the hall (or in Cuhaven's case, the fort) is fair game. This is of course not the spirit of hospitality. The definition of hospitality itself can be tricky, because "harm" is not a precise term. Can you rightfully murder someone who has thrown an orange at you?

2.3 Geas

Geas (gesh; plural geasa – gesh-a)

A geas is a restriction on the behaviour of a hero that has a spiritual, divine or magical origin. It often seems that carrying and gathering geasa is the price to be paid for being a hero – it is one of the features that sets them apart from ordinary people.

There are three main forms of geas:

Limitation

There is something the bearer of the geas must not do; Cuchulain for example was forbidden to eat dog.

Compulsion

There is something the bearer of geas has to do; Cuchulain for example had to accept any invitation to eat made by a woman.

Death geas

The bearer of the geas can only die in particular circumstances. Note that the wording of these is sometimes ambiguous, for example, "Can only be killed by a door" might mean immortal unless adjacent to a door, hit with a door, attacked by a man nicknamed 'Door', battered with a huge shield as big as a door etc.

As can be seen from the examples of Cuchulain's geasa given above, they often come into conflict with each other – the great hero died after he was invited to eat dog by an old woman; he could not refuse and found himself greatly debilitated when he faced his enemies and was slain. It is part of the epic drama and pathos of Celtic mythology that heroes find themselves weighed down by their geasa – they should embrace the tensions and dilemmas this creates. Often personal geasa clash with the promises and oaths a hero has made to others, for example when Fergus mac Roich promised to escort Neesha back from exile he was delayed by a geas to never refuse hospitality and while he was feasting Neesha was murdered. Fergus himself went into exile rather than face the shame of returning home.

A hero might start out with a geas from an early age (see below), would expect to have one or more before becoming Proven and would generally have collected several by the stage of being Renowned.

The more common geasa of limitation and compulsion may be acquired in three ways:

At birth

When a hero is born a significant person (e.g.: a parent, druid or sidhe) places a geas upon them – this is one of the things that marks out a hero.

By imposition

Heroes may have a geas put upon them. For this to be possible the hero has generally done something to become vulnerable, e.g. committed a dishonourable act, criticised or injured a wyrd user, or rejected a woman's love.

By choice

Heroes may take a geas upon themselves by declaring it publicly. The most common reason for doing this is to regain honour after doing something dishonourable (even if it was unavoidable) e.g.: "Since I was not here to save the children from the raiders, I take the geas that I will never refuse any request from a child." Note that to restrict one's freedom of action in this way is seen as a generous and honourable thing and is often the best way for heroes to make recompense for a failure on their part without losing face.

Geasa taken by imposition or choice will generally be related in some way to the circumstances that gave rise to them e.g.: "Since you arrived late when summoned by the druid, you are geased to always be late whenever you are summoned." They might also have a limitation upon them related to their subject e.g.: "As I was drunk when the treasure was stolen I take the geas that I will not take strong drink until I have retrieved it."

Death geasa are a special case and are generally only given through powerful wyrd or divine intervention. They would seem to be a tremendous benefit to a hero but this usually works out not to be the case. Some are very general – "Can only die outdoors" for example; others are less protective than they first seem, such as the ambiguous example given above. Some death geas seem very complex: the Ard Ri Conaire the Great had no fewer than eight conditions but fulfilled them all leading to his death in the destruction of Da Derga's Hostel. The death geas might even be regarded as a prophecy that will inevitably occur at some time no matter how hard the hero tries to avoid them or keep the circumstances secret.

The breaking of a geas is a drastic act – as noted in the case of Cuchulain it can lead to death. At the very least it should result in disability and dishonour. As geasa form one of the immutable laws of the Celtic, heroic idiom they cannot be easily avoided, although a clever hero might find loopholes in the wording, especially of a geas taken by imposition.

Note that Teutonic and Norse heroes sometimes have similar taboos, oaths, prophecies and restrictions hanging over them. It is particularly common for boastful Saxon and Viking warriors to take on the equivalents of geas in the advance of battle or some other enterprise. In these cases they tend to state both what they aim to achieve and the restriction they will accept if they fail to do so e.g.: "I will strike the first killing blow in tomorrow's battle or I will not wear mail for a year."

As Geasa are part of the Celtic Paradigm, non-Celtic folk can occasionally have one imposed on them in the Celtic manor. It will probably be taken with less grace than a Celt would show, but it is just as powerful.

2.4 Breaking one of the above rules

If you break one of these rules you WILL be punished by the gods.

Good in-character reasons for breaking a rule include:

- Being forced into it, as when two geasa are in conflict
- Breaking the rule for a greater purpose even though you know there will be dire consequences.

The punishment of the gods might include curses, corruption, punishment by your peers or the druids, oft-times madness, or even death.

These outcomes are bad but are story driven. Such situations create exciting narrative possibilities full of the potential for classic Celtic tragedy and pathos. We hope players will be honest about their rule-breaking as this gives great role-playing opportunities.

NB. It is possible to force someone to break one of these rules by putting two rules in conflict. You might, for example, have a geas to attack an enemy on sight and then meet him under hospitality. In these cases forcing an enemy to break one of these laws is strategically an excellent plan.

A bad reason for breaking a rule is:

Just because you chose to ignore it, deliberately without good in-character reason, or because you think no-one else will know.

In cases like this the punishment of the gods will be death on the spot.

We like our players to be honest.

2.5 Corruption

Honour makes folk great. This is simply true. Likewise, if you fall short of honourable behaviour the forces that shape the world reflect physically upon you. This comes in the form of either physical or moral degeneration. Sometimes a whole people will be struck by such corruption. For example, The Corpse Goose Goblins were once the noble Parthelonians and the Scotii were once the proud followers of the great wife of Mil. If the leaders of a people fail to act properly, by breaking an oath or Geas, then their whole tribe will suffer for their action.

Corruption can also affect individuals. People who have started on a dishonourable path may find they cannot avoid further degeneration. For individuals corruption may take the form of moral and behavioural degeneration but might also take the form of physical blemishes or other worse transformations.

2.6 Druids

"The Celts have persons called druids, who deal with prophecy and every division of wisdom. Even kings would not be so bold as to make a decision or take action without the druids counsel. Thus in reality it was the druids who governed. The kings, who sat on golden thrones and lived luxuriously in their great residences, became mere agents of the decisions of the druids."

The Orations of Dion Chrysostom

This Roman observer may have exaggerated the point but there is no doubt that druids are very important in Celtic society. They are wielders of the wyrd, experts in arcane learning, priests of the various deities and, perhaps most importantly, their judgement is called upon to resolve all manner of disputes. What's more, their decisions are held to be practically infallible – only other druids can openly question their pronouncements; for others to do so risks magical and social punishment. In essence, druids are mouthpieces of the gods, in contact with the Otherworld and able to access that power and knowledge.

Not surprisingly, achieving such a position is not easy. Even years of learning and experience may not be sufficient to become a druid – to do so is a quest in itself. No character may start out as a druid – initially they will be some other sort of wyrd user; until they are proven and taken as Olave by a druid, who sponsors them. Even then there is no single or simple way to reach the rank of druid – a set of tasks, tests and expectations will be devised uniquely for any character wishing to take that step. Note that there is no disgrace in failing to become a druid; the character remains respected in their chosen field and may try again in the future. Just as we do not expect many players to become renowned, we do not expect many player characters ever to become druids.

In their role as priests druids lead ritual and ceremonies to honour the gods. This does not have to be particularly formal or consist of long and complex rites, although druids may choose to devise them if they wish. It is usual for many members of the community to be present at such rituals and for chieftains and kings to be strongly involved as leaders of their peoples. As long as honour is shown to the gods at the appropriate times and places this should be sufficient – no one but another druid would criticise them for getting it 'wrong'. However, if the gods are displeased they will let the druid know – perhaps by direct communication but more likely through unfortunate events in the future. The four great festivals of the Celtic year (see Celtic Pantheon) should be observed and the relevant gods honoured – to fail to do so risks disruption to the progress of both the sacred and agricultural year. Sacrifice would usually be an important part of honouring the gods; material goods and foodstuffs ritually cast into rivers, buried or burnt are the norm. However, in extreme cases human sacrifice may be deemed necessary – a willing sacrifice being far more powerful than an unwilling one.

The druid's control over wyrd and links to the gods come together in their powers to divine hidden knowledge. Sometimes this might involve divining the future but it is more common (and more practical in game terms) for druids to search out useful lore in dealing with seemingly intractable problems. The method of doing this varies: chewing raw meat and dreaming, consorting with otherworldly beings, consuming psychoactive substances – it is up to the imagination of the druid (but the more elaborate the better). However, what does not vary is the nature of the information gained – it is always somewhat obscure and indirect. You cannot expect straight or clear answers. Nor should druids be in the habit of giving plain and unambiguous answers to questions – clearly their wisdom is so deep that only they can understand it.

To appreciate the role of druids in passing judgement and settling disputes it is necessary to understand a little about the settlement of disputes in general in the various cultures in the realms of Dumnonni Chronicles. Amongst both Celts and Saxons there are very few crimes that are regarded as crimes against 'the state' (e.g.: kings or lords); instead, offences are regarded as being committed against the victim and their kin or tribe. Also, most crimes can be dealt with by paying recompense – a payment in valuables. Although the actual amounts vary between different peoples it is generally the case that individuals of higher rank are worth more compensation and the more serious the injury the greater the payment. Note that recompense can even be made for killing someone. The injured party or their kin might also demand some sort of oath or geas (see relevant section) by the guilty to ensure there was no repeat of the crime, or publicise their guilt at a later date. This system is intended to prevent the spread of blood feuds within tribes or amongst allies – kings and chiefs would rather see their people expend their energy against their enemies. Note that secretive crimes where

the perpetrator tries to conceal their identity are seen as crimes against society as a whole and are generally punished with mutilation or death.

Druids become involved in disputes when the parties cannot come to an agreement over appropriate compensation. Kings and chiefs might also be involved in the arbitration but ultimately the advice of a druid would be followed; some lords might delegate the whole matter to druids and simply see that their judgement was carried out. Where druids are particularly called upon is in complex matters that are not simply common disputes but matters between tribes or dealing with *wyrd* and the Otherworld – for example, when the kingdom of Dumnonia was left weak by the death of most of its warriors and the disappearance of its king the druid Slough Cul gave half the kingdom to clan Morna, a warband newly come through the mists. On such occasions several druids might gather in a druids' circle and perhaps call upon other wise folk to join them (e.g.: bards, priests, even Norse gods) in coming to a decision. To be invited into a druids' circle is a great honour but it does not make one a druid. Note that when druids make a pronouncement they are speaking with the voice of the gods and **cannot** be gainsayed. The words of a druid become actual fact to all concerned – the guilt or innocence of the accused, the truth or falsehood of a statement. Anyone who thought otherwise would be regarded as a dangerous lunatic. This decision is retrospective, having the practical effect of changing the past if necessary; for example, when the druid council declared that Manix, their former head, was not in fact a druid but a drune lord (see below), it became the fact that he had always been a drune lord and as such he was never head of the druid council: anyone who thinks otherwise is a madman to be shunned or punished.

With all the power at their disposal it makes it a very difficult matter to oppose a druid (although druids may argue amongst themselves, but rarely publicly). To use physical force against a druid is a heinous crime likely to bring down the curse of the gods against the perpetrators and their kinfolk (who may carry out punishment themselves rather than risk divine wrath). Opposing a druid is not impossible however, and is perhaps best done by turning their words against them; on the occasion when the druid Droog cursed Cynan Moyle to only speak lies he retaliated by loudly proclaiming Droog's positive qualities – since all present knew that Cynan must be 'lying' it was clear that he was actually criticising Droog in a way that he could never do directly. The druid tired of the whole affair and lifted the curse. However, generally attempting to resist or undermine a druid is very difficult and some of the most powerful and pugnacious chieftains (king Gwydion of the Black Shields for example) try to avoid druids rather than risk dealing with them.

The elder races such as the Tuatha, Fir Bholg and even the Fomorians and Sidhe have druids of their own. Druids of different races will respect each other and these peoples will respect druids of other races as powerful wielders of *wyrd* and mouthpieces of the gods.

The 'evil' equivalent of a druid is a drune lord. In most respects such individuals operate in the same way as druids, using powerful *wyrd* to achieve their ends. Warriors can still expect to be cursed for using force against drunes and druids must beware their arcane strength. However, there are a couple of features that define drune lords: firstly, they always have a weakness, some aspect of that is flawed and can be used to defeat them; secondly, because they have used their power to aggrandise themselves personally it dies with them – the effects of their *wyrd* will dissipate with their death. This differs from the druids whose power ultimately derives from the gods, therefore their actions will last as long as the gods survive.

2.7 Celtic Ethos.

If you are Celtic then you should follow a totally different mindset to a modern person. The world is magical and unpredictable and there is no point trying to understand it, for that is the job of druids. Your honour and your reputation are all the matters. These two are judged by the three Great Virtues: Generosity, Hospitality and Bravery. The mere suggestion that any of these three in you could be called in to question is enough to cause rash and dangerous action. To be satirised is literally worse than death and if the choice is one or the other a Celt will choose death.

Note that Personal hospitality is different from the Hospitality enforced by the Celtic Paradigm, in that it is the spirit of hospitality. No one who comes asking for hospitality can be turned away, and even your worst enemies must be allowed to come and go in safety.

For the elder races the three virtues literally tie them in the same way that geas and oaths tie them. A Tuatha might die on the spot if found to be a coward. And to them a Bard's satire is as sure as a sword in the gut. For the sons of Mil these are choices, but all Celtic tribes will strive to adhere to them. Non-Celtic tribes would do well to keep up the appearance of sticking to them or get a reputation for low dishonour.

Loyalty is another important virtue for Celts. This is a two-way thing; a lord must be true to his vassals, provide for them and do right by them. His followers should in turn be loyal in word and deed. Although loyalty usually means doing what your lord wants you to do and breaking one's word to one's lord is the worst sort of Oath-breaking, it is quite possible for a person to do what they think is best for their lord even if it is against their wishes. E.G. Conan Mclear of Clan Morna started a war with the White Bear because he felt his lord had gone soft.

Another side of accepting the people's loyalty is that you become responsible for their actions. If one of your Vassals lies then you are accounted a liar and so on. In the above example even though Goll McMorna, chief of Clan Morna made it very clear that his warrior had acted without his consent and against his wishes, and even though he and Klaw, chief of The White Bear were friends, Klaw still held him accountable for the crimes of his vassals and war broke out.

A final thread of Celtic honour is Vengeance. Forgiveness is an alien concept to Celts. Vengeance can sometimes be quick and bloody but it can also be slow and obtuse. The Fianna hold the Clan Morna responsible for the death of Finn Mac Cool even though the actual killers are long since dead. In any situation they can hinder them they will do so and if they can side against them in a conflict they will.

2.8 Civilisation.

For Celts it is important to realise that Civilisation is an evil thing. Think how the modern American right wing hates big government. Civilisation stifles freedom. It is about control and stagnation. For Dumnonni it has further sins. The Wyrd is ever-changing and to regiment it is to kill it. This is what may have been done to the world beyond the mists. Civilisation destroys the very foundations of Dumnonni and is therefore an anathema to the Fae, who regard it as a cancer.

The Abrahamic religions, particularly Christianity in Northern Europe, can be seen as the great civilising force of the dark ages, so this might be the reason that none of these faiths can find Dumnonni. It is protected from them.

The other great force for civilisation is the Romans, who the Celts have plenty of reason to hate anyhow.

The two common civilising influences in Dumnonni are written language and maps, which are both discussed elsewhere in this book. Imagine how Dumnonni would be assaulted by straight Roman roads, or central government, let alone the evil that is peace.

Being a Celtic Warrior. By Steve Emmot

I have fairly strong thoughts on the subject, having played a Celtic warrior at DC pretty much from the very start of it. I worked hard to get it as correct as I could, based on my take on the setting (all these things are, by nature, subjective) and having buried myself into both the Invasion Cycle and the Red Branch Cycle of tales for inspiration.

Anyway, my take on playing a Celtic warrior is pretty much as follows:

Aspire to greatness: This is obviously the most basic and fundamental aspect of the stereotype I guess. If you wish to be a champion and a hero, take risks, die for your honour. Be seen to do deeds, seek the company of the great lords and champions and match yourself against them. Make your life into a tale.

Boast of your deeds and be respectful of the deeds of others: A warrior should never tell a lie about his deeds, and should expect that other warriors are showing the same honesty. The crew should be aware of this as well. One of my lowest moments at DC was meeting a group of Fir Bholg warriors and announcing myself to them as Cynrain the Battle Winner, who slew in honourable single combat the king of the Fir Dolm, Crunmar Mac Agnomar. Their response was to call me a liar, which was, on the whole, a bit shit. If someone boasts of a mighty deed, be impressed by it. And if you do a mighty deed, boast of it. This is how stories and legends are built.

Glory in your geasa: Every notable hero in Celtic myth was burdened by at least one geas. They defined them in many ways. The weakness that the geasa gave them was a huge contributing factor to their 'heroic-ness'. It charted the path of their lives and gave them their possible doom. It is the most inherently and uniquely Celtic trait of the Celtic hero. Write a geas or two into your backstory. Love them and hate them in equal measure. Cynrain has a lot of geasa. They include, but are not limited to the following: He may never wear a helmet, he must drink from every river he crosses, he may never sleep more than one night under the same roof, he may never be handfasted, he may never eat the flesh of the swan, And he must never refuse to give something to someone if they truly need it and ask him for it. Now some of these are purely roleplaying and background geasa, but some could easily get him killed. I love that aspect of them. They give depth, and add risk.

Know your weakness and your place in the social order: Bards and Druids have you under their thumb. They always will. Chafe against it all you want, but it's true, and it makes the society so much richer knowing that for all we strut and shout and fight, the gits with the words are the ones who really sit on the top of the heap. Bards hold the key to your immortality. As Cu Chulainn said, "I care not if I live but a single day so long as my tale lives on after me."

Be seen to be honourable: This doesn't mean you are good. I've often played Cynrain as a truly horrible person, at least as far as 20th Century morality goes, but he has always BEEN SEEN to be an honourable man (hopefully). That said, in my opinion, being honourable does not have to mean that if your opponent's sword is shorter than yours, or if he has no shield, you should match your weapons to his. There is a tale of Cu Chulainn in which he fights the king of Leinster. At the first clash Cu Chulainn cleaves the king's shield in two. The king reels back, shouting that Cu Chulainn should give him the chance to get another shield, or to throw down his own. Cu Chulainn kills him, stating flatly that a warrior should bring appropriate and sturdy arms to a fight. Another aspect of the honourable nature of single combat, to me at least, is that heroes should not end up rolling around in the dirt with knives. Combat between heroes should be epic and cinematic, not something that resembles two pissed up chavs fighting in the street at 2am on a Sunday morning.

Evolve: Old warriors become something else, they become war leaders and advisors and emissaries. When we get old as our characters I think we enrich the setting by taking on these roles.

3. Character creation.

3.1 What do you do?

3.11 Warrior or Wyrd Weaver?

All characters are based on either warriors or wyrd weavers;

A warrior can take two wounds on each location and can use and wear any type of arms and armour (the Gae Bolga being the only exception - see being renowned).

A wyrd weaver can summon and use the wyrd. They can take two wounds on their bodies, but only one on each limb. They also cannot use metal weapons bigger than a knife or wear metal armour because it prevents wyrd use (see blood metal).

Following the Celtic world view there is a third type of person, the workers. These are the farmers, traders, craftsmen, etc. However, from a player point of view, if you want to play someone with one of these backgrounds, we still think it makes sense that your basic stats should be either warrior's or wyrd user's (see below).

3.12 And what else are you?

By adding an archetypes characters define the sort of things they can do.

It is perfectly possible to not choose a subtype as a warrior, indeed this is the most common type of character.

Examples of archetypes (with actual characters examples):

Warrior only (Cascorach)

Warrior Bard (Cynan Moyal)
Warrior Smith (Fulfnir the Anvil smith)
Warrior Healer (Alsca)
Warrior Berserker (Ulf)

Wyrd Bard (Mads the Anvil Skald)
Wyrd Smith (Lorkan)
Wyrd healer (Fitch)

There are a few archetypes which only go with wyrd weaving. Examples of wyrd archetypes only available to weavers are Ovate (The Dead), Wistman (The Fae), Shaman (Nature), woad artist (body art), etc. See Wyrd Weavers.

Here are the three most common archetypes in detail and few further 'one schtick' suggestions. A longer list would include; Trader, Forester, Farmer, Steward, etc.

3.2 Healer

Healing comes in four different levels – two mundane, and two wyrd.

3.21 Stabilisation: Although anyone can hold someone's guts in, you need basic healing to stabilise someone's wounds.

3.22 Slow healing: This is the healing bandage equivalent, but could include all the normal sewing, herbal salving, etc. This is not strictly wyrd use although it will heal a wound much faster than reality.

Once a healer has applied slow healing, the location will return to full health in half an hour(ish). However, the final arbiter of whether it has healed or not is the healer, not the injured party. A wound is only healed after the time has elapsed and the healer has returned and checked over the wound. (Note: there might be rare situations when the original healer cannot get back in a sensible time, in which case another healer can do the check, but this should be the exception, not the rule.) If someone's wounds are particularly bad a healer might decide it will take more time, or extra actions to heal, e.g. 'You will have to keep that leg elevated for at least an hour.'

As a requirement for slow healing the healer must work on victim's skin, armour might have to be stripped off, etc. There is an opportunity for good role-playing and phys-reps (fake blood, sewing kits etc). Wrapping a hanky around a wound over armour does nothing and generally looks niggling. There is no limit except time available to how much slow healing a healer can do.

Slow healing and stabilisation are the only types of healing a Warrior healer can do.

3.23 Cinematic Healing: This is the use of wyrd to allow the recipient to temporarily shake off the effects of an injury or injuries. If you think of John McClane being bashed about in the Die Hard movies then you have got the idea. However, the wound is still there, fake blood and all, and the effects of the wounds healed will return soon after the fight, or a little longer in the case of a long linear, and **MUST** then be treated with Slow healing.

The wyrd healer can do only so much cinematic healing before becoming exhausted, that is to say three single locations (minor deeds) or all of one person's wounds (major deed). With greater sacrifice they can do more. See Wyrd Weavers.

3.24 Ritual healing: This is special one off wyrd healing which can restore a crippled limb, or any other medical procedure short of resurrection. This is time-consuming and needs special props, etc. Discussion with a ref will be necessary to decide what is possible and what is needed. See wyrd rules on rituals.

3.3 Smith.

3.31 Armour repairing.

Repairing armour is one of the main things a smith will find himself doing on events. Repairing armour needs props (just like healing). Leather needles, leather patches, etc for leather and a hammer and anvil for metal work. As we have an excellent working forge at Culhaven, if an armorer can work metal for phys-rep repairing, this would be excellent.

Armour repairs can be done in three different ways.

Bodging it: This is a quick repair will take only a few minutes and can give armour back its protection. It has the drawback that it will only last a short while, even if not hit. It also means that if afterwards you want to repair it properly it will take twice as long. Any piece of armour can be only bodged once.

Full repair: a piece of leather armour can be repaired in half an hour of work and metal armour in an hour. These times are only guidelines. Bigger pieces, like a shirt of chain, should take longer and minor repairs shorter. Being proven also allows a smith to work twice as fast. If the smith knows the armour has taken a particular battering they can declare it irreparable.

Wyrd repair/destruction: A wyrd smith can summon power to mould a piece of armour like putty. As with all wyrd use, the smith can only do so much of this before becoming exhausted (see Wyrd weaving)

3.32 Making special stuff.

Both mundane and wyrd smiths can make special objects. The first of these will be their apprentice piece – the piece they make that shows them to be proven.

Sometimes the plots will include an expectation that something will be made, but it is also possible to work on a project of your own choice. Discuss with a ref about what you want to make and between you, you can decide whether it is possible, what materials (mundane and special) are needed and how long it will take to manufacture. There are no set rules for this but the more powerful the object the longer it will take to make and the more difficult the materials will be to quest for.

Note that there are no standard magic items at Dumnonni Chronicles (E.g. +1 magic swords). All items are unique, rare and time-consuming to produce.

Wyrd smiths can also set temporary wyrd into their work (See setting wyrd into a thing or person).

3.4 Bard.

The bard is one of the most important people in Dumnonni. Bards hold power over the reputations of everyone from kings downwards and reputation is more important than anything else.

3.41 Satire and praise

The bard is an arbiter of people's actions. They should take it upon themselves to make public comment about the behaviour of those around them. And people listen to what is said. For example, to accuse someone of cowardice is to mortally wound them; they will do almost anything to refute the allegation. Likewise the praise of a bard raises someone in everyone's eyes. A wyrd bard can augment their words so that they are irresistible, but even the normal words of a bard can remove fear, boost morale, start fights or stop them, etc. However, a bard must be careful as their words enhance the truth but if they do not reflect it they will lose their power. For example; accusing an obviously brave warrior of cowardice is unlikely to be taken seriously and the bard's words will lose their power.

3.42 Word Hoard

When a bard sings a new song or tells a new tale, which gets acclaim from their audience, they gain a token to add to their costume to indicate their increased word hoard.

This might be a feather, a silver ring, a patch for their cloak, etc. Thus a bard will gradually create a marvellous costume, a cloak of feathers for example. The player needs to provide the props and thus decides what the pieces are. They also judge for themselves whether they have achieved acclaim, but they should take care not to show false pride.

The types of story and song we want bards to tell or sing in, listed in ascending order of how much we want them.

- Singing basic songs like the longboat song, or short boasts do not count towards the word hoard.
- Good telling of what has happened on the event. Appropriate songs (Feed the Raven, the Black-shields Song, etc)
- News-giving (telling tales of happenings outside of play, for instance telling of the Anvil raid on the Clan Morna).
- Recent events. Stories about happenings on previous events.
- Retelling actual myths. Norse legends, bits of the Mabinogion, etc.
- Tales or songs about the Dumnonni great and good.
- Telling tales of Dumnonni history. This is the thing we want to encourage most. Great oral histories may entail a bard doing some out of character research and they will probably need to pigeonhole some of the old lags.

A great bard should be working towards the bottom of the list, not just being a light entertainer.

3.43 Giving Bardic names.

One of the important responsibilities of a Bard is the giving of Bardic names, epithets of personal significance such as Cynrain Battle Winner, Kai the Giant, Conn of a Hundred Wounds.

The name can be literal, symbolic or ironic. Jill Dream-Walker does dream-walk, Denuli the Peaceful preferred talking to fighting and Small Ox was large.

Giving a bardic name should not be a commonplace event. Most of the time normal satire or praise is enough. But if a bard sees something really special or dreadful they should gift the perpetrator a name.

The bard must also be able to put their honour where their mouth is and retell the tale when asked. Without a good story the name will not stick.

Whether the name is insulting or glorious the recipient is stuck with it and must bear it with pride. Having to live with a name like Imlladd the Liar means having to work twice as hard as everyone else.

3.44 Lawgiving and truth speaking.

A Brehon is a bard given the title and made responsible for remembering laws and making judgements. Any bard can be asked to make a judgement, however, or to speak truth. A bard should be very careful to only say things he knows to be true, because being caught out in an untruth, even if it was given in good faith, will destroy a bard's reputation. If you are not sure of an answer be vague and wise sounding. "The answer you seek can be found in your heart, child. You know what to do!"

3.45 Bardic duels.

Bardic duels can be fought just for entertainment but can also be deadly serious. In some cases a bardic duel is to the death.

It is a joint improvised story where the two contestants take it in turn to narrate. The story is often about one or both bards, but it is also common for the protagonist to be a third person real or imagined. One bard takes the side of the protagonist and the other opposes him. The protagonist is often relevant to an on-going argument. A Red Branch Bard might challenge a Fianna one after an insult about cleanliness so the protagonist would be a grubby Fianna.

The rules are simple; you may not contradict your opponent, but must turn the story about in your turn through cunning words. Using phrases like "it only seemed like" are frowned upon. At some point one of the participants will admit he has been beaten. If a bard is too prideful to realise they have been beaten then the audience can be asked to arbitrate, but for the bard who has been declared the loser in this way it is a great shame.

3.5 Other Archetypes.

Some other archetypes really only have one ability attached to them. This is a sort of catch all category. Here a just a few suggestions.

3.51 Berserker: A warrior who can choose to work themselves up into a berserk rage (see combat rules).

3.52 Woad artist: The warrior woad artist can only do the simplest form of woad painting. By painting complex woad on an un-armoured location they can get an extra point of protection. The rules terms are the same as for armour repair, i.e. it takes up to half an hour to paint a person. Many of the Red Branch have this skill.

The wyrd woad artist can put all sorts of wyrd in the art as he paints (see setting wyrd into a thing or person.)

3.53 Herbwise/Potion-maker: An alchemist, who mixes potions and salves to heal and harm. The mundane herbwise can do mundane healing with his herbs. For the wyrd potion master see setting wyrd into a thing or person.

3.54 Craftsman: Although the smith/ armourer is going to be the most common type of craftsman, jewellers, woodworkers and artisans of all kinds are possible. These use all the appropriate rules from the smith section above.

3.6 Where do you come from?

Either

3.61 You were born in Dumnonni.

You can be from one of the established tribes of Dumnonni (see the list below) or you can be from one of your own devising (with the approval of the refs). Your parents or their ancestors were the ones to come through the mists and although they have brought much of their culture with them, they are used to the many peculiarities of the place. They also already have a base here and have made political alliances, enemies etc.

Or

3.62 You are new through the mists.

You have come from the mundane world. Coming through the mists can happen in a number of different ways. Some of the common ones are sailing by boat into thick fogs, entering wyrd-laden barrows or passing through mysterious fae gates. Although it may appear random, anyone who is 'chosen' to find their way to Dumnonni is fated. They are a doomed heroes called to an unknown purpose. There is also some balance of the peoples, in that after terrible wars, greater numbers find their way here to replenish the land.

You can have come from the period ranging from the dark ages back to the pre-Roman era (500BC to approximately 900AD) and from any part of northern Europe, though mainly from Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia. There is no relative time between here and there, so it is possible to have arrived escaping Roman persecution, even though there have been early Vikings here for many generations. It is even possible for a person who entered the mist after you to have arrived before you. This means you might meet your descendants as old men.

There is no way back to the mundane world, though it is possible to travel to a joint afterlife, be it Valhalla or Tir Na Nog. Likewise, there is hardly any way to affect the mundane world, though there are a few ways that curses and calling can be sent. However, people's troubles from the mundane world have a way of finding them here, or even being already here waiting for them when they arrive. No one from any of the three modern Abrahamic religions ever finds their way to Dumnonni. There is some form of bar to them, to the point that people travelling with a Christian, for example, will find he has fallen out of the boat, or been separated in the labyrinths they were exploring (see also 'What is Dumnonni?')

Anyone travelling from the mundane world will find the presence of monsters, overt magic (indeed in some cases suddenly being able to do magic themselves) and even the actual appearance of the gods, unsettling, but remember you are pagans who know this type of thing does exist, but until now have not experienced it first hand.

Note that coming through the mist is often a good choice for someone new to the system as it allows you to do some fun real history research and not have to know very much about the detailed Dumnonni background.

3.7 Creating a Character worth Remembering.

3.71 Being someone else.

The actions of your created character should often be quite different from your own reactions influenced as they are from your modern world view. This requires 'getting in character' Try to create a set of cohesive motives, so you have an idea of what your character would do in any given situation. In particular, winning means something very different to a hero in Dumnonni, and death or material loss are insignificant compared to retaining and increasing one's honour.

This break-away from the modern mind-set is one of the main things we try to achieve in creating the DC game world. There are plenty of pointers to help achieve this throughout the guide, and sound advice can be had from Dumnonni veterans.

3.72 Where do I fit in?

What type of things are you planning to do at Dumnonni? It is important for your character to have a niche to lay claim to and/or definite goals/aims.

Also are you high-born or low-born? What your parents did and what your upbringing was should reflect on who you want to be.

If you are coming with friends then decide whether you want to be a cohesive group. Often a new group will have far more impact, and fun, than individuals.

3.73 Are you rich?

Unlike many systems it is up to you if you have lots of 'bling' as a starting character or not. See the economy section to see how we our approach differs from a standard monetary system. Certainly you can start with any equipment that you have that fits the system. Your back-story should be interesting, first and foremost. Being rich or poor is just a different starting point for a good character. Either option should inspire good role-playing opportunities.

3.74 Theatrical speaking, accents and avoiding obvious modern language.

Trying to make it sound different to modern speech helps the atmosphere greatly. Doing accents is encouraged, as long as it is not too comedy. It is surprising how putting on an Irish accent changes your mind-set. Likewise, using more flowery, dramatic language is great also. We like to avoid modern swearwords, not out of prudishness, but because they always sound modern (even where the origin of the modern expletive is ancient). Don't call someone a cunt. Tell them that "they reek like the pissel of a Fomorian and their words are the yellow torrent that sprays from it."

Just for ease of play, English is the common language of most of the people of Dumnonni. However, if you want to smatter your speech with Gaelic (Pictii), Welsh (Romano-British) or even Scandinavian (Norse) words or phrases this often sounds cool. The Usipeti use Dutch as their secret family language.

3.75 In and out of game prejudice.

Dumnonni is a game and we want as many people as possible have fun and feel welcome here.

Players are encouraged to play whatever they want within bounds of the game world and their choices are never limited by real life characteristic like gender, skin tone, accent etc.

In Character insults based on a person's tribe, honour, Geas, etc. are very much encouraged but these must be based entirely on the character's origins and actions in the game. Insults about someone's real-world attributes are not acceptable.

Sexism, homophobia and transphobia are not something we want to see in the heroes of the free races and players should not write these attitudes into their cultures. It is never acceptable to threaten sexual violence either In or Out of Character.

It is worth remembering that, although playing a bigoted character may feel novel and entertaining, it is usually neither for the person on the receiving end.

We enjoy exploring most complex issues and the refs may choose to include 'heavy' plot lines which may very occasionally include some forms of discrimination. In those cases, refs will do so mindfully and in consultation with the other refs and any players involved. Refs will continue to talk to affected players during the plotline to make sure it stays fun. Crew should only ever play on these heavier issues under the direct instruction of refs.

Dumnonni is a close knit community and we never want anyone to feel excluded or bullied in real life. If you are ever unhappy about an interaction with a player, crew member, ref or a plot line, you can speak to either Alysa, Enka or Nathan who will take your concerns seriously and work with you to resolve the situation.

3.76 Plot Hooks.

Think about who your enemies might be, what your goals are and anything that might be fun. We cannot promise to add vast amounts of personal plot to every event you play, but the more interesting the ideas you give us, the more likely it is that one of the refs will bite and run with it!

Ref's point of view from Jon

One of our long-time players once asked me if it would be possible to embark upon a particular epic quest. It was a really big epic thing. I said, 'Well, yes – but you do realise this will be fantastically difficult, take a really long time, may be unachievable, and probably damn your tribe and create ridiculous difficulties into the bargain?' He wisely answered, 'Well, there wouldn't be much point in being a Celtic Hero if there wasn't ridiculous difficulty.' True words: the quest lasted for years, it was a truly epic tale, he had a blast, and so did those around him. It created part of the epic history of Dumnonni.

This is truly echoed and clarified in the words of one of our players:

"A man can never have too many enemies!" (King Gwydion)

Lastly, it is important to think about what objectives you might have which are player-led rather than plot driven. The more you do this, the more you will not be reliant of the busy ref-team to create your own personal story, your own fun. Do you want to make political alliances? Do you want to make sure the High King knows who you are? Etc. Have drives and agendas which you can forward in game without having to wait for it to land in your lap. Weave your personal plot threads with those of other players and you will be sure to have lots to do, and lots of fun.

So you want to be a Bard? By Mark Chilvers

Imagine the scene – a cold and rainy night, a sea of mud in the stockade, in the round house, the fire is bright, and the mead is flowing. Around the fire sit many weary warriors, battered from the day's battles wrapped in their cloaks. A man begins to sing a song about the last battle and how one of their friends fell that day, fighting against the Fomor, his last breath given in defending the free peoples. The song tells of how that warrior was strong in his sword arm and how many men he had killed before he fell in a desperate defence. It also tells of how when he was drunk he would fall over and sleep with his feet in the fire hence earning him the name 'Cinderfoot'. The song has a chorus that the warriors can bellow out and stamp their feet to, and they laugh loudly at the descriptions of how 'Cinderfoot' tried to seduce the blacksmith's daughter, only to receive a bloody nose. When the song ends they cheer and give the bard silver and gold, and one warrior gives a narrow silver bangle to the bard with a horn of ale. Then they sing it again.

As it says, a Bard is an important part of Dumnonni. It provides the Chronicle part in the game. The people of the dark ages lived short and violent lives and for the most part, they passed unremembered, but for someone who wants to be a hero, the most valuable thing is not gold or silver, nor fine armour and weapons, it is renown. A warrior only does what he does so that they may be remembered in story and song. As a Bard it is down to you to create those songs and stories.

So what do you need to be able to do to make a good Bard? First you don't need to be an amazing singer or musician; it helps of course, but that is not what makes a good Bard. First, it requires confidence. The confidence to stand in front of an audience and entertain them. If the one thing you hate in life is to get up in front of people, don't think about becoming a bard. It's a bit like stand-up comedy, in that it puts you and you alone on the spot.

Next, you need some kind of act. If you can sing unaccompanied, that is fine, as long as you can do it confidently. If you play an instrument, that's good too, but it needs to be appropriate for the Dark Age setting. Bringing in a modern acoustic guitar will look out of place, a mandolin, or bouzouki would work though. A drum is good, a bodhran or a nice wooden drum, or a whistle, flute or pipes. Remember, the other players spend a lot of money on their kit, and everybody goes to great lengths to keep everything in keeping with the period. So getting a nice instrument would be appreciated by all. However, you can just start with your voice and a song.

Finally, you will need some material. You don't need to have a set of three hours of Norse/ Saxon dark-ages songs. Start with four or five and make sure that you know them well. Practise! A bard will not get paid if he keeps forgetting the lyrics. Appropriate folk songs are what seem to fit into the game, although some words may need changing to remove modern references. Ballads and songs about war are good as long as they keep within in the idiom, and there are many songs about leaving, travelling, love, money etc. As you go along it should be possible to learn the stories of some of the characters from the game and even create songs about them. This is the point where you can give characters renown for their action, although they don't have to die to have a song about them, just do something heroic, or mad or very dangerous..

The same applies for storytelling. There are many historic stories to be told and learning a few would be an excellent thing for a bard to do. Something from the Tain Bo Cuailnge, the Mabinogion, or the Norse sagas. They need to be told with passion and character, so, again, practise them. Delivered with different voices and dynamic changes in pace, and volume, they can be spell binding. Once you learn a few stories about the heroes of Culhaven, then they can be told to what will be undoubtedly be a receptive audience.

So it is not an easy task, to be a Bard, and rightly so. The position of Bard, the keeper of the word hoard, was a rare and honoured position in the society of the time. All Bards were granted hospitality in every lord's hall, for the entertainment value, on cold winter nights, and the act of remembrance of heroes old and new. To hold an audience around a fire, where the audience hangs on every word, and to hear their appreciation at the end is a fabulous experience, as it is to sit in the round house and

hear story and song. It adds a great deal to any event and it is part of the Dark Ages come alive. Do not approach it lightly.

New to Dumnonni by Dave Mckenna

So you're contemplating a trip through the mists to your first Dumnonni Chronicles event? You think you are all prepared and ready to go when your housemate pipes up;

"Have you chewed the leather into your hand-stitched armour yourself? Is your ground-down woad ready to be mixed with urine? You do know Dave Oliver only speaks in Anglo-Saxon?"

Then the fear hits you. What if the tales are true? Is this game more re-enactment than re-enactments?

Whilst the above is a slight exaggeration a lot of people are nervous about the perceived levels of kit fascism and hardcore roleplay at DC events. Hopefully what follows will help allay those myths.

First and foremost everyone at DC is helpful and friendly. Don't be afraid to ask about anything you're unsure of, from whether your character concept is any good to problems with kit. Throw yourself into the roleplay, DC is a game of heroes in a dark and gritty world. Playing a warrior? Play a mighty warrior who steps forward to offer the enemy champions a chance for a glorious death. Weaving Wyrd? Make a show of calling forth your power from whatever source you get your magicks from. Above all make people sit up and take note. After the battle, always tell tales about how brave your shield brother was, about how terrifying the magicks woven by the Ovate you saw were. Everyone, and I mean everyone likes people telling them how great they are.

Plot is everywhere, literally everywhere, Fae creatures in the dark, brave mouse warriors in the rafters, Gods and Goddesses roaming the land. Stick your nose in to any you find and it's a rare occasion when you will be disappointed.

All in all, DC is an exceedingly open and friendly game. Yes, they do have some restrictions but that enhances the game. After my first event I realised that none of my housemates' questions had any foundation. Dave Oliver only communicates in Gaelic prose...

4 Combat rules

4.1 Ref calls

First and foremost, ALL players and crew must learn and react to the following;

Time Freeze: All players must freeze on the spot and close their eyes.

Time Out: The game has been halted temporarily by a referee. Players may relax and talk.

Time In: Players may continue the game and get back into character.

Man Down: Someone has been hurt for real! All playing stops until the injury has been attended to. Anyone who is injured or sees someone else injured should shout this and seek assistance from a First Aider. Don't wait for someone else to call out.

4.2 Fighting Safety.

Head and Groin Hits: Deliberate head and groin hits are BANNED.

If anyone is accidentally hit on the head in combat then they should play it as a glancing blow that does no serious damage but causes them to stagger back momentarily.

Grappling and Body checking: Neither of these should ever be used in general melee. Although there is some general pushing, barging, etc. inherent in Dumnonni combat, especially shield wall fights, care must always be taken to avoid hurting each other.

Pulling your Blows: This means not hitting people with your full force, but instead over-emphasising your blows so they look hard but are in fact reasonably soft.

Intoxication: We are not puritans but over-indulgence has in the past caused people to perform under par. This has included drunken people who thought that alcohol had made them god's gift to role-playing, people who were unsafe to fight and hangovers keeping crew out of events the following morning. Be responsible about it please. Note also that we have to enforce a strict no underage drinking rule.

Other Rough stuff: Avoid body contact, wrestling, offensive shield use etc. Some of the more experienced crew and players may do all of the above, but only against people they know and who are expecting it.

Light holders: Anyone holding a flaming torch or lantern must not fight, and they must not be hit.

4.3 Fighting rules ethos

Combat should be grim and gritty. Players and crew should register wounds by flinching, groaning, falling down, etc. to create a realistic feel during combat.

We believe that fighting is most fun with great jeopardy. This is one of the reasons why our system has relatively few hits and little healing. It is our hope that in order to survive you will have to bring your 'A' game. Thus, in order for the fighting to be difficult, **you must take your hits**. Not taking your hits is the quickest way to undermine the feeling of risk and immersion. Not taking your hits also obviously damages the game for others. That said, if it seems appropriate some SMALL leeway is allowable – we want you to be heroes, not accountants. So if you do carry on in heroic action after ignoring for a moment the hit that should have taken you down, you must take the consequences of any further blows you might sustain immediately afterwards. One extreme consequence is summed up in "The dying act". (See 'Taking your hits'.)

Players and crew have slightly different rules for combat to encourage the style of play we want. In general the crew rules are designed to allow the players to look good if they fight theatrically. Our crew are briefed to push the players hard and to punish them for mistakes, but not to think of the fights as a competition. The win for them is making the players look and feel epic. A quick look at the crew combat rules should make this clear. For example, crew do not attack players who have had the good grace to take their hits and fall to the ground. See 'On theatrical fighting'.

4.4 Player Combat rules

4.41 Hits and armour.

Without armour, warriors can take two wounds to any location. Wyrd Weavers can take two on their bodies and one on each limb. Armour adds to these totals as below. Armour only protects what it covers, not a whole location.

Type	Examples	Protection
Light armour	Thick leather, cloth padded armour (eg gambeson), furs or 'woading'	1
Medium amour	Rigid leather or ringmail	3
Heavy Armour	Chainmail, lamella, metal scales or lorica segmentata	4
Light helm	Leather or padded	1 extra to body
Heavy Helm	Firbolg mask or a metal helm	2 extra to body

Note 1: Armour can be stacked, so wearing chainmail over a leather tunic and a plate helm will give a person 7 points of armour on their body (1+4+2)

Note 2: Arrow damage goes straight through armour to the appropriate body location. Arrows do not damage armour.

Note 3: To encourage the use of helms even though head hits don't count, helms add armour to the body instead.

Note 4: Other types of armour will be given armour values by a ref on an ad hoc basis.

Note 5: Woading only works as armour if the location is otherwise unarmoured.

4.42 Damage and healing.

Being hit by any weapon causes one point of damage to either the location or the armour it hits. As well as counting the damage points it is important to act out being hit appropriately with staggering, crying out, etc.

Large two handed weapons, large creatures, dropped boulders and arrow hits all knock the victim to the ground whether they are seriously hurt or not.

With the exception of arrows, blocking with a shield will not stop the victim from being knocked back.

If a limb goes down to zero it stops working. If the body goes down to zero you become unconscious.

Wounds need treating to stop them getting worse. A location already at zero will become minus in only a few minutes. Most forms of 'first aid' will stop a wound getting worse until it can be properly healed. As always we want you to act out the drama of keeping someone's guts in rather than just tying a hanky around them and saying it's better.

Healing a wound is difficult and can only be done by a skilled healer. In general, healing is performed at four levels: stabilising (stopping the wound from getting any worse), slow healing (professional attention leads to slow but full recovery), Cinematic healing (wyrd-enhanced healing from the gifted), exceptional and restorative healing (reforming severed limbs and curing the plague, a master's work). These are discussed in greater depth elsewhere but they all do basically the same thing, that is to say that they return a location to full hits. Armour can also be repaired (see Smith)

4.43 Death and permanent injury.

This happens when a location has negative hits, though it particularly needs to be seen in the context of what we are trying to achieve.

If it is apparent either through being massively negative or because a wound does not seem to be sensibly survivable (a beheading for example) then you are dead.

If you are left untreated for more than a few minutes with negative hits on your body then you are dead. As a rule of thumb you may survive about 10 minutes (a count of 600), or even less if you have taken multiple hits.

A limb in negative hits will become permanently crippled if not treated quickly. If it has taken a real battering it might be appropriate for it to be already missing or crippled.

In general, if the healers reach you quickly enough most injuries can be healed.

4.44 Berserking.

Occasionally, a character might be filled with a berserk rage. They lose rational control and fights with reckless abandonment. When they fight in such a fury they can continue fighting a lot longer than a normal person. Unfortunately as soon as the warp spasm has left them, their wounds take their normal toll. This often kills them.

A character can only go berserk if there are very good role-playing reasons to do so. The exception to this are 'berserkers' who can choose to work themselves up into such a rage at will.

Be careful not to take the piss, however, as this phrase, 'a lot longer than a normal person' should not be an excuse to totally ignore a battering, unless you are doing a 'dying act'.

4.45 The dying act.

If players have taken enough hits to kill them they have the option of a dying act. This is a bending of the rules for one last heroic action. This might be to go down in a flurry of blows saving the day, or staying alive long enough to make an impassioned speech to your friends. It might be that bleeding out quietly while the healers fail to resuscitate you is the best pathos. The choice is yours, but after that you are dead, nothing can save you. A good example of this is the death of Tannick of no respect; he was geased to fight the undead and went berserk when Culhaven was attacked by them. He carried on for the whole fight, far more than the normal rules would allow, and even though the healers were on him like ants at the end of the battle he told them he was unsavable. When the crew know this is what is going on they can ham it up more and make someone's death epic.

4.46 Honour duels.

Honour duels are an important part of Celtic culture and common in Dumnonni. They can be used to resolve conflicts, demonstrate prowess, get revenge on your enemies or just because it would be dishonourable not to. They have lasting impact on your a characters reputation and should be taken seriously. Most challenges will be to first yield; this allows players to test the skills against foes and allies, building stories with NPCs that can be ongoing. It also allows NPCs to build their own reputations whether they win or lose. As they are played out in an open arena we encourage players and crew to pull out all the stops. A more often than not a challenge are made in advance of a fight and gives the players time to do IC training and practise, creating good RP and improving players hard skills. Crew will make winning hard and players will lose if they are not up to it. Players need to be very careful to yield if they are losing and accept the consequences. Likewise when a crew member yields most honourable characters should let them live.

The rare occasion when an honour duel is challenged to the death it is a situation with a very real chance the player character could die and should be taken very seriously for this reason.

4.5 Crew combat rules.

Crew are given the maximum number of times (total hits) they can be hit before they fall down dead; this is based on the type of creature they are and how much armour they are wearing. When hit, they should react accordingly.

1-2 hits	Unarmoured Human
4	Lightly Armoured warrior – This is the default for most crew
6	Heavily armoured warrior – e.g. Roman legionary or Norseman in chain
8	Fomorian
10	Heavily armoured Fomorian champion

However, it is not expected that you will normally reach this maximum. To make combat theatrical we expect crew to die earlier when it seems appropriate. Below are guidelines for this **essential** element of dumnonni combat. It should be quite possible, though difficult, for a player to kill crew with one excellent hit.

Unless you are a rock hard monster, i.e. you have been told so by a ref;

1. if hit with a dramatic two-hand blow, fall over.
2. if hit squarely on the body with an arrow, **die**.
3. if hit in a particularly dramatic way, or it would just look cool to do so, **die**.
4. if you receive a pummelling of blows from multiple people, **die**.
5. if you have not died from any of the above reasons, when you reach your Total Hits **die**. Never exceed this total!!!
6. If a player falls down from their hits, leave them be and choose a new target.
7. At times the refs will tell crew members that they are particularly tough and they will follow different rules, but this is the exception not the rule.
8. Always react to being hit, by flinching, groaning, falling down etc. to create a realistic feel during combat.

Inexperienced people should follow the lead from the regular crew.

Taking your hits. By Nathan Gribble

I wrote the following for the other refs a few years back.

I had a most excellent weekend with only one flaw and that was self-inflicted. I cheated. Particularly on the Sunday when I was unhappy with how poor I was at not getting hit. In order to remain heroic, I did not count my hits as fairly as I should have done. I hope I did not do it enough to annoy any of the crew and I don't think it interfered with the fun of any of the other players, but it left me feeling cross with myself and broke my immersion in the game. I can easily justify it, but in the end it was not worth it, for me at least. If I ignore hits, even a little, then I have taken away the risk of failure, and without that the challenge has gone. I am not trying to be evangelical about this, I am just making the point in the hope I will do better next time I play, for my sake at least.

This is one of the most contentious things we have to deal with at Dumnonni. Some players very carefully count their hits. Others know roughly how many times they have been hit, but are more interested in the over-all effect. And a few others think that as they are heroes, they need not bother to count their hits at all because they should win unless they themselves choose not to. None of the above approaches is implicitly wrong, but they can be irritating to other players. Note that in Dumnonni the first option is the one we encourage and the third option would be frowned upon, although it is used very successfully in some other systems.

So what do we want at Dumnonni? Of all the criticisms made against Dumnonni, people not taking their hits is one of the most valid and is something that can be especially disappointing. We do our utmost to create a realistic system, so why fall short in combat?

There are different guidelines for crew and players. As a player, if you get hit and think: "Meh, I do not want to have to fall down and stop having fun," you need to realise that without failure there is no jeopardy. Your injury, or even death, will make the game better for everyone, including yourself, in the long run. Be big about this, count your hits. Obviously, if you ignore a few points here or there no one is going to notice except you, but, and this is a big but, if you stretch it too much and other people notice it, particularly other players, it will affect the game for them and that is bad. Remember immersion is the Dumnonni 'big idea' and, of all the crimes you can commit, interfering with someone else's immersion is the worst. Also remember that your reaction to a good blow, well delivered (it may not be a killing blow or one that takes you down), is the reward for that crew member in that fight; react well to let them have that reward, and you in return will receive better reactions from them as you feed off each other's role playing.

Also, in common with many other systems, we have the problem that we are not fighting with real weapons and trying to (actually) hurt each other. If you just try to get in as many hits as possible with a lightweight speedy weapon you make the fighting very dull-looking and unrealistic. This is true for both players and crew. It may seem contradictory, but you need to fight as well as you can whilst subjecting yourself to some obvious handicaps. You want to be using your weapons so it looks as if the fighting were real (and also thinking about looking cool, obviously). Try and imagine what it would look like on film and avoid the 'drum rolling' hits and other uring stuff.

On theatrical fighting by John Wood

Role-playing combat, particularly at Dumnonni, is very much a skilled activity. It is unlike any other martial or re-enactment form because of the weapons used and stage combat nature of the performance. The attacker does everything possible to make the blows look theatrically real and forceful while minimising any actual impact. The defender responds to the implied, but not actual, impact of each blow they fail to avoid in an appropriately dramatic manner. In Dumnonni combat, learning to respond and react to a blow spontaneously is as important as using weapons and shields in a convincing theatrical way. Even when blocked battlefield weaponry can cause you to stagger under the sheer weight of a well-placed blow. A Dane axe will easily knock you to the floor even if you are braced well behind your shield. These reactions are critical to giving combat a good theatrical flow and pace.

The safe, low-impact nature of role-playing combat means the protection offered by armour is denoted as a number of blows, which you mentally have to note as they are spent. This however does not account for the other important effect, the impact of a well-placed blow. Even if your armour saves you from a nasty injury it does not stop you being bruised or otherwise hurt by the force of the blow. This may involve staggering back, being winded from a good spear thrust, limping from the bite of an axe swing or mimicking the loss of feeling in your arm after the clatter of a sword against armour. Each is very important, adding extra dimensions, flow and pace to the *melée*. The true measure of skill when playing a warrior in combat is not the ability to hack the most efficiently with a foam rubber weapon, it's about making the use of weapon and shield look theatrically convincing and being able to react spontaneously to blows in an appropriately dramatic manner, whether that's playing out a wound or reeling back from a blow. By no means is this easy. As I said at the start role-playing combat is a very skilful and unique activity you will have to learn. I've been working at it for 29 years now and still get it wrong at times. What is important, though, is that you accept this and put the effort in to learn these practical role-playing combat skills.

Perhaps the most overlooked and foolishly underrated aspect of combat is role-playing being wounded or hurt by blows. In such situations are the greatest moments of battlefield camaraderie and emotion to be found for friend, foe and most importantly you. This is when wounded warriors make epic last stands, healers and warriors truly come together to create memorable scenes and comrades rally in life and death choices. After the battle the injuries are badges of honour, testaments to all you were willing to give in common cause for your brothers in arms, proof you were there and stood against all odds. Role-playing at Dumnonni is foremost about good spontaneous theatre, and combat when acted out to its utmost possibilities is a very important part of that drama.

What is Dumnonni Fighting about? By Pod

At Dumnonni, tactics and individual skill make a big difference to the outcome of battles and duels. The warriors who prosper, and have their deeds turned into tales and songs, are those who can either truly fight well or can fake it very well.

There is a very careful balance that Dumnonni aims for, a combination of fighting skill and theatrical ability. Quite which is most important is a matter of regular debate. I tend towards the 'make-it-as-realistic-as-is-reasonable' side of the debate but choose to carry extremely heavy and cumbersome shield and weapons to slow me down and keep the challenge high for myself. I like fighting against skilled opponents and trying to win, but I also enjoy the theatrics of the process and many battles I have spent struggling to survive or even unconscious after being wounded in the first clash of weapons. Quite what qualifies as winning in these battles is often debated as well. A good death of an iconic character will echo down the ages and be celebrated in tales and songs. Sometimes winning can be just a matter of trying to not get hit or even just not be noticed. Some of the mightiest of warriors in Culhaven have only survived battles by hiding underneath the corpses of their enemies or making a timely tactical retreat.

Whether you prefer the drama or the contest one aspect seems to flavour the Dumnonni approach to battle; if you get it wrong, you will die. You cannot afford to just charge into the middle of the enemy formation and assume that the healers will sort you out. No one gets that many hits even in full chain and leathers. Warriors should become very cagey about exposing themselves to dangers unless it is for a very good reason. Real courage starts to play a part as a well loved and respected character can be killed and lost in just a few moments on a chaotic battlefield.

The key to battlefield success is to take the fighting seriously. This requires a reaction to each blow that is commensurate with the way in which you have been hit and weapons moved in ways that mimic real weight and power. It seems counterproductive to fall over or stagger back when struck if you are trying to hold a position but after a small amount of this you find yourself really not wanting to be hit by anything. If someone has managed to hit you, despite your best efforts to stop them, give them the benefit of reacting to it. Avoiding battle, if possible, starts to seem sensible. You will find ways to protect yourself.

These ideas are just as true for crewing as well as playing as it all helps to create the right atmosphere on the battlefield.

How do you successfully portray a competent and respected warrior?

As fighting can be so dangerous, the characters that you portray have to have a good justification for risking their lives and their reputations. Warriors' reputations are all that they have in life and in death and they should only be spilling their blood when it makes a difference or makes a good tale.

Wear real armour and a helmet, or become very good at avoiding blows. We are not really trying to hurt each other but it needs to look and feel as if we are. I think a helmet is an absolute must as sooner or later you will get clattered in the head and some real protection will take the sting out of it.

Practice fighting with all your weapons. Practice dropping one weapon and grabbing another one quickly. Train in a martial art. Be prepared to learn from other warriors. Get a shield. Talk to the warriors around you and learn their names. Roleplay is wonderful in a fight as a well-played angry, menacing or honourable warrior can hold an entire flank with the right attitude or speech. Improve your fitness: no warrior can ever avoid all the swords, axes, javelins, spears and arrows that are whirling around a battlefield. Even the most renowned of warriors has sometimes been found winded and bloodied in a heap on the floor. Those who can keep moving whilst carrying weapons and armour and still keep blocking and dodging after two or three days of battle will have some great advantages.

Find, or make, a good war leader. This person has to get the right people into the right place at the right time. This is sometimes very easy when there is a clear enemy and an objective that everyone knows about, but it can be near impossible at times as Celtic warriors have strong opinions on many things and many have geases or sworn oaths that cause them to behave in unexpected ways. As much as anything, a war leader needs to constantly prove that they know what they are doing by inspiring the other warriors before the battle and controlling the battle once it has started. Speeches and discussions and agreements and arguments are all required.

A good war leader will; keep looking around and keep moving, watch your flanks and your spacing, organise the warriors to take advantage of their skills, delegate, have lots of plans and adjust their plans when things go wrong. A bad war leader is often more roleplay fun to have than a good one, but it is a dangerous path to choose if your character wants to stay alive.

What to expect in a battle.

It is noisy and confusing but usually very exciting. Arrows and javelins can come from any direction (including your own side). There will be lots of shouting.

A good battle will contain all or some of the following:

The shield wall: good for defence and providing the rock on which enemies can smash themselves; also good as a battering-ram to push through the enemy formation, break them up into smaller groups and defeat them a few at a time. Get a shield if you want to survive in the shield wall and surround yourself with warriors who will help you when it all goes wrong.

Skirmishing: for holding back the lightly armed and armoured enemy warriors and getting round behind the enemy shield wall and causing it to crumble through fear and panic. Skirmishers need to be quick and able to run for the whole of the battle.

Archery: for killing the enemy archers and keeping all the enemy hiding behind their shields. A well placed arrow will bring down the greatest of warriors and often the fear of an arrow will pull shields in the wrong directions, opening up protective formations.

The battle-breakers: warriors who will individually, or as a small group, charge into exactly the right place at the right time to turn the battle, and sometimes to die heroically as a result.

Javelins: sometimes the sky is dark with thrown weapons and many warriors are struck down by well-placed javelins or poor positioning. The very greatest of warriors have been known to catch javelins thrown at them and instantly throw them back.

Advances and charges: done at the right moment will win a battle. At the wrong time and place then everyone may die.

Retreats: An organised retreat is always the hardest manoeuvre as anyone left behind will be lost.

Oaths and Geases: A mighty oath gives a warrior status. It can also bind them stronger than steel. To announce, in the mead hall that you will be the first to slay any Fomorian that attacks Culhaven will get every warrior and bard to look for you if they attack. If you miss the chance or die in the attempt then your excuse will have to be good or your words will be considered weak and worthless. Geases will give you no choice in the matter; you must follow them to your doom if necessary.

The key to the success of these approaches is the willingness of everyone concerned to react to blows and to allow other people a chance to show what they can do. Sometimes it means spending the battle slowly dying so that someone else gets to be the hero. Sometimes it means just being third grunt on the left just holding the flank and sometimes it means slaying the enemy as fast as you can. Rarely you will experience the joy of finding a sweet spot on the battlefield where it seems that no one quite hits you or sees you and you sing a song of death with whatever weapons come to hand. Often it means spending a lot of time with the healers or the blacksmiths trying to recover from the blows you have received.

Judge your moment well and when it comes, die a good death if you can. Nothing is more Celtic than weeping after a famous victory because one brave warrior was lost, or celebrating cheerfully when many warriors have died well. It is the times when the fighting is all falling to pieces, despite everyone's best efforts, that lead to the greatest tales; the battle of the four feathers, the last stand of the seated men, the storming of Balor's keep and the death of Olaf the Smelly are all tales retold again and again.

Good warriors die to make the tales come alive. Warriors are sacrifices to the bards' muse, for no victories are better than those won with real cost. Success is not about killing more than anyone else or being the last one still standing. Real success as a warrior comes when tales are told about the deeds you have performed, when the bards sing songs about you and other warriors speak of you with respect; and above all when you are noticed by the gods.

At Dumnonni, tactics and individual skill make a big difference to the outcome of battles and duels. The warriors who prosper, and have their deeds turned into tales and songs, are those who can either truly fight well or can fake it very well.

There is a very careful balance that Dumnonni aims for, a combination of fighting skill and theatrical ability. Quite which is most important is a matter of regular debate. I subscribe to the make-it-as-realistic-as-is-reasonable side of the debate but choose to carry an extremely heavy and cumbersome shield and weapons to slow me down and keep the challenge high.

Personally I like the challenge of fighting against skilled opponents and trying to win, but I also enjoy the theatrics of the process. Sometimes it is just a matter of trying to not get hit or even to not be noticed. Sometimes it demands a rousing speech and a charge into almost certain death.

The key to battlefield success is to take the fighting seriously. This requires a reaction to each blow that is commensurate with the way in which you have been hit. Arrows will knock you back or down unless they hit your shield or the very rare piece of solid metal. Javelins will have a similar effect. Spears, axes, knives and clubs should be treated as if they were the real thing (both when they hit you and when you are swinging them about yourself). You need to respond to any blows received in combat as if they were wielded with real strength and intensity. Clearly your own weapons need to be wielded as if they were full weight weapons as well to give everyone involved the best experience. Wear real armour and a helmet, or become very good at avoiding blows. We are not really trying to hurt each other but it needs to look and feel as if we are. If someone has managed to hit you, despite your best efforts to stop them, give them the benefit of reacting to it. This transforms the style of fighting to one in which everyone is trying their best not to get hit. Those warriors that rely simply on attacking will soon be wounded, dead or dying.

As fighting can be so dangerous, the characters that you portray have to have a good justification for risking their lives and their reputations. Warriors' reputations are all that they have in life and in death and they should only be spilling their blood when it makes a difference or makes a good tale.

A good battle will contain all or some of the following:

The shieldwall: good for defence and providing the rock on which enemies can smash themselves; also good as a battering-ram to push through the enemy formation, break them up into smaller groups and defeat them a few at a time. Get a shield if you want to survive in the shieldwall and surround yourself with warriors who will help you when it all goes wrong.

Skirmishing: for holding back the lightly armed and armoured enemy warriors and getting round behind the enemy shieldwall and causing it to crumble through fear and panic. Skirmishers need to be quick and able to run for the whole of the battle.

Archery: for killing the enemy archers and keeping all the enemy hiding behind their shields. A well placed arrow will bring down the greatest of warriors and often the fear of an arrow will pull shields in the wrong directions, opening up protective formations.

The battle-breakers: warriors who will individually, or as a small group, charge into exactly the right place at the right time to turn the battle, and sometimes to die.

Javelins: sometimes the sky is dark with thrown weapons and many warriors are struck down by well placed javelins or poor positioning. The very greatest of warriors have been known to catch javelins thrown at them and instantly throw them back.

Advances and charges: done at the right moment will win a battle. At the wrong time and place then everyone may die.

Retreats: An organised retreat is always the hardest manoeuvre as anyone left behind will be lost.

Oaths and Geasa: A mighty oath gives a warrior status. It can also bind them stronger than steel. To state in the mead hall that you will be the first to slay any Fomorian that attacks Culhaven will get every warrior and bard to look for you if they attack. If you miss the chance or die in the attempt then your excuse will have to be good or your words will be considered weak and worthless. Geasa will give you no choice in the matter.

How to succeed:

Maintain individual skill and fitness: no warrior can ever avoid all the swords, axes, javelins, spears and arrows that are whirling around a battlefield. Even the most renowned of warriors has sometimes been found winded and bloodied in a heap on the floor. Those who can keep moving whilst carrying weapons and armour and still keep blocking and dodging after two or three days of battle will have some great advantages.

Find a good war leader and to trust. This person has to get the right people into the right place at the right time. This is sometimes very easy when there is a clear enemy and an objective that everyone knows about, but it can be impossible because Celtic warriors have strong opinions on many things and many have geasa or sworn oaths that cause them to behave in unexpected ways. As much as anything, a war leader needs to constantly prove that they know what they are doing by inspiring the other warriors and controlling the battle once it has started. Speeches and discussions and agreements and arguments are all required from a good war leader.

Learn to use your weapons.

Keep looking around and keep moving. Watch your flanks and your spacing. Talk to the warriors around you and learn their names.

Roleplay is wonderful in this environment as a well-played angry, menacing or honourable warrior can hold an entire flank with the right attitude or speech.

The key to the success of these approaches is the willingness of everyone concerned to react to blows and to allow other people a chance to show what they can do. Sometimes it means spending the battle slowly dying so that someone else gets to be the hero. Sometimes it means just being third grunt on the left just holding the flank and sometimes it means slaying the enemy as fast as you can. Rarely you may experience the joy of finding a sweet spot on the battlefield where it seems that no one quite hits you or sees you and you sing a song of death with whatever weapons come to hand.

Charging the enemy line alone in full view of all the warriors present will probably lead to death or capture. It may cause a spontaneous charge as all your friends rush forward to save you from dying, or it may just be accompanied by a few witty comments as they watch you die messily on the enemy spears. Judge your moment well and when it comes, die a good death if you can. Nothing is more Celtic than weeping after a famous victory because one brave warrior was lost, or celebrating cheerfully when many warriors have died well.

All of these things sometimes go wrong and it is the times when the event is all falling to pieces despite everyone's best efforts that lead to the greatest tales such as the battle of the four feathers, the last stand of the seated men, the storming of Balor's keep and the death of Olaf the Smelly. Good warriors die to make the tales come alive. Warriors are sacrifices to the bards' tales, for no victories are better than those won with real cost on both sides.

Success is not about killing more than anyone else or being the last one still standing. Real success as a warrior comes when tales are told about the deeds you have performed, when the bards sing songs about you and other warriors speak of you with respect – and, above all when you are noticed by the gods.

5 Wyrd Weaving

Wyrd use in Dumnonni is much more about headology than magic points. Most of the time, effects will be judged, not by rules, but by how cool it looks. However, some guidelines are needed as to how to go about it, and how much wyrd woo a person can get up to.

5.1 Doing Wyrd Deeds

To do something wyrd you need to act out the deed. Exactly how you do it depends on the style of wyrd you choose, but it should be clear from your actions and/or words what you expect to happen. You might use Tai-Chi-like moves to summoning the wyrd, followed by an obvious action to show the effect, anything from a Darth Vader force choke, to miming 'fighting a wind' to resist a spell. The list is both long and obvious, and examples could include:

- Locking eyes with someone and forcing them to copy your actions.
- Stamping the ground to cause an earthquake.
- Punching or pointing to do damage.
- Miming a big backhander to knock someone over.
- Calling down the powers of a god with loads of shouting and imploring to heavens and then talking to the gods about what you want them to do to your victim.
- Carefully making up potions and salves from ingredients.
- Painting elaborate body-art which holds wyrd.
- Becoming possessed by mad spirits and having fits and foaming at the mouth before screaming your intent.

It is also useful to make symbolic connections between props and the recipient, for example breaking a stick to break their bones, crushing an effigy to cause damage, throwing it into the air to make someone fall over, cupping an egg gently in your hands to stop someone dying before a healer can save them, and so on.

The responsibility is on you to make it look good, to make sure any recipients are aware that they are being affected and know what you expect. It is down to the recipient to respond appropriately and make you look good in return.

5.2 Areas of Influence

We don't want everyone to be using the same effects; we think it is better if wyrd weavers have areas of strength and weakness. Each wyrd weaver should decide what style of wyrd to use. Areas of influence are an artificial system to give you some starting ideas. You could as easily use the sacred Tree Calendar or the Norse Runes as your resource. Or create your own out of whole cloth. (Have a look at Mark Langford's essay for additional inspiration.) However, this will act as basic system; a guide to the sort of powers and restrictions you should have. It is designed to allow the old Dumnonni titles to fit easily into the new system.

There are five roughly defined areas of wyrd.

The Dead: The spirits of the dead and the afterlife. Talking to the dead, travelling to the afterlife, resisting cauldron born (as an aside the undead are more affected by the wyrd than normal people so an ovate can consider his deeds as one level easier when working on them).

Making: mending and or making stuff, as well as healing and medicine. Unlike other areas of wyrd the user chooses a sub-area, such as healing, blacksmithing, or some other craft. These all have a mundane archetype to go with them.

Fae wyrd: The Fae, The Mists and The Otherland. All things fairy, such as glamours, Fae pacts, understanding the dance, etc.

Nature: the physical world and the spirits of nature. Deeds of this sort tend to have physical effects. Its practitioners are generally the more shamanic primitive types.

Persuasion: hearts and minds, a bard's area of power. By using the wyrd a bard can make people believe whatever he says.

A wyrd weaver will have a particular affinity for one of these areas of influence and a weakness in at least one other. This effectively means they are best in one area, can do a bit in most areas, but will struggle in their weakest area.

To do a deed from outside your area of influence should be considered one step harder, for example, a petty deed would be a minor deed, a minor deed would be a major one and so on. Likewise, to do a deed from your area of weakness would be a step harder again, with petty deeds the equivalent of major deeds, and minor deeds the equivalent of heroic.

5.3 The Terrible Price

Those who use the wyrd must channel powerful divine, natural, or even unnatural forces through themselves. Such forces will take their toll on both mind and body, and a wyrd weaver who has been throwing magic about a battlefield can come out of it just as exhausted and sweaty as the warriors, perhaps even bruised and battered. The effect will be proportionate to the relative power of the deeds of wyrd you have been up to.

It doesn't stop there; doing wyrd deeds expends a weaver's power, so you can reach a point where you cannot do any more wyrd, which leaves you vulnerable and possibly a bit grumpy. To regain your powers you must take time to restore yourself in a manner appropriate to your area of influence.

5.4 Titles of Wyrd Weavers

The people who use the different areas of influence have a variety of different titles. Here are some common ones, but you should not feel limited to this list.

The Dead: Ovate, Drune Lord, Priest of the Morrigan or Hel (Norse).

Making: healer, crafter, smith, Priest of Gobni or Thor (Norse), Priest of Brigit.

Fae: Wistman, and any number of Fae titles which make no sense to the sons of Mil.

Nature: Shaman, various priests

Persuasion: Bard, Skald (Norse), various Priest types, Trader, Sycophant, Olave.

It is worth noting that the title of Druid is not on this list as it can apply to any sort of wyrd user. Also, although priests might call themselves priests of X, they really draw their power from all the gods and may ask different gods for different types of assistance.

5.5 The Wheat and the Chaff

Wyrd and power are directly linked. To put it simply, it is harder to affect someone important. Your simple wyrd deed that would affect a whole handful of crew grunts might only affect one powerful NPC or even not work at all.

Likewise your average crew members are worth little as sacrifice except in large numbers (wha ha ha ha!), but a powerful enemy can really provide the juice.

5.6 Levels of Wyrd Deed

Wyrd weavers can do any number of petty wyrd things without running out of juju juice, but they may only perform three minor deeds or one major deed before having to restore themselves. If they make extra sacrifice they can push it a level further and do one massive thing. This only applies to instantaneous spell-like effects; other wyrd activity uses a much more free-form approach.

Wyrd weaving is not an exact science. Although the examples in the following section offer a ball-park for effects, the simple rule is that you can expect something to happen, but you can not know exactly what. To keep things workable wyrd deeds are divided into four levels to cover the kinds of effect shown in the examples provided.

Petty: Small things which have actual game-time cost.

Examples:

- Slow healing of a healer (see Healing)
- Sensing wyrd: Any wyrd users can sense the presence and rough power of the wyrd in people, things and places.
- Calming fears and inspiring people (bards only).
- The general jubbly of being important.
- Navigating the Otherland.
- Simple woad painting (see *Woad Artist*).
- Talking to spirits.

Minor: Wyrd users can do three of these before needing to restore themselves.

Examples:

- An instant physical effect on a handful of people: tripping them, pushing them back, etc.
- A short term effect on a target: causing them pain, putting them to sleep, making them fear you, confusing them, or trapping them in one place. These effects can last a couple of minutes or until the caster stops concentrating, depending on the effect.
- Forbidding anyone to go through a gate, or into a small protected area. This will last a few minutes only.
- Wounding someone or breaking something.
- Giving a small bonus to someone, along the lines of strength, extra protection, special sight, or wards against wyrd.
- Resisting the wyrd.
- Cinematic-healing a wounded location or instantly repairing a damaged piece of armour.
- Other random things like talking to the recently dead or creating glamours.

Major: Wyrd users will be exhausted after exercising one major deed and can do no more deeds until they are restored.

Examples:

- All the instant effects can be done to a large group of people.
- All the short term effects for minor deeds can be done to a handful of people, not just one.
- You can wound a handful of people or kill one.
- You can give a bonus to a handful of people.
- You can Cinematic-heal all of someone's wounds or repair all of their armour.
- Get creative.

Heroic: Such deeds can only be undertaken with great sacrifice; either personal, of other people, or of things of import. The bigger the effect needed the greater the sacrifice required to make it happen. There can be no real list or comparison for these, as each situation is different (but we've provided one anyway), the point being that nothing is impossible if you pay the right price. This is where the "be cool and not niggardly" rule is at its most delicate; too powerful an effect for too little cost will not only make success cheap, spoiling the fun for everyone else, it will also destroy your credibility.

Here are a few examples with appropriate costs.

- To heal everyone in a group, a wyrd weaver could burn themselves out - being unable to channel any wyrd for the rest of the day and be on negative to the chest (dying without help).
- To call someone back to life, wyrd healers can offer their lives instead.
- Sacrificing a wyrd-wrought sword, could make all the swords of a group have the same effects for one fight.
- To sweep a battlefield clean of their enemies, a Druid can sacrifice a willing king.
- To stop a battle, a Bard can offer his voice.

5.7 Restoring Your Wyrd

To regain your equilibrium after doing various deeds of wyrd, you must meditate or pray for a certain time. This depends both on your personal power and the place of meditation as shown:

	The Right Place	Anywhere (meditating)	Not meditating
Unproven	1 hour	2 Hours	4 hours
Proven	30 Minutes	1 Hour	2 Hours
Renown	15 minute	30 Minutes	1 Hour

The right place to meditate should be a place significant to you. Holy shrines, henges and the Fae gate are all good, as appropriate to your wyrdness, but if it is not totally obvious then ask a ref. Meditation does not necessarily mean sitting and going "Om;" it might be the ritual action of various sorts of mundane work of an appropriate kind, e.g. a smith should work a forge and a healer could sort her healing supplies.

Sacrifice is also a very important part of the Celtic world. The magic realm is all about giving to receive. Sacrifice is a way to restore your wyrd or add to the power you already have so that you can undertake heroic weavings. Important people and willing sacrifices are far better the run of the mill. For restoring purposes, sacrificing halves the normal time it takes to restore your wyrd. Sacrificing a powerful NPC halves the time again. For heroic deeds, only willing sacrifices or VERY important people can replace your own sacrifice.

It is also possible to sacrifice important objects in the same way. An heirloom sword, for example, could be broken on the forge to give the blacksmith extra power.

5.8 Setting Wyrd into a Person, Potion or Thing

Woad artistry, potion making, rune magic, and tribal spirit rituals all work in this way.

It is the process of putting magic into an object, potion or person temporarily. Making healing potions, painting woad and rune, spirit glyph magics are the most common forms of this, but it should not be limited to just these.

As this preset magic is slightly restrictive, and to set a reasonable game limit to such things, a healer or craftsman can have twice as many such enchantments made and ready as a wyrd weaver who uses instant deeds. Thus you could have up to six minor deeds, or two major deeds, or even one major and three minor, active and ready to use. This means that, a Potion maker could, for example, make six healing salves which cure a single wounded location, or two all-heal potions. He can make no more, or cast any other wyrd until some of these have been used. It is a contrivance on our part for game balance that this limit exists, but it also makes the making of such things more an in-game activity.

Such magics, be they woading, a potion, or a rune spell, last only for a short time, even if they are not used or removed in some other way. This would be anything between a few hours to a weekend or possibly even a little longer to have an off-scene effect, as seems appropriate to the craftsman who made them. Objects with one-use wyrd in them, that do last longer do exist, but these follow the rules of 'Making Special Stuff' and as such are restricted and negotiated with a ref on an individual basis.

The time it takes for craftsman, to put wyrd into a thing that they are making, or setting upon something, will be roughly equivalent to the time it would take other wyrd weavers to restore themselves after instantly performing such a deed. But in taking the time, the craftsman is restoring himself simultaneously. The act itself should be undertaken in the 'right place,' a calm unstressed environment with the right tools and ingredients, for this to happen in the shortest time. If it cannot be in the 'right place' the time needed will be longer, as per the table on meditation. As soon as there is stress, (e.g. battle, or other interruptions) it should be considered in the 'anywhere' column for restoration and time taken. Obviously, nothing can be made if the maker is not concentrating.

This is more than just the mixing of ingredients or painting a person, it is the whole process of finding special ingredients, or getting into the right state. Some things might only be worked on certain days, or under special conditions.

For potion makers, we would encourage creative ingredient collection to make the process more fun. The potion might need to be made from river water –just when a horde are camped down there, or the blood of a particular enemy –taken before his death. By so doing a potion maker can set other players tricky tasks, and generally make the process more entertaining.

Though woad paint has few ingredients, in order to paint it on a person, both caster and recipient must get properly worked up. This could either be a time of calm contemplation, dancing, or perhaps chanting.

In general, you must consider that you are doing sympathetic magic, not chemistry, and the process needs symbolic ingredients as well as mundane ones.

Making things this way should nearly always be an in-game activity. Nipping off for a kip in the plastic camp while 'your character' is doing the work off-scene is niggling. If you want to get up early to make your potions before the violence starts in the morning, then you really have to get up and do it, but you will earn credibility doing it.

As a good example of this, the White Bear clan can draw on the strength of the bear. Using instant wyrd deeds a weaver could give one person strength with a minor deed or give a group that strength using a major deed. But by doing a cool ghost dance and ritual cleansing with the White Bear warriors in the morning (very, very early –preferably before breakfast), the tribal wyrd user can set the bear spirit in them for use later in the day as needed. Such a ritual would have to take around 30 minutes from start to finish.

5.9 Blood Metal

Working iron is magic. It is a mysterious skill that only a smith knows. Refining iron from ore is magical too, and therefore iron has very special properties.

It is anathema to the Fae, causing them pain as if it were red hot – this is why they call it *blood metal*. For this reason, it cannot be taken into the Otherland.

Iron also blocks the use of wyrd in anyone other than a smith. Wearing or carrying any more than a couple of daggers-worth drains a wyrd weaver's power from them. Trying to perform a wyrd deed whilst in contact with too much iron (for instance trying to fast-heal a warrior in chain mail) will not only result in failure, but also causes the wyrd weaver the same pain the Fae feel.

5.10 Wyrd Duels

One of the most important roles a wyrd weaver will have is defeating enemy wyrd users. This is done by the wyrd duel. This is not just a shout off, but a joint improvisation with both participants collaborating to look cool as well as competing. This can be a word duel, as suggested in Mark Langford's essay, but it could also be a mime of great powers throbbing between you, a combination of more mundane props and wyrd actions to affect your opponent, a silent stare-off, a close harmony sing along or indeed anything else that will make you both look powerful and wyrd.

The outcome of a duel then for the most part relies on the good role-playing of the participants. The crew member will know if they overpower the player(s) or not and will indicate this by their action. The player(s) should be able to interpret this and react accordingly. However, there are times when a

player is so much in the method that they miss the cues that they should be losing. In this case the NPC might have to indicate the position more overtly by holding their hand high in the air. By doing this they are showing that they owns the player. The player then knows that they must accept any spell effects and the NPC could end the duel at any time of his choosing.

To improve your situation you must role-play your socks off and think around your opponent. If you can get the battle into your area of influence this will help as will finding and using the opponent's weaknesses against them. Weakness could be anything from arrogance, deformity, lack of understanding, fear of death and so on.

Two examples: Caladin the Druid beat a hunchback by healing his deformity and Serona the Shaman defeated a bitter and lonely Drunelord by giving him a kiss.

We expect this to be a real battle of skill, or be it intellect not real power. You will be punished for choosing battles you cannot put your mouth behind. You will be double punished for ning.

5.11 Ritual and Other Magic Not Covered Above

Big rituals and other things not covered in the previous sections have this simple rule of thumb.

The more effort put into it and the cooler it looks the better the outcome.

This may be a short on words, but it describes most of what the wyrd system is; everything from headology to grand rituals, all of which work best in a very loose framework.

5.12 Working Wyrd With Others

If two or more wyrd users wish to work together to create a greater effect this is most certainly possible.

For wyrd deeds two participants casting a combined weave can have far more dramatic effects. Like with the basic rule, more dramatic means better and two or more people can definitely put on a good show.

When setting wyrd into an object or area, a pair of weavers can choose to halve the time taken to caste the weave, double the effect, or double the area of effect.

In Wyrd duels there can be more that one participant on either or both sides. In this case there needs to be a lead weaver with others supporting them, or it can occur as two separate duels going on at once.

The most common time for more than one wyrd weaver to work together is doing ritual magic. Be it making a ghost fence, or as happened at the battle with Balor, a lullaby sung by Bards, Druids and other wyrd weavers to send the enemy into a sleep so that they could search their camp.

5.13 Wyrd Weavers and Battle

In previous versions of the game we have had a blanket ban of wyrd weavers being attacked. This to us seems to reduce the jeopardy and therefore reduce the fun. To this end, we are making it more complex and making those wyrd weavers that want to stay out of the fighting to have to work a bit harder to do so. There is still an implicit separation between those that deal with the mysteries of the

world and the common warrior. This difference engenders different sorts of respect, awe, and fear in people. But it is necessary to advertise your position. A man in a dress is an easy kill, but if as you run up to him, he starts hopping and spitting then he is clearly something to be avoided.

The Wissen: if you want to use the wyrd but still really get stuck-in to the fighting, it is now possible. You are disadvantaged by lack of armour and metal weapons, as well as fewer hit points, but go for it. However, bear in mind that in this sort of fighting wyrd weavers can expect no immunity from their foes. This is not a casual distinction. If you look at Mark's essay you can see that by so doing you are giving away much of your power and this cannot be taken back easily. So generally, once a Wissen always as Wissen, though this rule is occasionally broken.

Different cultures treat wyrd weavers differently and as a person of power it is important to understand what works for whom:

Honourable Celts and The Elder Races: These regard wyrd weavers as sacred and will not knowingly attack one unless they physically attacked first. By attacking (physically) a wyrd weaver will be lowered to their level and is fair game. Celts need the least advertising as looking like a wyrd weaver is normally enough to keep you safe.

A rare exception to this are Fir Bholg Curse Eaters, who relish killing wyrd weavers, as it fuels their own power.

Picts: Picts are very superstitious and will be afraid of displays of wyrd power. Each separate group will need to be shown your power or they will stick you like a pig. Picts also occasionally have Drune Lords that 'shelter' some warriors from the curses of wyrd weavers. These warriors will be sent to deliberately attack wyrd weavers and are really pawns in wyrd duel.

Saxons, Goblins and Norse: Though all respect wyrd weavers as dangerous, they may consider getting a first strike in and taking them down as tactical targets. When facing these sort of people, don't turn your back on them and make sure they think you still have power to hurt them if they come to close.

Fomorians: These peoples regard themselves as powerful enough to overcome 'minor' wyrd weavers. If you are going up against them you have to put on a really good show or they will swat you.

Romans: Romans are one of the few peoples to arrive on the shores of Dumnonni who do not buy into the 'wyrd is everywhere' concepts (see elsewhere for a fuller description of their world view). They see wyrd weavers as tactical targets. They are not blind to the dangers of retaliation and curses, but will work on practical ways around them. Quick strikes, possibly from hiding or muffling a wyrd weaver's mouth, to avoid 'counter measures'. They do, however, see actual ritual as the way to contact their own gods and so assume that a wyrd weaver in full flow is probably talking to his gods and so should not be disturbed for fear of a really bad blow-back.

Undead and Animals: These do not know the difference between types of people and so will attack wyrd weavers as indiscriminately as anyone else.

Note on Healers: We think it better for the game if, for the most part, healers do not have the protection afforded by other more aloof wyrd weavers. They do, after all, take part in the battles in a very real sense, the same way the Wissen do. This has a bit of variety, where honourable Celts would allow a healer to move unmolested (as long as he made himself plain), but more disreputable folk would see healers as a legitimate tactical target. This means that a lot of the time healers need protecting, or need to learn cunning, perhaps even to find ways to handle themselves if attacked.

Real-World Safety: For those people who, for *real-world* reasons, do not want to be hit, it will still be possible to stand at the side of any battle and be very obviously praying, canting or doing jubbly. But do make sure the refs know, so that the crew can be appraised.

5.14 What Wyrd is Not

On the whole, the magic in the system works, it works because the people doing it put a lot of effort into making it look good and so that it seems right for the setting. To keep it that way, avoid doing anything that feels like modern stuff; like hypnotism, chemistry, modern medicine or psychobabble; it simply does not fit. Likewise, no big *high fantasy* spells: fireball, teleport, or flying battle-pants –these are visually unrepresentable in any good way, and also highly iving.

Do not take the piss and do not be iving. The system is deliberately flexible to allow for improvisation, but this means the onus must be on you moderate your excesses. We want *wyrd* to work when it is done well, and this means you have to keep your game up if you are going to be successful. It is not a soft option.

The Ways of Wyrd. By Mark Langford

The Beginning

Way back in 1989 (ish) my college friend Dave Oliver told me that he was moving to Devon and he was going to set up a LARP system. At the time we were both going to a system

called 'Trouble at Mill', which was a fairly standard fantasy system with wizards, clerics etc. You can still see echoes of that system (and Mythlore) in DC if you know where to look but something interesting happened at t'Mill, and Dave wanted to take it further. He very much wanted to have a game where personal skill could shine, so if you were good with a bow, you could pick it up and use it, rather than having to 'buy a skill'. Personally I have always been rubbish with bows, but I could see he was right. The problem back then was we couldn't see how you could get skilful at magic, so we ended up with a system that was 'dressed up' with Celtic and Saxon names, but at root was a clone of every other LARP system - we had spell lists, wyrd points and class names like Stone Warden.

Over the years many, many very talented people have come to Dumnonni, realised that this was the least interesting aspect of the game but still wanted to be 'magic users' despite the lame spell calls and it was then, to my mind, that the real adventure started to take place. We improvised endlessly, read everything we could lay our hands on from Celtic myth to anthropological studies of shamanism, and I ended up writing my MA thesis on possession states in Haitian Voodoo. You don't have to go that far, but if you have only read fantasy fiction as your inspiration you are really short-changing yourself.

How to 'be' a wizard

1: Status

The gaining, raising and keeping of status is the first and foremost task of a wizling. You will probably never admit it to the ordinary folk, but all that stuff about serving the gods or whatever comes much further down the list. If people doubt your power, or it is undermined in some way (usually you have only yourself to blame if this happens) you are stuffed. Go back to farming pigs, if you live that long ...

The first of many good ways to undermine yourself is to wear armour and use weapons and If you do that, what you are communicating is that you don't have faith in the unseen powers you are supposedly a master of. This means you'll need to have a clear idea of how they work in order not panic and resort to a big pointy stick.

Improvisation skills and status

Acting skills are handy, particularly when you are lacking confidence (not just a beginner's fault, trust me). It's handy to fall back on a process you know works. The following exercise comes from the book "Impro" by Keith Johnston - go read it. Its particularly useful for druid battles etc. so that you get the right balance between collaboration and competition. Never forget your 'in character' enemy is your theatrical partner. Her job is to make you look good (even when she is grinding you into the ground) and your job is to make her look good too (what?!?). The 'rules' are very simple:

one of you will come out with an opening statement, and the other, regardless of how initially demeaning the statement is, agrees, reinforces the assertion, elaborates and exaggerates it before using it as the springboard for an assertion of their own.

Consider this exchange:

"Compared to me, you are naught but a worm."

"A truly wretched worm, yes! I all I do burrow about in the dark, eating your leftovers, blind to your glory, blind to the treasure you have let fall that I might easily discover, here in the dark, if I was not such a lowly worm..."

Who comes out of this exchange better, despite the assertion of lowliness? The fundamental rule is not to temper your language, despite the natural urge we all have NOT to lower our status. (Didn't I say earlier on that your entire purpose as a wyrd user is to RAISE your status? What's going on???)

The temptation is to say something along the lines of "So I SEEM like a worm to you?" This is, when you think about it, much less interesting and doesn't set up the next step half so well.

"How galling it must be to you to come here to destroy a worm, simply because it might, just might, have chanced on something to bring you down, break you. And what would people say if you were humiliated, not by a mighty warrior, but a worm such as I?"

Here you can see that by exaggerating the lowliness of the insult it undermines the status of the first speaker.

You can practise this quite easily, and get in to the habit of starting your sentences without quite knowing how they will end. You will have time to think of what comes next whilst you are talking but don't try to edit yourself. If you come out with something stupid, just roll it up into the process and press on. This sort of stuff is the equivalent of verbal hand-to-hand fighting. and

just as simply hammering away at an adversary's shield will not beat him, neither will repeated assertions of power or status.

I also mentioned that you need to make your enemies look good. In the previous example

the 'worm' elevated his adversary's status, and this does two things: first if he does 'lose' the exchange then the other is clearly a bully and a braggart, but if he 'wins' then he has triumphed over someone much more potent, raising his status far further through his success.

Of course there are counter-moves and gambits to this game, but they all follow the

basic 'accept what the other person is saying and go with it' rule, and if one person doesn't know the rules of the game then the other will soon 'win'.

Some of status games are generic regardless of what type of character you play, and some culturally specific.

In pre-Romanised times the Celts could be divided up roughly into four social groups: Druids and bards, warriors, ordinary folk and slaves. The first caste differentiated themselves because they had had twenty years of college education, and were the arbiters of the law, genealogy and the will of the gods. It's a little more vague when it comes to specific female roles in this system as the Roman historians weren't interested in how or why their ships were met by black-robed women shouting curses.

The priesthood is pretty much a Roman concept, but a popular one in the Romano-Celtic world (which never really embraced Ireland, which makes the idea of a priestess of the Morrigan a bit odd, although not impossible – more likely is the notion that a woman is a living representation of a particular goddess, effectively the same role, but different conceptually) but the choice of gods is not the usual line up: you are more likely to be a priest of Sulis Minerva, Mithras or Isis than any of the standard Irish clan.

The post-Roman world described in the Bernard Cornwell books is a morass of degenerate, half - remembered druidry, folk magic, Christian sects (which are quite reasonably off limits in DC), and the beginnings of the imported Saxon ideas of magic. The 'cunning man' depicted in the 'Way

of Wyrd' by Brian Bates, is probably the best introduction to DC magic (as it was the inspiration for many of the best bits), with its rough and ready mix of aelf shamanism, runecraft, herbalism and the Norse pantheon.

By the time of the Danelaw in northern Britain, which is the cut off point for the DC timeline, you have Scandinavian Godi (priests) and trolmader (check spelling with *) (hedge wizard shamans and shape-shifters).

We know so little about the fringe world of the Picts that in DC terms it's a good place to add totemistic shamanism and scratch that basic itch to play a native American from Scotland.

The fae are magic, but in practice they don't really do anything different, they just think in a completely and utterly different way.

2: The duty that must be done

"Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest."

It's your job to make sure that the warriors and peasantry never wake up to that fact. Go out and be useful, or scary, or lovable, or ideally all three. Every minute you are not doing that is an opportunity for them to say, 'Hold on a minute! We CAN cope without these guys.'

It is also your job not to lumber others of your kind with extra work, and no one really wants to be judged by a council of wise men and women who know all your tricks and see through your excuses.

Oh yes, and at least pretend that the chieftains and kings are your superiors, and that there is no better duty than to help the humble peasant. Telling people you are in charge is a good way of not being in charge. You may be a meddler and a storm crow, but don't get caught!

3: Knowledge

The limits of knowledge are a keen issue for those that live and die within them. Out-of-character game logic is that it is only fair that one person doesn't get to do everything, and as your character rises through the ranks of Dumnonni society, more and more challengers will beat

a path straight to your door. At that point, it is only sensible to share out the plot as much as possible – it makes for a better event if everyone is involved. I'm quite sure that the druid that I played, Slough Cul, knew how set a bone or treat an infection as well any proper healer, he just considered it beneath him and uninteresting when there were Picts to sacrifice and kingdoms to be bartered. And if he had done it, it would have spoilt someone else's fun, so he didn't.

It is far more interesting to play your character's weaknesses than to be good at everything. However, the idea that people could focus on abstract concept like 'the dead' or 'nature' is

an aspect of modern rpgs and will get in the way of burrowing into the interesting stuff that is thinking like a person from 1,500 years ago.

The Saxon concept of a 'word-hoard' neatly sums it up, and those whose currency is knowledge must learn to gather it and spend it wisely. If your character is a druid and studied at Ynis Mon, you were lucky and have a properly comprehensive education within the limits of the Celtic

world view, but even so you would have had strengths and weaknesses within the training. If you didn't to to Ynis Mon your education must have been whatever one or two masters deigned to teach you – scraps, in return for drudge labour and sexual favours – and they wouldn't teach all their tricks would they?

Most wizardlings would know to a greater or lesser extent most of the following things, but be selective about what you actually use:

- most of the myths, laws and legends of their own people, although not necessarily as they are written down now.
- some of the beliefs of their allies and enemies, but in a very partial or warped way.
- how to treat injuries, poisons, curses and diseases
- how to inflict the same through trickery as well as overt methods
- how to divine through reading entrails, gazing into pools, watching the flight of birds etc.

- how to get the attention of supernatural forces through sacrifice
- to tell whether something is supernaturally significant (sigh... but use your brain - 'Is it magic, ref?' 'Well, does it look magic?!?')
- how to put on a good show, intimidate a foe with magical flimflam or make the finding of a lost cloak pin a moment of amazement and fear
- if you are a Celt, you were probably born with the ability to swear black is white, but a druid or bard is expected to make everyone else believe it too.

if you want your character to be good at something, do yourself a favour and learn a bit about it yourself. Even if it is just an evening on wikipedia, it will deepen your role-play experience to have a slightly more obscure (or accurate) god to call on, and to be able to make knowing comments about the use of herbs while treating a wound.

4: Harnessing the Supernatural

It may be a disappointment to you that the actual practice of magic comes nearly at the bottom of the list of things that a Master of the Wyrd does, but there are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, magic becomes decidedly UN-magical if you see it all the time. Magic, to misquote Sir Lancelot Spratt, should be used last, sparingly and ideally not at all. You may have to use magic in an emergency (and it is an emergency if your status is slipping!) but your standard go-to bag of tricks should be your gob, your poisons and your poultices. You also know that every time you use magic, you get a little closer to 'the price that is paid'.

Open and Closed Spells

If you are familiar with the idea of open and closed questions, then open and closed spells should be easy.

When you first start casting spells a template of how they should be gets you up and running, but very soon becomes a profound limitation, not least because all the examples are inevitably 'closed' spells. Mighty wizard says something, poor crew member does what he is told. If the mighty wizard wants to refine a closed spell, then his only option is to become more poetic and make his language more vivid, but the ultimate end result is much the same, despite the fact that he has actually done the right thing and thought theatrically rather than in terms of 'games mechanics'.

The 'open' alternative is much more ambiguous. You advance on your foe, catch her eye and then, with a flourish, produce a dried twig! You then start muttering over it, an evil smile playing on your lips... Even before you snap it in two, the imagination is racing... what will that twig REALLY break?

Open spells are like open questions - they leave the person responding to them with a much wider range of choices. Often you merely need hint at a broad area and in my experience crew members will be as obliging as they can. Their brief might well have been, 'Die quickly but well'.

From their point of view, it's much more fun to writhe about in lurid death throes occasionally than be bleedin' "wind-blasted" yet again. From your point of view, you often only use spells to interrupt the momentum of an opponent's attack, so anything extra is a plus. They solve many problems as well; being pushed back by a windblast may not be possible, safe or artistically pleasing. I, for one, am bloody awful at being buffeted back by an imaginary wind, but I might, left to my own devices, come up with some other reaction which is just as good.

As a clever player, you might realise that the rules of 'accept, exaggerate and exploit' in the status section also apply here, even if no word is spoken.

Ceremonies REALLY benefit from the open principle.

5: The price that is paid

You KNOW that you are better than the rest of them, that weakling shower of warriors that need their laces tying for them, and their dullard kings and as for your fellow-priests and druids, you really don't want to get started on those power-hungry buffoons who jealously keep their secrets or their places on the high council!

And given time, that fact will curdle in you and you will go wrong. You will decide that you know best, and poison when you should heal or heal when you should poison. You will start muttering, going mad for fear of becoming a monster, or worse (or better, depending on your point of view) you become a monster.

Some monsters do not have tentacles growing from their faces, but the next time you look into the reflecting pool, what will you see looking back? What crawls beneath that mask of generosity, wisdom and humility? And in a place like Dumnonni, how long will it be before the tentacles actually do start growing?

6 The peoples of Dumnonni.

Here are descriptions of the many peoples that live in Dumnonni. Not all of the below make good player characters. For this reason here is a list grading them as good player characters, difficult to play, only allowable by ref consent and totally Non-Player Characters.

If you want to find out more about the peoples of Europe in the dark ages, Wikipedia is very much your friend. Though it is sometimes short on detail and does not always agree with the Dumnonni Canon, it is an excellent starting point.

Note, that what follows is often an over simplification of the truth or is some cases deliberately wrong. This is the common knowledge and is a general primer as well as suggests for player backgrounds.

	Good	Difficult	Only by Ref agreement	NPC
Elder Races				
Tuatha				
Craft Tuatha				
Wild Tuatha				
Tuatha Sygath				
Tautha De Domnu				
Fir Bholg				
Fir Gallion				
Fir Dolmen				
Fomorians				
Fianna – Celtic Warbands.				
‘The Fianna’				
The Red Branch				
Clan Morna				
The White Bear				
The Cul Cascorach				
The Forsaken				
The Black Shields				

	Good	Difficult	Only by Ref agreement	NPC
Tuaths – Celtic tribes				
Tribes of Erin				
Ulaid				
Laigin				
Dairine				
Dalriadans				
Connachta				
The Gamhanrhide				
Tribes of Albion				
Dumnonni				
Briganti				
Iceni				
Cataveelanni				
Tribes form across the sea				
Arveni				
The Celtiberians				
Tribes from the Low Countries				
Usipeti				
Frisii				
Nervii				
Menapi				
Northern Tribes				
Bristling Boar				
Running Dog				
Matu				
Bloody Stag				
Attacotti				
Fen Picts				
Selkie				
The Norse				
Hrafn's Houscarls				
Magnus the Good's Houscarls				
Unaligned Norse				

	Good	Difficult	Only by Ref agreement	NPC
Romans				
Romano British				
‘The Ninth Legion’				
Sub Romans				
Classical Romans				
Saxons				
North Gyrwr				
Heardingas				
Althelhelm’s realm				
Spaldas				
The Sea Wolves				
The Sortzart				
Odda’s Fyrd				
The Jutes				
Sidhe				
Otherland denizens				
Changelings				
Degenerate folk				
Scotia				
Smerti				
Corpse Goose Goblins				
Black Fox Goblins				
Dvergar – Dwarves				
Armen Av Wyrden				

6.1 The elder races.

The Fae are at one extreme in terms of age, because they can be said to have been in Dumnonni all along, and the Sons of Mil are at the other, having just recently stumbled in.

The Elder races are a peculiar middle ground. Just as with some of the mystic places of Ireland, their 'there' is now here (see 1.1, Dramatic Geography). For them there is no break between their time in Erin and now, it is just that everything around them has changed, and as in their view it is the way of the world to change, they just accept it. This means that when Fir Bholgs, Tuatha de Dannan or Fomorians talk of 'the land' they are referring to Dumnonni and Erin as one and the same. To them ancient feuds about who controls the land are still current, still totally valid. When Donn brought his army out from the Moonlit City he did not stop and go "Wait! This is not the place I went in from," because for him it was.

As all the elder races are immortal, they tend to have long histories and long memories. This gives them a sense of superiority over the Sons of Mil who they see as mere children, with fleeting lives, short memories, and no real history.

6.11 A short history of the elder races in Erin and Dumnonni.

(For a better understanding of the history of the elder races, read the classic of Irish myth, The Book of Invasions.)

- Ancient Erin was ruled by the Fomorian, terrible sea demons.
- The Parthalonians drove them into the sea, but then vanished themselves and the Fomorians returned.
- Next the Fir Bholg invaded and once more the Fomorians retreated.
- The Tuatha de Dannan invaded and defeated the Fir Bholg at the first battle of Moytura. However, during the battle the three great Fir Bholg kings, Donn, Sreng and Conn fought with such ferocity, that the Tuatha called a parley. At this, the shroud Conn, negotiated to keep Connaught for the Fir Bholg. In a fury at what he saw a betrayal Donn took what remained of his army under the hill to the Moonlit City. He vowed to return to claim all that had been taken from his people.
- Because Nuada had lost his hand he could no longer be king so Bres the Beautiful took the throne and ruled badly. When Nuada regained his hand he retook the throne, but Bres called on the support of the Fomorians led by Balor of the baleful eye, and a new terrible war broke out.
- At the second battle of Moytura the Fomorians were finally defeated and Balor was taken wounded and taken back to Tory island, where he stayed in a deathly sleep for an age.
- The sons of Mil (humans) invaded and defeated the Tuatha, who withdrew from their cities, many going under the hollow hills.

Dumnonni history of the elder races

- After many years of decline both the Fir Bholg and Tuatha were the smallest fraction of what they had been. In spite of their ancient enmities an accord had grown between them, due in part to their joint disdain for the sons of Mil.
- The Fomorians however, were powerful again. Balor woke from his slumber and once more began an invasion.
- During this time the mysterious Tuatha S'gath re-emerged and the threat of the 'story that must not be told' split the Fir Bholg. Conn fell into despair.

- Balor was finally defeated and killed. The elder races refer to this as the third battle of Moytura.
- The Fir Bholg tried to stop 'the story that must not be told' from spreading and war between themselves and the Tuatha began to brew
- The great bronze doors to the Moonlit city were found, as was the horn that would open them.
- Bull blew the Horn and Donn and his army came out from their thousand-year exile. In the ensuing battle Donn killed Conn, but himself lost an eye. This means he can no longer be king and he has also lost his sanity. However, his daughter, Finivar, who was fostered to Conn, has taken up his cause.
- Finivar, armed with the Moonsword, has grabbed leadership of the Fir Bholg, with an iron fist. Her hatred of the Tuatha is well known and she has declared that she will finish her father's duty and drive all his enemies into the sea. She has declares a fourth battle of Moytura will be joined.

6.12 The Fir Bholg.

These are mainly an NPC race and should not be considered for a player character without much thought and discussion with the refs.

Fir Bholg literally means people of the bag. These ancient warriors are what is left of the mighty race that once ruled Erin. After the battle of Moytura they were driven underground, either literally to the moonlit city, or to the darker corners of the land. Those that went under the Hill are filled with a great need to vengeance against the Tuatha. But even those who stay in the sunlit world and served Conn of a hundred Battles, harbour resentment at their fall. Now Donn has returned and Conn is dead, many rally to Finivar's banner and hunger for what they see as their dues. A rare few keep to their oaths to Conn and still follow his widow Eithne.

In reality the Fir Bholg are three separate nations. As well as the Fir Bholg who are the most plentiful, there are the Fir Galion who are the great champions and arbitrators of the Fir Bholg (Conn was a Fir Galion). Then there are the dark Fir Dolmen who serve Domnu the god of destruction. All three can be found in the host of Finivar, though only the Fir Galion and Fir Bholg served Conn.

Most Fir Bholg regard the Sons of Mill as little more than vermin.

6.121 Fir Bholg Wyrd.

Close as they are to the Sidhe, the Fir Bholg wyrd has much to do with the Mists and the Otherlands. One such power is the calling of and walking in the mists. By so doing a Fir Bholg may travel from one place to another as if it was one step. They can and do regularly use this power to tactical advantage in battle.

The Fir Dolmen also have a second fearsome form of Wyrd use: - The Curse Eaters. These twisted and mad horrors delight in eating the curses caused by violating the normal sanctions against fighting with wyrd users. They deliberately seek out wyrd users and try to provoke curses.

6.122 Fir Bholg battle masks.

All Fir Bholg wear bronze or silver masks. The Fir dolmen, particularly the curse eaters, wear twisted and grotesque ones. A Fir Bholg will not remove his mask except in the company of family or totally trusted friends (think of it as a taboo like our modern views of nudity).

The mask gives the wearer protection as if they were wearing a heavy metal helm. It also protects them from the madness normally associated with travelling in the mists.

6.13 The Tuatha

Literally Tuatha means 'the people'. What we are really referring to are the Tuatha de Dannan (the People, or children, of the Goddess Danu), Tuatha de Domnu (The People of the Goddess Domnu) and the Mysterious Tuatha S'gath (The People of the Shadow).

The Tuatha Straddle the boundary between the gods and men. Indeed many of the gods are Tuatha ancestors, Lugh and the Dagda to mention just two. Even those that have stayed under the sunlit sky rather than retreating to the Hollow Hills stand out for their beauty, prowess and honour. They personify the Celtic paradigm and adhere to it totally and naturally.

6.131 The Tuatha de Dannan.

Some might think these would be the easiest of the elder races to play, however playing one as a character should be approached with great caution. Getting it wrong, by breaking the Celtic Paradigm or just not pulling off the ageless cool, and nobility, breaks game atmosphere and can be punished in game quite hard.

The Tuatha Warrior caste.

These are what most people mean when they refer simply to "Tuatha". They are the most numerous of all the Tuatha. They are the mighty warriors and champions of the people that invaded Erin in their sky ships, after their four great cities, Failias, Findias, Goirias and Murias, sank below the waves. They were there when Sreng cut off Nuada's hand and suffered under the poor rule of Bres The Beautiful. They have fought the Fomorians for years unnumbered. Always great and terrible in a fight, and skilled in mighty feats, the mere presence of one such as Cynrain Battle-Winner has been known to turn the tide of battle by reputation alone.

These Tuatha are easily recognised by the Blue stripe they wear across their eyes.

The Artisan caste – Called Craft Tuatha.

These Tuatha are marvellous in their craftsmanship and *wyrd* use. The three gods of craftsmanship, Goibniu, Creihne and Luchta stand among their number. The four great Treasures of the Tuatha De Dannan are; The Stone of Tara, The Spear of Lugh, The sword of Nuada and the Caldron of the Dagda.

Though the works of those that walk still under the sky are no match for these lost treasures they are still to be marvelled at. These Tuatha have long memories and complex, like their craft, are their schemes. They mourn still the loss of the glory that was their sunken cities and yearn for the splendour of those days. Many are driven mad by the loss, but others work towards a return to the old ways and the grandeur of the past.

Of all the Tuatha these are likely to dress the most resplendently, though some wear simple work clothes. They are easily recognised by the Red stripe they wear across the eyes.

Those called Wild Tuatha.

These are Tuatha from either of the Castes who have chosen to live in closer harmony to nature. They live in small families, or travel singly as hunter-gatherers in the wilder places of Dumnonni. They of all the Tuatha are closest in their relationship to the Sidhe and often travel the Otherlands, a fact that means they are treated with suspicion by some. They should not be underestimated, however, due to their humble appearance. Many had had great and famous lives even before they "took the Green". They, like all Tuatha, are bound by old oaths and Geasa and though they are slow to anger once roused they are as terrible as any of their kind.

They wear a Green stripe in place of the red or blue one of their lineage.

6.132 The Tuatha S'gath

Their name means "the people (or children) of the shadow". The origin of these people is shrouded in legend and mystery. Few of them have ever been seen in Dumnonni. Little is publicly known, save that they are something to do with the sea god Manannan Mac Lir, an ancient curse, and 'the story that should not be told'. They wear a rainbow eye stripe.

6.133 The Tuatha De Domnu.

Tuatha who have fallen into despair, revel in the destruction of war or are consumed by hate, often choose to follow the dark goddess Domnu. Though they, like all Tuatha are bound by an honour code, their desires drive them to unspeakable horrors. They live for Domnu's terrible laughter as they plunder, corrupt and destroy. Following their goddess's wishes they serve Cethlinn the Fomorian queen, who is more calculating than was Balor, but no less bloody or ruthless.

Serving the same goddess as the Fir Dolmen does not in any way make them allies, indeed if anything their hate for each other is greater than any other.

They signify that they have "taken the dark" by a black woad stripe in place of the red or Blue of their heritage.

6.14 The Fomorians.

The Fomor are, like the Tuatha, near gods. However, where the Tuatha are exceptionally beautiful, the Fomor are deformed hideous monsters. The great Fomorian are fearful giants. Even the rank and file are huge, and terribly strong. Many are malformed, with missing limbs, twisted bodies and grotesque features. They often have fishlike features, particularly the priests.

Though Merciless and barbaric, the Fomor are not without honour. They will treat respectfully with those who they regard of worthy. However, as they consider most of the son's of Mil and even much of what is left of the elder races as little more than cattle and they treat them as such. Just as if culling the herd or hunting wild game, they do not consider it wrong to ignore an entreaty or use guile to kill. Fomor love the taste of rotted meat and will leave the bodies of the dead and dying to decay in great feeding piles. These piles are just as likely to have men in them as animals. The smell of decay is also perfume to them some they plaster themselves in offal for war and procreating.

Like all folk in Dumnonni they are bound by the Celtic Paradigm and once they have recognised a person as worthy they behave with good honour, though maybe only in the clamour to be the first to slay them in an honour duel.

To make a Fomor recognise your worth, unless you already have made a name for yourself, you will have to work very hard at shouting, boasting and displaying mighty prowess. Even Wyrdd users do not necessarily get respect unless they put on a really good show.

6.141 Fomorian factions

There are many Fomorian factions but here is a sample to give you an idea of their variety.

Lost Monsters.

After the defeat of Balor, many Fomorians felt dishonoured to have survived him and now hunt the land in packs seeking to remedy this and take revenge on the world and themselves in the most bloody and destructive fashion they can.

Cethlinn, the Queen in the shadows.

Balor's widow sits at the centre of a web of spies, and intrigue. Her agenda is unknown, and possibly unknowable, except that it would include the subjugation and or destruction of all. She is totally ruthless and has levers in unexpected places. As well as the Tuatha De Domnu, who are gifted her by the queen of Sythil, she has a force of the most vicious killers that the Fomorians have to offer, and that is saying a lot. Assassins, bards, Drune lords and many more, who have dark enough hearts find their way into her employ, as spies and agents, many not even knowing it.

The Cult of Balor.

Many of the Fomorians worship their leaders as gods. Even after Balor's death he is still venerated and his priests do *wyrd* in his name. This cult now focuses on the power of Balor's head, which is itself a terrible weapon. Massan used in the war of the plans, but it was stolen from him. It was then claimed by Manix. Whoever controls the head, controls the Cult and the substantial remnant of the devout Fomorian bodyguard to their one-eyed god.

Tory Island.

Once the Fomorians ruled all of Erin, but were driven back into the sea by the Tuatha. They retained a foothold on Tory Island, however, where for many generations Balor slept in the Crystal tower of Connand, stained with the blood of the Numedians.

Now that Balor has been defeated and the Fomorians have been driven back once more, Tory Island is once again their bastion and refuge. The coast closest to The Island is a wasteland ravaged by Fomorian raiding parties.

The Fomor of The Many-Coloured Land.

Though almost all Fomor are hideously ugly, some few can be beautiful. These are those who are born with the blood of Bres the Beautiful in their veins. These can hide themselves in human, Sidhe or even Tuatha company and make excellent spies. One such Fomorian is Queen Brae of The Many Peoples. After the third battle of Moytura she took control of a large part of the Eastern coast and declared herself queen of all, of any race, who would follow her. Many of the defeated Fomor took this bargain and now thrive under her rule. After the defeat of Massan much of his army also bend a knee to the Queen of Tir Iidathach, The Many Coloured Land.

The Army of the Drowned.

Massan of The Drowning Pools had all his housecarls drowned ritually. Only the strongest returned to life and these weighed down with great *geas*. Thus all his Fomor host were proud to be part of 'The Army of the Drowned'.

Even after his defeat and death, when much of his army took succour from Queen Brae, large groups still roam the land looking for honour and plunder.

The Bosom of the Sea Hag.

Just as they came from the sea so some have returned there, into the keeping of The Cailleach, the Sea Hag. There they wait with hungry hearts, impatient for a chance rise once more from the deeps to avenge themselves. Have a care near deep water for an unwary step will take you to close to their scaly claws.

6.2 Fianna – Celtic Warbands

A Fianna was an Irish warband. For the sake of simplicity, we have gathered actual Fianna, like that of Finn MacCoul, as well as the Red Branch, who were the warrior elite to the kings of Ulster; together with player-created groups like The White Bear. What makes them distinct from tribes is that each can contain people of diverse backgrounds. Upon joining a Fianna, a warrior's loyalty transfers to it, rather than his people. For some Fianna, having been settled in Dumnonni for many generations, the distinction between them and a tribe is fairly negligible.

6.21 The Fianna

It says something about the self-assurance of the this particular Fianna group, that they call themselves THE Fianna, though they are (arguably) the most famous of all Fianna: that of Finn MacCoul. In Irish legend they have many adventures with Finn as their leader, often on the outside of society. For a while The Fianna were led by Goll Macmorna, who slew Finn's father to rise to the position, but when Finn came of age, Gol stood down. Later Gol betrayed him further (see Clan Morna).

When Finn died, many of his Fianna collected in a magical cave to sleep until his return. However, when they awoke, not only had he not yet come, but they also found themselves in Dumnonni. Taking to their old ways they quickly carved out a niche for themselves amongst the Free Races, and had soon set up a base of power in the great fort, Almu of The White Walls. Over the years they have mellowed a little, now making up a number of families and separate war bands. They are still fiercely proud and often militant. They pride themselves especially on their appearance, wearing fine clothes with much jewellery and often spending hours polishing their armour until it gleams.

Though anyone has a right to try and join the Fianna, they have a number of very harsh tests to be taken. Once you have joined you are expected to follow very high standards of conduct or suffer the wrath of your brothers.

In the war with Balor, after many months of siege, Almu fell and now the Fianna are much depleted. Since that time the Clan Morna, still under the hated leadership of Goll, have also arrived in Dumnonni. When Goll was given half of the land of the Dumnonni by the Druid Slough Cul, The Fianna sided with the folk of Dumnonni in resisting their overlordship. And now that Athea has returned, The Fianna find themselves inextricably entwined in this conflict. The latest twist in this animosity being the death of Goll, during his honour battle with Sif of The Fianna.

6.22 The Red Branch

The Red Branch were the warrior elite of the kings of Ulster. As such they were mainly Ulaid, though anyone could join who was loyal, brave and 'feat strong' enough. Since their arrival in Dumnonni the Red Branch have formed again, this time to defeat the Fomorians once and for all. As before they were bodyguards to kings, so they are close to the High Kings of Dumnonni. Cascorach himself was once of the Red Branch.

The Red Branch are wild, boastful and boisterous. They have a tight bond between them, based as much on friendship and laughter, as upon honour. They love to celebrate almost as much as they love battle. They also enjoy a good game of shinty and are wont to play 'through' gatherings of more serious folk.

They normally spurn armour in a fight, relying instead on speed, woading and skill to win the day. Many Red Branch know the skill of battle woading (see 05 Wyrð Weaving).

Though they are sometimes called The Wild Boys, children they are not, and their foes tremble at their name.

6.23 Clan Morna

Goll MacMorna was originally a leader of The Fianna. His given name was Aed, he got the name Goll (which means one-eyed) when he lost an eye in his fight with Finn's father. Though he grudgingly

gave the leadership of the Fianna to Finn, when the lad grew up and proved his worth, Goll retained the loyalty of a sizeable group of warriors. This group became the Clan Morna. When the Fianna fought the High King of Erin, Goll and his warriors swapped sides at a decisive moment in the battle, causing The Fianna's defeat.

Under Goll, the Clan Morna thrived for many years, though, throughout this time, Goll feared the return of Finn and the terrible vengeance he would bring. In his old age Goll decided to find and destroy Finn while he still slept. He and his host rode under the hill in search of Finn's magical resting place, but instead of finding his enemy, stumbled into Dumnonni.

The arrival of the Clan Morna is comparatively recent history. In the aftermath of the war with Balor, they came into a land decimated by war, with not enough warriors to hold and protect much of the land. Meeting with Pengar, the Ard Ri, and charged by the Druid Slough Cul to take half of Dumnonni as their own, the Clan Morna seemed set. However, the Dumnonni peasantry, placed under their dominion, did not take well to the yoke of their new masters. With the return of Queen Athea to her people and her demands for the kingdom to, once more, be one, a slow, but inexorable descent into war has begun. Through these troubles Clan Morna have not been without friends; they have made alliances with Queen Maeve, who married Goll. Though this has led to further conflict with Maeve's enemies: not least The White Bear.

After Goll's death, Clan Morna split into two factions, those loyal to Maeve and those who now follow Conan Maclair. Immediately after his death Maeve made an accord with Queen Brae to have some of her lands returned to her, in exchange for those lands of Dumnonni that Clan Morna had controlled. Conan believes Maeve's witchcraft killed Goll and has fled with his followers to become a roving war band again.

Though often painted as the bad guys, the Clan Morna are still honourable; they stick to their vows and support their allies, even when it will obviously be to their detriment. Seen in a different light they could even be considered laudable. But because of their current role as enemies of the Dumnonni, Clan Morna are unlikely to make good player characters without much consideration and discussion with the refs.

6.24 The White Bear

The White Bear is one of the oldest surviving Celtic clans of the Free Races. They have been indigenous to the lands of Dumnonni since before people can remember and have not (for the most part) travelled through the mists.

An honourable clan, they were originally called together by the Great White Bear Spirit: an older and stronger spirit than either the angry Black Bear, or the nomadic Crimson Bear. Each of the three Great Bear Spirits possesses one defining attribute, be it the ferocity of the Black Bear, or maternal love of the Crimson Bear, or the strength of the White Bear. It is written and prophesied that, one day, all three clans will be united as one. On this day, all three attributes will be unified into one single bear clan, making them indomitable! Until then, only loose alliances and friendships can exist between them, and their many differences continue to keep the three clans apart.

Traditionally the bodyguard or honour guard of the Ard Ri, The White Bear has ever been at the centre of most issues of the Free Races. Though a predominantly Celtic

clan, they are known to offer 'shelter of the wing' to honourable groups that are in need, be they fledgling Norse clans, or Sidhe seeking refuge for whatever reason.

The White Bear lands are in the valleys of the White Mountains, that lie North East of Culhaven. Though the chieftain, Klaw, has done much to increase the prosperity of the clan and its lands, even re-forging the once lost 'Bear Blade,' he normally resides in Culhaven, leaving the clan matriarch, Rubela, a very powerful shaman, to rule the White Bear lands.

The oldest, most bitter enemies of the White Bear have always been, the very powerful Queen Maeve and her Connacht warriors. As they are geographically neighbours, border disputes and cross-border raids between the two peoples are very common. This has recently developed into full scale conflict.

The White Bear possess one of the Great Maps of Dumnonni and, as such, have a big tactical advantage. However, such a treasure skirts the disapproval of the Fae and other folk who regard maps as sacrilege (see elsewhere).

6.25 The Cul Cascorach

These are the Ard Ri's own warriors. They can come from any tribe or culture, but upon joining the Cul Cascorach they renounce all loyalties to any other. They are the Ard Ri's right hand and their actions are his law. How they act reflects on the Ard Ri, so they hold themselves to the highest standards of honour and any infraction would incur instant expulsion and possible execution. The word of one of the Cul Cascorach is the word of the Ard Ri.

6.26 The Forsaken

A very different war band: one made up of common criminals and people who have broken taboos or offended the Druids. A Druid has the right to condemn any person to a time among the forsaken. This can be for a moon, a year and a day, or, for the worst crimes, until redeemed. The Forsaken often band around a Druid, or Lave, who takes them upon esoteric quests of his devising. Often those who control the Forsaken are themselves being punished by the Druids, or mad. A member of the forsaken must obey any Druid without question. However, because they are the instruments of the Druid they are not responsible for their actions: the Druid is.

The Forsaken do occasionally travel alone or in small groups, but they are always in the service and acting for the Druids.

6.27 The Blackshields

In the mists of time the Blackshields were once called the Desi and learned the arts of raiding and warfare in the lands of Demesia in Eire. For reasons best left untold, they were banished by the High King and cursed to wander nameless for seven generations. They travelled East to the land of the princes and were named, by those they met, for the tarred black shields they all carried. Having few other skills they hired themselves out as warriors to whoever would pay them. With hard-won wealth and force of arms, they carved out their own lands in the valleys. Over countless generations they fought the other tribes of the Cymry and Prydain, the Romans, the Saxons, the Norse and often each other. When a boatload of Blackshields arrived through the mists in Dumnonni, they swore to serve the High King, Cascorach, in return for lands.

The Blackshields proved to be strong in battle, as well as keen singers of songs and tellers of tales around the campfires. They know their lives may well be short, so they revel in life and in every opportunity to be seen and heard. With their emotions close to the surface they can be cheerful rogues one minute and full of dark moods and violent displays, the next. When not fighting with their weapons, they battle with their word hoards, and many take a delight in wordplay. With tongues as sharp as knives they have earned numerous enemies who would gladly kill them. But, whilst no few Blackshields have died a hero's death in battle, a Blackshield's most deadly foe remains another Blackshield and more have died at the hands of a kinsman than by any other means. Surprisingly, despite their brash and uncaring demeanour, the virtues of those still living are many and they have risen high in the councils of the free people. They are often chosen as war leaders or champions and their counsel is sought in matters of honour. Since the Battle of Moy Tura, when Balor was slain, they have moved to new lands and founded a new kingdom around Duntarrion, in the shadow of the great mountain Bryn Mawr. But their numbers have dwindled and, perhaps, those that remain are indeed the last of the Blackshields. If they are, they will not go quietly.

6.3 Tuaths – Celtic tribes

To differentiate from Fianna, Tuaths are ethnic groupings, i.e. peoples. The list below should be seen as examples which have been well established in the game. If you fancy playing someone from a Celtic tribe that is not listed, a quick search for 'Celtic Tribes' on Wikipedia offers a massive selection to choose from.

6.31 The Tribes of Erin

There were many tribes, large and small, in ancient Ireland, but for simplicity we have split them into five great tribes. The provinces of these five were often denoted with the prefix cúige as in 'Cúige Connacht,' which literally meant the fifth of Erin belonging to the Connachta. Each of the five tribes have some holding in what is now Dumnonni, but the Connachta appear in game far more than the other four and so this is the one described in detail below.

The Five Great Tribes of Erin

The Ulaid from Ulster (Cú Chulainn was an Ulaid. The Ulster cycle is largely about the wars between them and the Connachta)

The Laigin from Leinster

The Dairine from Munster

The Connachta from Connacht (described below)

The Erainn (also called Iverni) from Meath

Lesser Tribes

The Dalriadans

The Scotia (described in degenerate folk)

The Celtiberians (describe in Tribes of Gaul and Iberia)

And the cruthn (describe in Picti)

6.311 Connachta

Connacht has a long history in the legends of Erin. Notably, it is the fifth of Erin that the Fir Bholg kept after the first battle of Moytura. It was also ruled during the times of the Ulster cycle by King Ailill Mac Mata and his Queen Maeve. Events of this time are the substance of 'The Cattle Raid of Cooley.'

Possibly because of its strong connection to the Fir Bholg, Connaught, the capital, has survived in Dumnonni intact. Though the Connachta are largely sons of Mil, many still claim descent from the Fir Bholg that ruled before the line that has Maeve as queen today. In the Dumnonni canon, Maeve is now the ruthless, ever-young queen of the Connachta. Until recently she ruled alongside Ailill, whose Gamhanrhíde stood loyal only to him.

Maeve is notoriously unfaithful with a voracious appetite for young men. Despite this and her hen-pecking, Ailill remained dotingly in love with her. In the end, she had to kill him after he betrayed her by kidnapping the twin grand children of Balor. Though Ailill wanted to protect the twins, their death was necessary to defeat Balor. During the battle itself, when the resolve to sacrifice them wavered, Maeve made sure it happened.

Like every other tribe, the Connachta were depleted in the war against Balor. They have since been further reduced by the desertion of the Connacht Fir Faphach and the attempt by the Fir Bholg to open the Door to the Moonlit city while it rested under Connaught. The war that pits Maeve and Clan Morna against The White Bear, the Scotti and Queen Brae on the other, sent further Connacht heroes to their graves

with each passing season. Though they are weakened, Queen Maeve and Connachta are not a force to be written off quite yet.

Those that still follow Maeve are fiercely loyal to her, some to the point of adulation. Their love for her means they will do anything she asks of them, without question, and as she is ruthless so are they willing to tread a very fine line between honour and her desires. Generally, they look down on the Gamhanrhide for having such a weak king and despise the Connacht Fir Faphach as honourless oath-breakers to be slain on sight.

Maeve has many children including a daughter by Ailill called Fouloula and Septuplet sons by Goll MacMorna. Fouloula is now married to Oswald, King of the Usipeti. The seven boys are still babes, but as is the way in Dumnonni probably will not be for long.

The Gamhanrhide

The loyal war band of Ailill are, like their king, foolhardy and honourable. Since the death of Ailill they have refused to take a new king. Their anger at Maeve is their main drive, but they are hampered because Ailill's last order to them was not to take vengeance for his death or act directly against her. They have chosen to understand this as allowing them to join a cause which happens to be against Maeve. For this reason they are constantly looking to 'help' those that are Maeve's enemies. The latest such cause is in support of the White Bear.

Because of the opposition to Maeve, the Gamhanrhide are the only members of the Connachta that make good player characters. A few of the Gamhanrhide have also taken to following Ailill's daughter Fouloula.

The Connacht Fir Faphach

There are many among the Connachta who believe that they are descended from the Fir Bholg. Thus, when Donn brought his army out from the Moonlit city, they felt they had older oaths to him than to Maeve. However, many saw this as a betrayal of Maeve, and it has left their reputation tarnished. Also, like all the sons of Mil, the Fir Bholg disdain them. For these reasons they are desperate to show their valour, honour and prowess. This makes them dangerous in battle.

6.312 The Dalriada

"Manannan smiles upon us. We sail!"

Celtic sea rovers, the Dalriada are hardy warriors on land and sea, with an eye for the main chance. These Irish speaking Scots raiders consider themselves to be unsurpassed in their boat-handling, and claim to be the only folk ever to have sailed beyond Tir Bo Thuin in the Western Seas. Blessed by Manannan Mac Lir they are bitter enemies of the Scottii and any who worship the Cailleach, or Sea Hag. Although they are a doughty Celtic warband their warriors favour round shields, shorter spears and lighter armour because they are more handy on shipboard. They also use bows in warfare more than many of the other Celtic peoples, and take great pride in their skill at archery. Their sea-raiding, piracy and mercenary nature has made them rivals of the Norse. It is said that the coming-of-age rituals for Dalriadan youngsters, which involve defeating a great adversary with a ceremonial hunting knife, are notoriously dangerous, perhaps accounting for this folk's doughty reputation and dour outlook on life. Fifteen years ago a Dalriadan queen, Ardessie, began uniting the warbands under her banner, but after her mysterious death they became fragmented and scattered once more. Often the crews serve as mercenaries in the armies of other peoples and many of them aided the Free Races in final war against Balor. Subsequently their wave-borne skills have been courted, particularly by Queen Brae of The Many Peoples.

6.32 Tribes of Albion

There are many peoples in Dumnonni that are the remnants of the tribes that used to populate what is now England. Most of these arrived here from the period of the Roman invasions of Briton and have been here for many generations. Indeed the Dumnonni themselves come from the west-country at this time. Occasionally people still arrive, freshly through the mists, from one of these tribes. These new arrivals may have come during the Roman period, but could also have come from a later time. The following descriptions are of the four most prominent tribes that live here, but these should be seen as examples; this is not an exclusive list.

Dumnonni (described below)

Briganti (described below)

Iceni (described below)

Catuvellauni (described below)

6.321 The Dumnonni

Although the lands controlled by the Dumnonni have given their name to the whole Land, the area they occupy is, in fact, quite a small area around Culhaven.

The name Dumnonni is a latinisation of the Gaelic Domhnain, meaning land or people of the land, which is nice.

Originally the Dumnonni were one of the local tribes of the West Country. However, they were possibly the first of the peoples to populate the mythical land beyond the mists, have been here for untold generations.

The Dumnonni are a proud people who regard freedom from oppression as their inalienable right. While Athea sat as first Ard Ri she outlawed all forms of slavery and it is a common Dumnonni saying that;

'it is better to die free than live in chains.'

During the war with Balor the peoples of Dumnonni may have suffered more than any other. 9 out of every 10 warriors died during the battle of Bickly, where King Eorgen held off Balor's advancing army long enough for Culhaven to be relieved. Much of the land was turned to ash and mud. During the final battle of the war, Eorgen disappeared into the mist with orders from Cascorach to bring help.

Recent history has had their hatred of oppression tested with the overlordship of Clan Morna (see elsewhere). However, Athea is now back and has vowed she will make her kingdom whole again.

With the massive death toll amongst the warrior class, any player characters will be lucky survivors, or possible lower-born folk who have taken arms to protect their land.

Dumnonni Warriors are distinctive for the blue, cross-hatching woad on their faces and their red cloaks.

Dumnonni locals

Living as they do in the lands about Culhaven, these people are more likely than any other to be involved in play. There are two local villages: Lower Harlow Water and Bickleigh, which have a healthy rivalry. At present both villages follow a single headman, Maga mab Matach, who speaks for all common folk who can get from their homes to Culhaven and back in a day.

The villagers provide all the workers for Culhaven and often expect the attention of the high folk to mitigate their local issues. Though it is tempting to ignore them as beneath you, remember who prepares your food and maintains your walls. It is unwise to upset them or as they whisper amongst themselves, 'The blue faced man will come and get you.'

Much of their history is described elsewhere in this guide.

6.322 The Iceni

This is the Tribe of Boudica and it suffered greatly under the Romans. After her final defeat, Boudica called her druids to her and they led her and her people into the mists. However, when they arrived in Dumnonni, the Iceni were appalled to find Boudica was not among them. Many generations later they still believe she will come to their aid in a time of greatest need. For this reason they have no king or queen and their leaders are considered only stewards.

During the war with Balor their lands were devastated and those that are left are a remnant of a remnant. They are hard warriors that have seen their homes and families stolen from them, and now have little left but honour and the desire for vengeance.

6.323 The Catuvellauni

They are a powerful tribe that resisted the Romans under their king Caratacus. When their lands were overrun, Caratacus and his warriors fled: fighting on among the Welsh tribes of the Ordovices and the Silures. These two tribes still have close allegiances with the Catuvellauni. Eventually, after being overwhelmed at the battle

of Caer Caradoc, all three tribes were driven into the Severn and washed away. But, these were not drowned, instead washed up in Dumnonni.

Caratacus himself escaped either fate, but when he fled to the lands of the Briganti, their queen, Cartimandua, handed him over to the Romans. This betrayal still causes animosity between these two tribes.

For many generations the Catuvellauni have controlled a large area of the plains bordering with the Iceni. Like their neighbours, their lands have been ravaged by the war, and once again, the Catuvellauni have been forced to retreat, fight and retreat again. These warriors are the masters of guerilla warfare learnt under Caratacus and honed by generations fighting the Fomor.

6.324 The Briganti

"Muther Knows Best."

These northern Celts have a hardy no-nonsense attitude to the world, still apparent in their distant descendants in Yorkshire and Lancashire today. They are also matriarchal, each family having a head-woman. Though there are some male Briganti leaders, woe betide any who forgets their place and ignores the 'advice' of their womenfolk. As a sign of this, the men do not wear trews, only the women do.

Unlike many of the Tribes of Albion, the Briganti remained strong under the Romans, possibly as a result of female practicality rather than male stubbornness. This should not suggest that they are in anyway a pushover, or that they lack honour. It is said that, rather than accept dishonour, it was common for them to walk out into the North Sea. It is also believed that some of these (possibly the most stubborn and brave), instead of being drowned, have found themselves washed up in Dumnonni.

The Queen is still called Cartimandua, like their most famous queen under the Romans, but it is not known whether she is the actual Cartimandua, a descendant or if it is just a title. From time to time the queen disappears for many years and returns with her youth 'regenerated.' The last time she was away a King tried to rule and his murder by the more traditional Briganti almost plunged them into civil war.

The war with Balor ravaged much of the lands of the Briganti, forcing them to flee to their northern hill forts. Here, they protect many refugees from the other plains tribes who have nowhere else to go.

6.33 Tribes of Gaul and Iberia

There are many Celtic tribes that have trickled into Dumnonni from mainland Europe. Here are just two examples: the Arveni, because they have had a largish presence on the southern shores of Dumnonni for many generations, and the Celtiberians, as they are literally the Son's of Mil.

6.331 The Arveni

"The only thing which outshines our brilliance is our modesty."

The Arveni, the Biting Fox of Guallica, held out against Rome longer than any other Gaulish tribe. After the tragic battle of Alesia and the fall of Vercingetorix, the Arveni refused to surrender, choosing instead to travel through the mists to the lands of Dumnonni, where they maintain the battle against the Eagle Empire to this day. Fiercely proud, the Arveni are afraid of nothing (apart from the sky falling on their heads, a subject sure to be met with scorn if it is mentioned). They are seldom shy in telling people of their prowess, be it in brewing, hunting, smithing or any other craft in which they excel. The Arveni are without king, and labour under a dishonour after one of their number slew a Druid. The young king, Patera, was sacrificed as a result, and now the Arveni suffer a geas to obey the demands of the Druids in all things until their debt is repaid. Though it should be noted that few of them trust the words of the Druids, preferring to trust their spirits to the guidance of Vix the fox.

6.332 The Celtiberians

The Celtiberians are ancient cousins of the Gauls, from the land of Iberia. They are instantly distinguishable from other Celts by the unusual disc-shaped cuirass of their chieftains, curved falcata swords, and their dislike of trews. The Celtiberians are split into many tribes, such as the Arevaci, the Belli, and the Lusones. Like the Gauls, they chiefly worship The God of the Sun, Belanos, his wife Belisama, Candamius, the God of Mountains, and the many faces of Toutatis, the Gods of the Tribe, who speak through their Priests and Priestesses. Similar in temperament to the Gauls, the Celtiberians are, however, more inclined to show their emotions. They also share a hate of Rome. Many centuries ago a number of Celtiberian tribes united under the rule of the Arevaci tribe and their High King known as Mil. These Celtiberians called themselves Milesians. Following the murder of their Great Uncle, Ith, at the hands of the Tuatha De Dannan, it was Mil's sons, led by Eber Finn, Érimón and Amergin Glúingel, who invaded Erin (and named the land so). Most of the tribes who have come through the mists from Erin since are descended from them, hence the term that many of the tribes of Erin use to describe themselves: "Sons of Mil."

Surprisingly few of these 'real' Milesians have found their way to Dumnonni, though at least one of Mil's actual sons has been to Culhaven. The few that have arrived are tasked with finding out what real events lie behind the legends of their invasion of Erin.

6.34 Tribes from the Low Countries

These are the tribes from the parallel system 'Tir Nan Beo' that runs in the Netherlands using the same rules and set in part of the Dumnonni world. Although there are obviously difficulties for British players to join one of these tribes, with discussion with the British and Dutch event organisers it may be possible.

6.341 Tir nan Beo – a cursed land

Tir nan Beo is a cursed part of the Black Marsh in the West of Dumnonni. Some say the curse is from the Fae, others that the Black Shields drew the curse down when they drove out the former Pictish population, or that the Picts themselves were cursed for crimes against the gods.

Recently these lands have been gifted to the Oswald, chieftain of the Usipeti, in return for his aid in the defeat of Balor. For the first time the normally nomadic Usipeti have a homeland and king. His

first act as ruler was to invite other tribes to settle and attempt to repopulate this land. Oswald is married to Maeve's Daughter Fouloula.

6.342 The Usipeti

A wandering people who came from the lands around the mighty river Rhine at the time of the Roman Empire. As travelling folk, it was inevitable that some of them would eventually stumble through the mists.

They are tradesmen, nomads, diplomats, and musicians, renowned for their hospitality. Where you find the Usipeti you find good food, stories, music, and the opportunity to trade around their sacred hearth fires.

6.343 The Frisii

This Teutonic tribe has long fought with their Saxon neighbours and the Roman Empire. Some took to the seas and settled in Britain. Those that have come through the mists have done so only recently.

The men and women of the Frisii have very different roles; their armoured warriors fight in a hard and straightforward manner, the women do not fight and appear to be restricted to menial and domestic roles. They like things they can touch, for as long as they can touch it, they can understand it. The Frisii do not meddle with things they cannot understand, for it is bound to lead to trickery and from there onwards to misery. As a whole they can make bitter enemies or great friends. Their judgement on you depends on your honour as much as your actions.

6.344 The Nervii

Another tribe that fought the Romans, often with success; they claim they almost defeated Caesar himself. They can appear arrogant, boastful and overconfident in their prowess. They too, came through the mists but recently.

They respect fame and seek reputation avariciously. Their leaders are those older warriors and veterans that the bards speak of well and often. They are a practical people who prefer utility, rather than sticking to worthless rules and old customs. They have little passion for ostentatious jewellery or art, except for well-made weapons and armour.

6.345 The Menapi

Although these people came through the mists earlier than the others, they remained largely hidden until recently: learning the *wyrd* of the land and listening closely to the voices of nature. Of all the folk of Dumnonni, they are perhaps the nearest to an understanding of the Sidhe, whom they respect and venerate.

They boast great wistmen and regularly take part in 'The Dance,' knowing what the Fae can do (or maybe even what they cannot do) when offered proper gifts, alliance, petitions, or promises.

They are ruled by women and use little in the way of metal for arms or armour. Their strangeness sometimes frustrates other folk, but their honour is well thought of, as they strive as much as any to follow a noble path.

6.4 The Northern Tribes

The people who inhabit the far northern highlands and the islands of the northern sea are wilder and more savage than even the Celtic tribes. This is the place where we have let our imagination fill in the gaps left by the lack of historical evidence. We have envisioned them as a primitive tribal society which venerates its ancestors and the spirits of the world (Samhlachs and Ysbryds). We have, for flavour, thrown in some Native American culture, both in the shamanism and the look. Also drumming, chanting, sweat lodges, whooping, counting ku, scalping, near-naked and painted bodies, though there is still a strong Iron Age motif. Though obviously an anachronism, Scottish accents work well for them, as does a smattering of Gaelic.

Though most people consider them all Pictii, in reality they are much more varied than this. The real Pictii call themselves the Cruthn and are split into many different tribes, each defined by their totem spirit, from which they are normally named. As well as these there are also even wilder, stranger and more barbaric folk. These include the Smetri, the Attacotti, the Fen Picts, and the Matu.

They believe they are descended from Cruthine, a great king who arrived in the far North of Caledonia from Scythia with a boatload of warriors. He ruled over his newly conquered land for a hundred years, before distributing the land amongst his 7 sons.

"Seven Sons - seed of Cruthine - then held a seventh of Alban's earth; Cait, Ce, Cirig - warriors all - Fib, Fidach, Fotla, Fortrenn."

Since Cruthine and his men had no women on their boat they were in need of wives. They were enemies of the Britons in the south, so no wooing was to be done there; however, the Irish provided wives on the proviso that if ever there was a feud over

who was to succeed as a king then the Picts should always choose from the female line of aristocracy, something they have always done ever since, both in the old world and in the Fey realm. It is said by their bards that the Picts had first arrived in the Dumnonni realm in a large fleet of leather currach boats. The tales tell that they were crossing a lake to attend a great feast, in celebration of the defeat of their foe Coel Hen: a mighty British king. All the different tribes had filled those boats and all were lost in a sudden mist – some say, caused by the Smertai in league with the Caillach.

In battle, the Picts tend to employ hit-and-run tactics, often using short axes, javelins, bows and staff slings, but their mightier warriors can form a shield wall using their distinctive H shaped shields and with the long spears they often carry. Due to their way of fighting and the scarcity of good metal minerals on their land; they tend to wear leather, rather than metal, armour.

6.41 Samhlachs and Ysbryds. (Pronounced: sau-la and is-brid).

The Cruthn see the world teeming with spirits: spirits of all things, animals, the dead, trees, stones, rivers, winds, and the weather, even the moon, sun and stars. They also regard the Sidhe as Spirits. The Pictish shamans, called Fiosaiche (Fisichu), can wield the wyrd by summoning spirits and demanding of them, negotiating with them, or petitioning them, depending on the spirit's power and the power and disposition of the individual Fiosaiche. There are both individual spirits, like the spirit of a particular oak tree, and also universal spirits, like the Dog Samhlach, the spirit of all dogs and the definition of a dog's nature.

Samhlachs are the totem spirits of a tribe and are universal spirits. Ysbryds are all other spirits, big or small, though to call a spirit Samhlach is to do it great honour.

Each Samhlach has an associated glyph which can be imbued with its power. This is why the Pictii often paint themselves with these glyphs and other woad patterns to give themselves protection. This woad painting is another of the skills of a Fiosaiche and is how the Pictii get their name (Pictii = Picture). (See the section on written language.)

All the Cruthn, because of their very personal connection to the Spirit World, are superstitious. This makes them very wary and respectful of *wyrd* and *wyrd* weavers. As well as fearing them, they can sometimes be convinced to follow particularly powerful and guileful *wyrd*-men. Thus some Pictii follow darker gods, like Crom Cruach and are driven to rampage by mad Drune Lords.

The Pictii and the Norse have a troubled relationship. They share the same space, but have little or no understanding of each other. The Norse are the worst at lumping all the Cruthn as one, mad host. In the war with Balor, much of the Pictii nation sided with the Fomor. Hrafn fought a terrible war to keep them from joining Balor at Culhaven in any numbers. And even now there is a permanent state of vigilance. However, not all the Cruthn wish harm to the people of the South and some are actively allied to the Free Races.

6.42 Tribal Geas

They may never eat the flesh of their Samhlach, save only in ritual. Each tribe has other tribal geasa which all follow. For example, the Dodhran (Otter folk) cannot pass an opportunity to have fun and the Swooping Hawk may not take more than they need.

6. 43 Pictish Tribes (Cruthne)

There are a great many Cruthn tribes and only a sample can be covered here.

The first three are tribes that could be played as characters: the outward-going Bristling Boar, the wild and vicious Running Dogs, and the strange and god-touched Matu.

Also given are four, very much NPC tribes: the hostile Bloody Stag, the cannibalistic swarm of the Attacotti, the shape-changing Selkie, and the enigmatic Fen Picts.

6.431 Bristling Boar

The Bristling Boar are the largest Pictish clan (except for their bitter enemies the Bloody Stag) and undoubtedly the most sophisticated in terms of organisation, equipment and clothing, favouring the distinctive extra long tunic which reaches the calf. They are willing to venture out from their borders and form alliances with other peoples beyond of their Pictish tribes. They realise that, if bonds are not forged, inward-looking clans will gain no respect or help from other Free Races. To that end, Picts from the Boar regularly travel to Culhaven to learn of other lands and pledge their spears to the service of the Ard-Ri.

They have given brave service to various Ard-Ri's over the years and are probably the most trusted of the Pictish clans. The Bristling Boar are known to have a particular distrust of the Dalriadan and Scotti (despite marriage links in the old world). The Bristling Boar chiefs sent war-bands to aid Cascorach in his war against Balor. Though not directly at the Great Battle of Balor's keep, they fought bravely at the Okement river, ten miles upstream, holding-off many of Scotti mercenaries, who were attempting to use the river to get to Balor's aid. Due to the great number of broken Scotti currach boats clogging the river, the Picts called this fight "the Battle of the Hides."

6.432 Running Dog

"We must go back for him."

The Running Dog are a rough federation of the Pictii who have a dog as their Samhlach. They run as small family groups, preferring to travel widely, rather than settling in one place. It is not uncommon, however, for a family of Running Dog to settle with another of the Cruthne, becoming loyal to this "Great Family." This means that there can be families of Dogs with both the peaceful and the warlike clans.

Loyalty is a Dog's greatest honour. When Dogs come of age they can choose their loyalty. Should they not choose loyalty to the family or clan their parents are loyal to, they will leave and travel, either alone or in small groups, seeking a worthy master.

Dogs do not consider themselves as individuals, rather part of a greater whole. This can cause misunderstanding in regard to honour duels, as all dogs would expect to join such a fight with their brother and expect that the opponent's 'family' would do the same.

All Dogs have the Geas that they cannot leave a wounded fellow behind.

6.433 The Matu (Bears)

The Matu are the descendants of the children of the Dagda and the Morigan. Of the three children, Bronach (Joy) and Gliondar (Sorrow) were birds, but Math was a bear. In her loneliness, Math sought the comfort of Great Bear Samhlach and their offspring were the Matu.

Gliondar also had a child, Patha Dunn, who is the hag-mother of the Morigu folk.

The three daughters of the each had a great gift. Bronach could see the past, Gliondar could see the future and Math lived only in the present. Thus the Matu say:

"The past may have been joy, but the future belongs to sorrow. Let us make the most of now."

The Matu regard themselves as much bears as men. As they grow older they tend to become more bestial and less concerned with the world. It is said they eventually go into unending hibernation. They live in the Black Marshes and worry little for the greater events of the world. Yet they are fiercely loyal to the people of Patha Dunn, but hate both the Fir Bholg and the Fae, for past harms. The Matu are known to be masters of woad painting and can weave extraordinary wyrd into the pictures they paint upon each other. For these reasons they might go to war and, when set on such a path, they are single-minded and terrible.

6.434 Bloody Stag (NPC)

One of the most barbaric of the Cruthne and possibly the most common, the Bloody Stag are driven by the desire to be lords of all. The Stag live with a simple credo in their hearts:

"What you can take is yours by right. Not to take it is weakness."

Stag leaders fight for their places and can be overthrown by stronger men at any time. They keep many slaves, whom they despise for weakness and so treat very badly. Raiding for slaves to replace those that have died under these harsh masters is therefore commonplace. They are most often at war with the other Cruthne, though occasionally they have joined with them against the peoples of the soft South.

The Stag do not serve any others, yet they see nothing wrong with forming alliances with other powerful forces. Such alliances are merely a convenience until their allies can be conquered. They have in the past allied themselves with other Cruthne, Fomorians, Drune Lords, and even corrupt Norse.

They respect strength, but do not fear it., in fact, they fear nothing save the curses of the wyrd which will rob them of their own strength. Their Fiosaiche are happy to use this fear to command their people. They also, demonstrate their power by being able to shield Stag warriors from the effects of wyrd, thus making them brave enough to attack even the wyrd weavers of their enemies.

Seeking power, they follow dark gods, amongst whom Crom Cruach is prominent.

6.435 Attacotti (NPC)

The Attacotti hail from the farthest northern reaches and the Wild Isles. They seem to have no fear for personal safety, braving the wild open sea in the smallest of coracles, or plunging themselves recklessly into battle. They live for destruction and dominance. They are known cannibals and participate in terrible and bloody rituals where whole tribes of people are torn to pieces to appease their dark gods.

They are not without guile, however, and their leaders are probably powerful Fiosaiche or even Drune Lords, but they are seldom seen. They have a single-minded drive to achieve whatever purpose their leaders set them to. At present, they are determined to destroy the Norse who also have a foothold in the Northern Isles.

6.436 The Selkie (NPC)

"Deep in the waters and dry upon the land"

The Seal Folk are shape-shifters; quite literally skin changers. In their true home, which is the deep sea, they are seals: sleek, furred, sharp-toothed predators. But at times they can simply slough off their skins as they leave the water, becoming as men, to walk two-legged on the land. Being out of their natural element, though, is not

comfortable for them; they suffer in the heat, light and dryness of the land-world. Their skin flakes and splits and some experience difficulty breathing the arid air. This discomfort increases the longer they are dry, and the further they are from water, or their true skin. Another grave concern to Selkies on dry land, is keeping their seal-skin safely hidden. If a Selkie was to lose this skin, or if it was taken from them, they would be unable to shapeshift back to their true seal form, and so would never be able to return to their home and people beneath the waves. Occasionally, a Selkie will aid or befriend a dry-land dweller, though the stories tell that romance between Selkie and human always end in tragedy. It is also said that no man who has visited the Selkies' world has ever returned. They are amongst the folk blessed by the god, Manannan Mac Lir . In recent years there have been good relations between the Ard-Ri and some Selkies, after he aided them in bringing about an end to the trapping of Selkies by Norsemen using wyrd-crafted hooks. Despite the Ard-Ri's intervention the Selkies are still mistrustful of the Norse. They are also enemies of the Scottii who continue to hunt seals, but friends to the Dalriada who do not.

6.437 Fen Picts (NPC)

Of all the peoples of Dumnonni the Fen Picts are perhaps the most mysterious; living on man-made island villages called crannogs, they hide themselves deep in the mist-swathed fenlands. They take even less kindly to uninvited guests than their highland kin. Fen Picts are masters of unconventional warfare; their application of misdirection and ambush is renowned. They stepped out of their fens to aid the Free Races in the final battle with Balor, but they paid a high price, as Balor's mightiest warleader, Massan, was sent to destroy them.

After the horrors of a bitterly contested fighting-retreat, a brutal last stand was fought and Massan driven back. It is said that the Fen Pict were mainly animist in outlook,

giving to the small gods of places and things with tribute, either simple or bloody, but after the coming of their new High Chief, Tyrnan, they have also moved to the worship of Crom Cruach, the Bloody Maggot and Lord of Endings. Their Shamans have been known to guide into battle the risen corpses of those they had made sacrifice of in the waters of the Fens. Tyrnan was the last High King of Eire (or so the bards relate); how he, and some few of his warband, came to be leaders of the Fen Pict, here in Dumnonni, has never fully been explained. And the Fen Pict remain as close-mouthed as ever. Other Picts look upon the Fen Pict with both pride and fear, for they are the thing that creeps in the mist and is known, but unknown. When war came, the Pictish tribes were brought together by pacts made to Tyrnan, but word has reached Culhaven of his assassination and the resumption of inter-tribal strife seems inevitable. Fen Pict wear plain leather masks to hide their faces when around strangers. They seem to carry simple, if not primitive, equipment and wear rough, drab clothing, but those few who have been to their lands and returned, speak of lavish treasures hidden deep in mist-shrouded mystery.

6.5 The Norse

Some of the latest arrivals in Dumnonni are the Norse. Though there have been Norse here for some generations, the majority are newly come through the mists.

6.51 Notes on Dumnonni's Interpretation of the Norse

We borrow the mythological perspective of many of the Irish tales, but our English view of the Norse is coloured primarily by the real history of the Vikings. This is in our psyche, because we have been brought up on tales of barbaric warriors destroying monasteries. There are, of course, the tales of the Norse gods, that have a style which could easily sit with their Irish counterpart. However, it seems that generally our Norse are more 'pragmatic' and down to earth than our Celts. Any culture that celebrates burning your enemy's hall in the night and has a special name for people who slaughter everything that comes out of a door, has to be a bit on the gritty side, but the Norse have an honour code which they all strive to adhere to, or at least to have a reputation of adhering to. There is a Norse saying "If no one saw it, it did not happen."

Like all people in Dumnonni, the Norse are bound by the rules of the Celtic paradigm, which can often get those new through the mists into trouble. What is interesting is that those who have been here a long time, are led by the paradigm not to take on Celtic morals, but to adhere to their own higher ideals. Dumnonni it seems, forces men to become heroes.

6.52 Norse Values

Much like the Celts, the Norse value honour, hospitality, generosity and loyalty. A sense of humour, Strength (being accused of weakness or animal attributes is a dread insult), tenacity and luck are seen as important attributes and will gain a person respect and followers.

The Norse are very fatalistic, they believe in omens and prophecy. A simple thing like a broken buckle or a raven flying overhead might make a person abandon a course of action. They are very superstitious, which suits them well in Dumnonni, where it is likely that the Alfar do actually live in an ominous copse, and the gods really do play fickle games with men.

5.53 A Brief History of the Norse at Dumnonni

- For many generations there have been The Norse in the northern fjords of Dumnonni, but when the threat of the Fomorians grew too great, the Norse King, Beorn, joined with the other free races and supported Athea's coronation as the first Ard Ri.
- Beorn later betrayed the free races and joined Balor. He was eventually slain at the Battle of Three Shrines.
- Beorn's son, Olaf, and his nephew, Hrafn, fought for the kingship and Hrafn won. He and his Jarls set about taming the North until he is one of two great kings: the other being Sigurd the Bad, a despot.
- Hrafn ruled well for many years, until he took a new wife, Sifa. After this time he gradually slumped into a torpid state doing practically nothing. Rumours started that he was under an enchantment.
- Sigurd the Bad was eventually defeated and replaced by Magnus the Good. Still Hrafn did nothing.
- The Jarls of the north had always been fickle men, but now a new lethargy began spreading like a disease amongst them. Halls once full of song and warriors trained and ready for war, became dark, cold places; full of drunken, sullen men, uninterested in the defence of their honour or lands.

- During this time the very gods of Asgard were tricked by Loki into spending a year and a day as mortals. Many not only became mortals, but lost their memories as well: Odin, Freya and Hel amongst them.
- Despite the various problems King Magnus and Hrafn's wife, Sifa, secured a great victory against the Picts at the Battle of Loch Bray.
- Later a Fimbulwinter engulfed the North, with chill fogs pouring over the land, like the breath of some great dragon. The nights were haunted by monsters of Norse horror: undead war bands from Niflheim, the half-wolf children of Fenris, the evil dvergar from under the mountains, and even great giants from Jötunheim. The gods all started to go mad; saying the gods had abandoned the Norse, that Bifröst (the Rainbow Bridge) had fallen into the sea, so no heroes could get into Valhalla, and that the sun was being eaten by one of Fenris' children, heralding Ragnarök.
- At this time the Norse gods arrived at Culhaven in disguise, seeking to get back to Asgard. But with Bifröst fallen there was nowhere for them, or Norse heroes, to go when they died, save Niflheim.
- Hrafn's wife, Sifa, turned out to have been Hel –who had lost her memories. Her influence, even unknowing, was what had brought Hrafn down. She then sided with Loki who may, or may not, have been siding with Balor.
- Hrafn's malaise was healed by having his famous weapon, the sword of the Brisings, returned to him. He was reminded of his duties and returned to the North to rally the broken Jarls and fight the various evils that beset the Norse lands.
- While Balor was fighting at Culhaven, Hrafn, Magnus and their Jarls broke the Picts, and protected the free races from attack from the North.
- Odin was rescued and Bifröst restored, though now its foot was in Culhaven. As a result, Lief, the Bard was doomed not to be welcome in either Hel's hall or Asgard but to stay to guide dead heroes to the rainbow bridge.
- The gods learnt that, like mortal men, they can only return to Asgard through a noble death.
- Magnus's right hand man, Angatyr the Whisperer, working 'without Magnus's knowledge,' tried to overthrow Hrafn and put his lord on the throne of the king of the North. He sent a great Jotun to slay Hrafn when he visited Culhaven for Beltane. The Jotun slew many of the gods before it was itself slain. Angatyr was uncovered and slain. Unfortunately this was before he could reveal his co-conspirators. Magnus then knelt to Hrafn as high King.
- Hrafn and Magnus mounted a pitiless war on the Picts.
- Many new folk arrived in Dumnonni to replace those killed in the war with Balor. Among these, Norsemen were very plentiful.
- A new cult appeared, led by Freya. All men who saw her fell in love with her. When she and her followers attacked Culhaven, she was slain by a Norse ship-queen called Svanni, newly through the mists. Svanni then gave her beauty to Hel in exchange for allowing Freya to go to Asgard rather than Niflheim.
- Svanni the ship queen defeats the Attacotti and becomes Queen of the Far Isle.
- The bloody Stag Great Spirit, The Stag Samhlach manifests, able to possess men. With this power the Shaman and Drune lords these most vicious of the Cruithn are able to threaten the very existence of the Seal Road. Hrafn take up arms and begins a desperate fight.
- Magnus, uses the chaos to try and advance his own cause. He tried to set the other North factions against each other, Hrafn against Svanni and the Thormadsons against everyone. However, he over played his hand when he tries to engineer the massacre of the Thormadsons. This fails and worse his hand is discovered red to elbow in it. Their revenge is decisive and bloody, killing him and pissing on his corpse.
- Plunged into chaos with one of the two great Jarls suddenly missing, and the Bloody Stag apparently unstoppable, Hrafn and all the folk of the Seal Road are on the brink of disaster.

6.54 The Seal Road

This is the name the Norse give the coastal region in the North Eastern part of Dumnonni and the islands North of the mainland. The main port is Holmsfiord. This is also now the seat of the High King of the North. Inland from here are the wild uplands of the Picts. The Isles are less secure than the mainland, being under threat from Attacotti raiders who had ruled here before the influx of the Vikings.

In general, even those who have been born here, are descended in only a few short generations from people on the other side of the mists. Thus as a character it is important to decide culturally where your family came from. Perhaps they were Geats of the same clan as Beowulf, or refugees fleeing Harold Fine-hair's unification of the Northway, maybe Rus traders, invaders of King Alfred the Great's Wessex, or settlers amongst the wild tribes of Ireland? These choices should colour your dress, culture and attitude.

6.55 Norse factions

Unlike Celtic peoples, the Norse will swear loyalty to strong leaders rather than follow ancient groupings. Thus any of the following factions could contain Norse folk from all over.

6.551 Hrafn's Housecarls

The King of the North, Hrafn, must balance the petty rivalries of his vassals, the constant threat from the Picts and the calls for support from Culhaven. His housecarls (húskalar or huscarls) are therefore his eyes, ears and right hand when they venture South. His Son Egil Hrafnson is his highest and most loyal emissary and is more likely to visit Culhaven than his father, who must be ever vigilant in the North.

Hrafn has loyal housecarls, some born in Dumnonni and some who have come through the mists. What separates them from his lesser vassals is that they have all sworn terrible oaths of loyalty. These men would die for their king without a complaint, as long as they can do it with a sword in their hand. There would be such men in Culhaven to further Hrafn's reputation and his many agendas.

6.552 Magnus the Good's Housecarls

"There is no shame in dark deeds done for loyalty."

Magnus was the second most powerful lord in the North. His nickname 'The Good' referred to his skilful nature, not his morality; and also to the fact that his predecessor, Sigurd the Bad, was so very much worse. Though none can say for certain that he was not loyal to Hrafn, it is widely held that he would have liked to see himself as King of the North. He was also thought to be an extremely pragmatic man. His housecarls who come to Culhaven may well be honourable men who simply have a dubious leader, but then they may be men who have a more complex agenda working for their lord. Rumours of the dark doings his crew of svartimen (shadow men) aboard the Red Ship have never managed to stick to Magnus (though he seemed unconcerned when its captain, Angatyr the Whisperer, was killed; perhaps he had overstepped his lord's orders, or failed to carry them out successfully?).

And then all Magnus's schemes came to naught, with his bloody murder by the Thormadsons. Some of his vessels have sworn to Hrafn, some to Magnus's 10 year old son, or rather his mother and Magnus's widow, but many more have not chooses who to follow, some even fleeing the Seal Road altogether.

And, the new captain and crew of the Red Ship are once more active, though under whose orders it is unclear.

6.553 The Queen of the Far Isles

"A Ship, A Queen, and a promise to get home: by Gold, by Gods or by the Reddened Edge."

The Norse have been fighting for control of the Far Isles longer than people can remember. With the Death of the Queen of the Far Isles, the Attacotti have been making advances in their unending war. However, with the arrival of the ship-queen Svanni, it would appear that the Norse are about to take the initiative. Any Norse players might swear fealty to the new Queen of the Far isles and help bring victory over the Attacotti.

6.554 Unaligned Norse

Many Norse groups, both those that are native to Dumnonni and those new through the mists, carefully keep their loyalties open, working with one faction or another, but never swearing to one high lord. Such folk are less trusted than openly loyal housecarls, but are an accepted part of Norse culture and will be negotiated with in good faith by most sensible men. Some groups are little more than pirates and brigands, but others have great honour and noble purpose. It could be argued that Svanni herself once fell into this category, but her faction is now big enough to wield independent power, even as it deals with both Hrafn and Magnus.

6.56 The Anvil

It has become custom that Norse characters who fight with the free races of Culhaven are put in what is known in battle as the 'Anvil'. As they fight in armour and in a solid shield wall this makes tactical sense. It also makes cultural sense, as the Cynan Moyal said, "The Norse are an immovable Anvil upon which the enemies of Culhaven are smashed."

6.6 Romans, Romano-British, and other sub-Romans

Being Roman is really a sliding scale, with Classical-Roman legionaries from Italy at one end, through auxiliaries recruited from across the empire, to the people of early Dark Age Britain, many of whom still regard themselves as Roman, even though they have little or no Roman ancestry. For Dumnonni purposes Romans are the forces of the great evil empire and Romano-British are naturalised Romans, or Romanised Celts. This simplification is for the purpose of this book and delineates those types of character that would make good PCs and those that are clearly NPCs.

6.61 Romano-British.

We mention the 'history' of this period here when elsewhere we expect you to do your own research because we have chosen a particular slant on this semi-mythical period. This is the time of Artos (Arthur), Madraut (Mordred) and Myrddyn (Merlin); the Matter of Britain and the Mabinogion; the Treasures of Britain and Caledfwlch (Excalibur).

In our vision of this period these are not Christian knights but great Celtic heroes, post-Roman warriors who carve a kingdom of light into the darkness of anarchy, even if it is only to last a short while. The use of Welsh names for the characters and treasures is a deliberate recognition of this vision.

Characters that hail from this period of history will know of Artos and his exploits. It is likely that heroes will have seen him, or even fought at some of his great battles (see the Ninth Legion below as an example). People need not be too careful about fitting an exact chronology as it is mythologised. If a fourth-century Welshman remembers a broken warrior fleeing Camlann, and a fifth century Picti fought Artos beyond the wall, this is no great problem.

Artos, Madraut and Myrddyn, as well many others from the Matter have been in Dumnonni. Artos was eventually slain here. Artos fought in the wars between the Picti and the Saxons and that has repercussions here. And sometimes we have taken stories wholesale from the Matter.

In post-Roman Britain there are numerous petty kingdoms of Celtic peoples lying to the north and west of those areas dominated by the Saxons and other Germanic invaders e.g.: Kernow, Powys, Dyfed, Gododdin, Rheged etc (a little research will provide more details – Wikipedia is a good starting point). All these kingdoms are at least part Christian and therefore there are restrictions upon their entry through the mists (see below). However, there are individuals and groups who are still pagan and can find their way through but this is not possible for whole peoples.

6.611 The Ninth Legion.

"By the deeds of Artos, so shall we judge our own actions."

The Ninth Legion is a good example of a Romano-British group in Dumnonni. They are not the famous force sent north of Hadrian's Wall and lost in the Pictish wilderness; they are instead a force of Romano-British who hail from post-Roman Eboracum (York). They served Artos in his battles with the Picti and like their namesake became lost in the snows north of the wall.

Here they found the Eagle of the Ninth suggesting they also stumbled into this land.

They have lived in the lands of Dumnonni for many years and have become naturalised. Though they still hate the Picti these 'Romans' have learnt the ways of the land and have in the past been allied with the free races.

6.62 Other Sub-Romans

Although Classical Romans only find their way to Dumnonni as enemies of the free peoples, it is possible that groups of Roman federates from the northern fringes of the empire can have come through. Such people may have mixed their cultures with that of Rome (worshipping gods of both pantheons for example) but remain distinct from it. They may be suitable PCs following discussion with the referees. The Hin Haudh were an example of this.

6.63 No Christians.

As Dumnonni has no Christians many post-Roman peoples are barred. That is why there are only early Saxons and also why most post-Roman Britons cannot find their way through the mists. However, it is possible to play a pagan throwback from the edges of society. Odda's Fyrd is a good example of such a Saxon group.

6.64 The Shadow of Rome

It should be noted that almost all the Celtic, Teutonic and Norse peoples who find their way to Dumnonni existed in some way in the shadow of Rome (see 2.8. Civilisation). To the Britons and Gauls Rome is an implacable enemy that eventually imposed its alien empire of straight roads, stone towns, taxes, laws and other evils. The Picts and Teutons successfully resisted Rome but it is no less hateful to them. Even the Norse are aware of Roman ways through the survival of the exotic and degenerate Byzantine Empire which they raided and traded with in equal measure. Only the ancient Irish do not include Rome in their cultural outlook.

6.65 Classical Romans

There have been three major Roman forces that have found their way into Dumnonni; with the exception of the Sub Noctem, they have stumbled here from great historical disasters.

The legionary veterans of Camulodunum (Colchester):

"Just because we walk in Hades, it does not mean we should be uncivilized."

These were led by Catus Decianus, the procurator who ruled Britain during the rebellion of Boudica. During the destruction of Camulodunum many of them were brutally slaughtered, but Catus had found the Horn of Pluto, which brings the dead to life, and so even death is not a rest for these tortured folk. On arriving in Dumnonni Catus in his madness saw in Balor a Caesar to follow. As they were fighting the Iceni, he gladly put his engineers to work civilising the land taken by Massan. In the intervening years these first Romans have been joined by the 17th, 18th and 19th legions (see below) and a Roman heartland has formed in the plains.

The XVII, XVIII and XIX Legions:

"Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!" Emperor Augustus

This Roman force was led by Publius Quintilius Varus against the German tribes and defeated at the battle of the Teutoburg forest. Somehow, the battered and beaten remains of these three legions found their way to Dumnonni where they fell in with Massan, after finding the Romans of Camulodunum already working with him.

Sub Noctem:

"No one can escapes the reach of Rome."

Sub Noctem was a cohort of Ceasar's finest sent through the mist to capture the druid Manix and destroy the fleeing Arveni Gauls. Though they were sent shortly after the Battle for Alesia from which the Arveni fled, the Gauls have lived in Dumnonni for generations, and these Romans have only just arrived.

6.66 Roman and Romano-British events that affect Dumnonni.

- Julius Caesar conquers Gaul and defeats Vercingetorix at Alesia. The Arveni flee this battle through the mists. Caesar sends Sub Noctem to finish the work. They arrive many generations later – such is the way of the mists.
- Over many years Rome conquers Britain.
- After the death of her husband, and provoked by Catus Decianus, Boudica raises an army in rebellion which is at first successful, but is in the end defeated at the Battle of Watling Street. Many of the Iceni fleeing the battle escape to Dumnonni.
-
- Many years later, Catus and the Romans who were killed in the rebellion also find their way through the mists (see above).
- Rome abandons Britain causing an almost apocalyptic collapse, but its people remain Romanised. First Uther and Artos become Kings of Britain battling with Saxons and the Picti for rule. Artos is defeated at the Battle of Camlann by his nephew Madraut, but afterwards Artos and many of his great warriors find their place in Dumnonni to continue this struggle.
- Britain is finally a Saxon land and the ways of Rome are lost.

In Dumnonni

- The Hin Huadh arrive through the mists. This small unit of Roman federates become a regular addition the forces of the free races, but things go sour after they spill the blood of Lorkan Brue-hands on the stones.
- The forming of Castra Stativa. Catus allies with Balor and his legion serves under Massan in the plains. Here they build forts, villas, roads and arenas just as had been done in Romanised Britain. Once deep within the Fomor-controlled lands, after the defeat at the Battle of the Plains, it lies now mainly under the protection of Queen Brae.
- At the battle of Caer Balor, the legionaries of Camulodunum are killed again and again, until the Scotia change sides and steal the Horn of Pluto from Catus. Catus is eventually captured and given the Triple Death. At this battle also the Hin Haudh fight valiantly and regain the respect and honour of the free races.
- Massan continues to hold the plains and the Romans under his command are bolstered by the Legions of the Battle of the Teutoburg forest.
- Though part of the army of Massan which was defeated at the battle of the plains, the Roman forces retreat in good order to Castra Stativa. Here they are given succour by Queen Brae.
- Sub Noctem arrive through the mists, doing terrible damage in the Otherland with the iron they have somehow managed to bring there.

6.7 Saxons and other Teutonic Tribes

The Saxon peoples encountered in the realms of Dumnonia are not the sophisticated Viking-fighters of Alfred the Great but the savage barbarians of earlier centuries that overran the remains of Roman Britain and Gaul as the legions departed. Generally, their organisation is barely above the tribal and their forces are composed of the retinue of 'companions' that follow a leader out of personal loyalty – 7 individuals are considered enough to form a warband and 36 are an army. Nor is their technology particularly advanced – only the wealthiest leaders have chainmail and swords, most wear leather and fight with spears, axes and scramaseaxe, their famed, heavy-bladed knives.

Their gods superficially resemble those of the Norse but differ somewhat in their organisation – many tribes favour the worship of one god or goddess and rank him or her above all others. Some examples (with Norse equivalent) – Woden, Wotan, Grim (Odin), Thunor, Donar (Thor), Nerthus (Frigg), Tiwaz (Tyr), Eostre (Idun), Ingwe (Frey), Frige (Freya), Weyland (Volund) and some without Viking counterparts e.g.: the god Saxneot and the goddess Hretha, both devoted to war and victory. Priests, who are often very animalistic in their appearance and behaviour, conduct worship – blood sacrifices are the norm, sometimes of humans. Many of the priests can write in a form of runes known as the futhorc. Some groups also produce fearsome, bestial warriors – bear-shirts and wolfskin-wearers – whose ferocity is such that they can be unpopular amongst their own people.

Saxons can be found all over Dumnonni in small war bands, ships crews, or farming settlements. However, their main area concentrations can be found in two areas.

The Saxon Shore: This long wide area of the eastern coast is made up of a number of Saxon kingdoms. Of the two this is the older, more heavily populated.

The Saxon Wolds: Some groups of Saxons made the deliberate move away from the Saxon shore and set up home in the wolds. Generally the Wolds are closer to a later Saxon period than the Saxon shore.

As noted above, 'Saxon' refers to many relatively small groups, who may think of themselves as Angles, Jutes, Frisians or some other sort of Teutonic tribe. Many of these are loosely allied to the Ard Ri of Culhaven but struggle amongst themselves to claim the position of overlord known as Bretwalda. However, some Saxon tribes ally themselves with the forces of Balor, or simply raid aggressively out of self-interest. It is difficult to generalise regarding such a disparate people, varying as they do from nomadic savages to settled and ordered farmers. Here are some examples:

6.71 North Gyrwas

A relatively numerous group who fight, when they must, as light skirmishers lacking sophisticated weapons and armour. They hold the goddesses Eostre and Hretha sacred.

6.72 Heardingas

A settled people who leave their fighting to a small core of heavily armed huscarls. They are currently led by a headwoman Frideswinth and hold Tiwaz and Frige above other deities.

6.73 Althelhelm 'The Dead'

These Saxons are unusual in having a revenant king. Though much of his court are also shades and corpses, Althelhelm has many living followers.

Noble-born among the constantly infighting lords of the west, Athelhelm rose to prominence and for some time became Bretwalda by force of arms. He was ever interested in more than worldly power but was defeated and killed by the warriors of Culhaven.

Some years after his death he returned from the lands of the dead, seemingly by his own will. Though he now acts with honour towards those who were previously his foes, he also appears to be amassing power and influence and those that knew him warn that his thirst for conquest may not have been slaked when he dwelt in Cythraul.

His deathly hall is a sad and drear place of weeping and sham revelry; although hospitable to the letter of the rule, a night there is likely to lead to madness or death.

6.74 Spaldas

A small tribe, little more than a warband, who fight as bear-shirts. These warriors work themselves up for battle over days and even weeks of ritual and the consumption of psychoactive substances. The shamanistic pursuit of an animal-like state is more important than any gods to them. They are not popular neighbours, even amongst other Saxons.

7.75 The Sea Wolves

These are the shiploads of Saxon pirates that can be found along the coasts of Dumnonni. They have a bloody reputation for extreme ferocity and lack of compassion. Though rarely any more than a few boats in alliance, when they are brought together for some common purpose they have been a considerable threat. Although no longer as numerous or troublesome as they used to be, the Sea Wolves are far from a spent force.

7.76 The Sortzart

These are the folk of the Black Bear; most of their warriors are berserkers. Their leader, Tomhodett, is an Ill-Fated King for his every victory is either snatched from his grasp or turned to naught, and his every gain a burden. However, he is also well known for his quickness to laugh and generosity of spirit; the Bards seem undecided as to whether this is tragedy or farce. He carries the cursed sword of Wayland which, when drawn gives him and his force great ferocity and strength but also causes him and his own great woe. When he draws his sword the rage of the Black Bear becomes like a contagion that affects all of his people, not just the warriors. With no enemy to fight the Sortzart often turn on their own. At present it is thought that Tomhodett keeps his sword sheathed and is an ally to the people of Culhaven, but who can tell what great need might force him to draw it once more?

7.77 Odda's Fyrd

Originally from Alfred the Great's Wessex, Ealdorman Odda of Devon, ruled part of what had once been the lands on the Dumnonni through the mists. He and his kin fought the invading Viking armies. His greatest victory was at the battle of Cynwit, but, as he was a pagan he was given no credit by Alfred. Soon after this battle, he and his fyrd camped high on a moor and awoke to find the world about them had changed.

Living the closest to Culhaven of all the Saxons, they are also unusual in ruling themselves by a 'Thing' – an almost democratic council. The ealdorman himself died fighting in defence of Culhaven from the Fomor and this, along with their old ties to the Dumnonni, have fostered friendship and alliance with the free races. However, they continue to have a distrust of the Norse.

7.78 The Jutes

These people are relatively new to Dumnonni, having only arrived through the mists in any numbers since the war with Balor; they originated from southern Britain soon after the fall of the Roman Empire. They are both fierce and politically astute and are carving out a place for themselves with sword and word.

6.8 The Sidhe and the Otherlands

Dumnonni is a land of mysteries and none is more dense and contradictory than the ways of Sidhe or Fae. They are everywhere, large and small, powerful and weak. Some might argue that the gods themselves are the greatest of the Sidhe, and indeed there are folk like the Queens of Summer and Winter who are gods of a sort. At the other end of the scale, most halls have wee folk that live in the thatch and feed on brave words. And there are dragons and other more terrible monsters.

As Dumnonni is a wyrd place and therefore everything is somewhat fae, the creatures and folk we are referring to are those that live in the Otherlands, or are 'part' of Dumnonni rather than arriving from the mundane world. In many senses, including their own thinking, the elder races should be included in this categorisation, but we have excluded them as they stand closer in our understanding than other Sidhe, and more resemble typical Celtic (albeit ancient) tribes.

The fact that the Fae are a mystery in key to their role in the game. We do not want them to be understood and often deliberately portray them in contradictory ways. Some times they will appear foolish folk that badly mimic the mundane, other times they will be astute manipulators. Sometimes quite human and humane, at others alien, callous and cruel.

The following is therefore what the majority of people believe about the Sidhe, **but is not necessarily true.**

It is said that the Fae made the land of Dumnonni itself from the dreams of mortal men, and that the greatest of them weaves all things into a tapestry on the Loom of Fate. They choose to limit their own powers, in order to make the land relatively stable. If they were to break this 'Compact' and give their magic free reign it is so powerful it could unmake the world. They are fallen gods. They are the very nature of things, Samhlach to the Picts (see Northern Tribes), and are given thought and action only to better drive their purpose. Others say they are only the dreams of the gods, or even great men, a shallow reflection of what is real. They are our beliefs and fears, dreams and nightmares made flesh, but the extent to which their reality is shaped by our own fear, awe or disdain, is far from certain.

The Sidhe are ever-changing and free, they can not abide for things to become fixed and regard such things as 'stolen' from them. Maps, written stories and even Iron are anathema to them and they quickly take anger if used against them. The use of such things in the Otherlands is quite literally destructive, causing far greater wounds and even unmaking things there.

The Sidhe are bound by complex rules and obligations called by some 'The Dance'. Promises and bargains are bartered for, as mortal men might with gold.

It is said that they can not break a promise and that they are driven by their nature to act. This unknowable web of vows and servitude is most definitely not safe for the unwary. In the most part they seems to have Celtic values appropriate to the Celtic Paradigm, although their ideas of honour and oath are more complex and tricky than either those of the human Celtic tribes or of the Elder Races. That said there are also Fae creatures and Otherlands of Norse, Saxon and Pictish, roots. Different tribes of Fae may follow quite different customs from each other, and many or most of these may well seem strange, dangerous, or just downright mad, to humans.

6.81 The Winter and Summer Thrones

The Sidhe are tied in many ways to the workings of the world. One such 'responsibility' is the dominion of the Summer and Winter Monarchs. These roles bind the monarchs to strict duties as well as giving them godlike power. Their stewardship of the seasons is both ritually and actually apparent. While the Summer King was captive summer could not happen and without winter's grip to keep things safe Dumnonni was almost washed away. Recently, Morganna, the Winter Queen has died and winter must wait for her to be reborn from an apple seed, eaten by the mother to be.

6.82 The darkness hates.

One other Fae, a powerful force that is worth mentioning here; is Muckle Mary Gyp. Her story is long and terrible, including a time long ago when she was naught but a frightening rumour, whispered of by the Sidhe, then growing as a fearsome enemy of the Free Races, then time trapped under the Oaktree in Culhaven, and two seasons as the Summer Queen, before she was trapped, killed and then freed again. Now she is an elemental force of hate and horror, manifest as darkness. Run for the light for her darkness kills!

6.83 The Otherlands

The Otherlands are magical places that are connected to Dumnonni and each other. They are "other islands" in the mists where a particular nature holds sway. The afterlives of the dead fall into this category as do actual islands such as Tory Island, the Isle of Glass or Hi Brazil. It included places of one nature like the Fonn Isean (bird spirit land) and Oillteil Cladhaich (The deep Burrows). And it includes really wyrd places like Ma Míchlú (the land of Mirrors) where you can see reflections of the past and future and Tir Sanhien (The land of tomorrow) quite literally that. Otherlands can also be found in ancient barrows and hidden secret places. Some of them may be very strange, it has been said that the magic bag belonging to the famed Fae *Ice-Pine-Knife-Bone* contains a complete Otherland, although its exterior resembles nothing so much as a dirty sack.

Travelling to and in the Otherlands is equally as dangerous as travelling in the mists, with the added dangers of the denizens that live there and that time plays tricks on the traveller in some disturbing and often fatal ways. To get there without a guide is impossible excepting in the case of a 'lucky' jump through a fae gate. Such a jump could just as easily be unlucky, and being lost or stranded in the Otherlands is to be really, truly lost.

Fae gates between different Otherlands are many and varied, and probably, no two are alike. Some of them may change their appearance and form.

The Fae gate at Culhaven is a particularly elaborate one in that it has three gates. Although you only fully arrive, in the Otherlands entering the last gate the small areas between the gates are somewhere between places. If a person tries to cross into this area by any way apart from through the gates they are flung deep into the Otherlands.

6.84 Playing a Changeling.

In the past we have allowed people to play a number of Fae character types and those who are still playing them can obviously continue. However, in order to keep the mystery of the fae really mysterious, we have decided to return to the original Dumnonni premise that players could only be changelings.

For reasons, not explained here the Fae have a habit of stealing children from other peoples, before they have been given a name and replacing them with Fae creatures. This practice means that there are folk of Fae blood, whom have been brought up in the mundane. Such folk make good player characters, in that they are strange and magical, but have no knowledge of Fae secrets. Such characters may eventually learn some of the mystery (see Paul's story of one such 'teaching experience'). Such a character would obviously have a mundane background giving them in a sense, dual parentage.

6.9 Degenerate folk

There are several peoples who have fallen from the path of honour and have become corrupt (see the Celtic Paradigm). They have degenerated physically, morally or both. Such folk do not make good player characters because they are outside the norms of society.

It is possible for a person from one of these groups to behave honourably and by so doing redeem themselves, but it is rare and hard. Indeed the Black Fox goblins as a whole seem set on achieving this, but their naivety and general misunderstanding mean that they do not go about it in a clever way.

6.91 The Scotia (Degenerate Celts)

"So you want us to steal the Horn of Pluto. Now that we can do!" Finig - Scotia chief

The Scotia, once an honourable Celtic tribe and descendants of the great Queen Scotia of Milieus, have been tainted by the foulness of blood wyrd. So deep did they fall, that they soon forgot their great ancestry and became vagabonds and thieves. Interbred, dishevelled and with no understanding of honour, the Scotia are brigands that steal what they want and murder carelessly. They are often the pawns of the people who seek to destroy the free races. The worst of them are lead by blood-soaked hagmothers and are 'birthed' full grown as fierce warriors ready to kill at their 'Mother's' command. Until recently they were the servants to Balor, but they changed sides at the battle which saw his death. Some now follow Queen Brae. Some have returned to their rapine ways. But a small number, wanting to better their place in the world, have renounced the blood wyrd on which they had depended, seeking to reclaim their ancestry and bring once again honour to the name Scotia.

6.92 Smerti (Degenerate Pictii)

"Listen to the Beast within"

The Smerti are more animal than men: brutal, direct and true to the worst attributes of whichever Samhlach they are bounded to – for instance, a Dog is vicious and stubborn, but not loyal and a Crow might revel in carrion and death, but not be wise. Each can have a different type of Samhlach, thus a Dog, a Stag and a Crow might run together. They cling together as a tribe, for no other Pictii will tolerate them. Whether they are from the other tribes originally and thrown out or always Smerti, is a secret only the Cruthn know.

They are generally quick to anger and in battle channel their Samhlach to become berserk. Some even change shape to become the beasts they are on the inside.

They follow Rosmerta, a blood-thirsty, dark goddess, but are sometimes driven by the words and prophecies of other Fiosaiche.

6.93 The Corpse Goose Goblins (Degenerate Ancients)

"Dig now. Dig. Dig!"

These diminutive goblinoids are not all they seem. Easily mistaken in appearance for the Black Fox goblins who oftentimes have aided the Free Races, the Corpse Goose are by contrast dark, mysterious and secretive. They say they are no kin of the Black Fox, claiming they are not goblins at all, but the cursed remnants of a magical and powerful ancient race. They now dwell underground and are masters of the wyrd of rock, earth, death and the dragon lines. Their wyrd weavings are all associated with stones of power, wyrd that can be used to curse the living or bind the dying as mindless servitors, warriors and workers. They have no love of other subterranean

races, including the Fae, and are often at war. They fight by cunning: with traps, ambushes, or betrayal, and their many expert archers frequently employ cursed arrows that can bring down the mightiest of warriors. Their wyrd weavers often draw great power in battle from huge stones carried into the field of combat.

For years they were at war with the Free Races, but a strained truce was brokered by Suill Bas, the High Druid of the Corpse Goose. In the final battle against Balor they even aided the Free Races. Since then their druid has been a frequent visitor to Culhaven and has offered his people's aid on several occasions, though it would be hard to find anyone who trusts the Corpse Goose to this day and it is said that the price they ask for their help is one that few would be brave enough to pay.

6.94 The Black Fox Goblins

"I am Klaw and so is he."

These goblins have become infantilised as well as deformed. It is not known who they used to be, though the fact that they are so angry at the suggestion that they might be Fomorians is certainly a clue.

Naive, often scared, anxious to please, easily impressed and quick to anger, the Black Fox goblins are in many ways like young children. They should not be underestimated, however, as even with all that is set against them they strive to be honourable and respected.

They worship their ancestors and, in a very real sense, anyone who impresses them. This 'hero worship' is one of their most noteworthy behaviours. Once they have fixated onto a hero they are likely to follow him around to find out how he behaves. They may take the names of their heroes, try and act like them and even claim to be them, so there are a number of Cascorachs, Bulls and Klaws amongst them. This may appear disrespectful or funny, but in many ways it is tragic.

Often overlooked or underestimated, they are able to find things out that would otherwise be secrets. However, not knowing what is important and what is not can often complicate whatever intelligence they have gathered.

6.95 The Dvergar – Dwarves (Degenerate Norse)

"For this wonder the price is small, just the song of a cat and the silver lining of a rain cloud."

It might be unfair to regard the dwarves as degenerate as it is hard to say whether they were ever more than they now are. They are referred to quite often in Norse myths and we can surmise that they have been such long before entering Dumnonni. Short, bearded and twisted with age they most certainly are, but unlike your 'Tolkien' Dwarves, they are also cunning, greedy and immoral.

They are master smiths and stone crafters. Tales of them often include the making of truly marvellous items of power, like Thor's magic hammer and Frigg's golden hair. And so people are often keen to trade with them for their craft. Yet you should be very wary about any bargain you make, as it is likely to cost far more than you first imagine. For example, they are known to treasure teeth and once offered will take as many as they can from those asleep. They also lust for young women and will take them, either in bargain as slaves or, if they can, catching them unawares.

Their understanding of stone means they have great interest in both the wyrd stones of the Corpse Goose and the stone circles of the Sons of Mil. Some, it is said, love the stones and have given up their avaricious ways to become 'stone herds'. If someone does harm to their charges, a stone herd will react with terrible fury. For example, because of Lorken's blood being used to corrupt the stones, many stone herds fought with the Free Races against the Fomorians. However even these should be treated with caution, as those who do not follow this more peaceful life are wont to pretend to do so to engender trust.

They live underground where they keep their slaves and have huge fire-filled workshops. They do not like to come to the surface too often, as the sun hurts them.

6.96 Armen Av Wyrden (Degenerate Saxons)

"You have the stink of stolen power on you."

Their name meaning arm of Fate, these wild, raggedy Saxons, are almost certainly mad or moon-torn, as the saying goes. They feel the gods are punishing them for some unknown slight, and work desperately to regain their favour. To this end they hunt down magic of all sorts, which they feel has

been stolen from the gods and must be returned to them. Once it is found they will destroy it with great ritual and prejudice – be it a magic item, a sacred place or an overt wyrd user.

Though mad as a box of frogs, they are not without cunning, and are as likely to try theft or murder to get what they seek, as to attempt to take it openly. They are also able to wheedle and cajole in an often convincing display of reason. They will trade for what they want if they need to and will generally follow the rules of hospitality. However, do not forget that they believe they are on a mission from the gods, which may overrule all other considerations.

Amongst their number are 'wyrd sniffers' who can sense wyrd from great distances and will bring the Armen Av Wyrden down upon it like a pack of dogs.

EVENINGS IN THE LONGHOUSE by Roy Smallpage

The battle done, and the suns last rays filtering through the silver birch near the main gate, you peel off the heaviest of your armour, don a nice warm cloak, pick up your drinking horn and stride over to join your clan around a nice warm inviting hearth, or take your place seated in the longhouse attending one of the year's mighty feasts. Dumnonni is and always has been a principally Celtic world. As such the four greatest Celtic feasts are observed. Imbolc, is the coming of spring, customarily held on the first of February, but more usually is observed on the first event of the year in March or April. Beltaine is always the festival in May and at Outlore. Lughnasa or the feast of High Summer, is always observed in June or July, whichever event is nearer the summer equinox of 21st June or the longest day. Lastly, Samhain is the Celtic feast celebrating the New Year. This is the original Halloween, and as such nearly always a time of ghosts and spirits of long dead Dumnonnian Heroes. As with all Celtic time the day begins as soon as the sun sets, not at midnight. Players bring their own food to each feast, and possibly a loaf, or bowl of nuts as a donation to share with their fellow feast-goers. Eventually the need of visiting the midden to empty your bladder comes over you, and you would be well advised to always take a weapon with you. It may be referred to as 'downtime' but the site and your character are still very much time-in! Unknown assassins have been known to lie in wait behind bushes or in ditches nearby.

Evening is absolutely the most important time of any day for me, without question. It is during conversations around a crackling fire, that you learn of what others have done or were trying to achieve while you were fighting. It is your duty, though, to impart your hard-earned knowledge to others. Tell them why you had to go down to the river. Nothing kills a role-playing event quite so quickly as a safely guarded secret, whatever the I.C. reasons. If you do not believe much happened during an event, the chances are it is the PLAYERS who are to blame. At DC events there are always more plot and story lines than you can shake a big stick at! If these 'secrets' are not subsequently disseminated after they have reached the players, you cannot, in all fairness, then blame the refs. Tempting as it may be to sit in your favourite chair or haysack all night, get up and visit other campfires. Join other clans and learn their songs. Form in-character friendships, rivals and even enemies! Share their drinks and maybe their food as well. Do not worry about finding a seat. Characters will be getting up all the time and only the throne of the High King is a reserved seat in Culhaven! While you are at it, ask folk if they have heard the tales that someone just told you, about how the local villagers know of a weapon to slay this great beast that has been killing the White Bear cattle. Get involved in conversations. Do not fear ridicule because your character does not know about this god, or that hero, just join in and enjoy it. We are all heroes seeking knowledge at 'down times' like evening feasts. Whether you are one of the Fae, huddled in a conspiratorial knot, with your fellow members of an elder race, plotting a secret ceremony, or whether you are a member of a clan engaged in furtive whispers, or hushed discussion about plans that must ONLY be heard by your clan. Now is the time when other characters must learn of what you are doing! How this is achieved, is down to you and your qualities as a role player. Maybe you speak in a voice raised just enough so that others outside your group can hear. Maybe you are a blabbermouth and blurt out that of course your clan has the horn of the Connacht, in fact they intend to destroy it on the morrow at the altar in the – oh maybe I shouldn't have told you this? Maybe you explain to other players that although you have been ordered by your chieftan to tell no-one, you at least trust them and want to explain that the blacksmith is fashioning a mighty torc to aid your clan champion in the fight at dawn. Maybe you get drunk and slur out exactly how the Fae intend to humiliate a certain hero for his part in moving the Fae gate. However you do it, you then not only keep that storyline alive for your character, you start it for someone else. You also create potential confrontations or in-character discussions for third parties, and the story lives on. In short, you become a strong contributing character to the event as a whole. A crucial link in the story chain is now unfolding. Yes, maybe you CAN see a character hanging around in the shadows, with his hood up and saying nothing. If his actions make it clear he is spying, or at least trying to listen in, understand your 'character' does not have to actually 'notice' him until after he has maybe gained some information at least? Be generous to other players in this regard. Unknown to you, the character you have just chatted with, maybe already knew half the story, but you just filled in the gaps, and thereby made his event story complete. One thing is for sure, spreading 'secrets' makes for many, many more glorious role-playing moments than everyone just keeping schtum, minding their own business and involving themselves only in their own plot arcs! Now if you will excuse me, I can hear my best friends singing one of my favourite songs out in the guard tower on the main gate, and simply have to tell them what the Fae were saying about the Black Shields just now!

Klaw – Chieftan of the White Bear – Advisor to the High King.

A Fairy story by Paul Armstong

Odd. She had always been a little odd. Some thought she was a lot odd. Other children avoided her, or bullied her. Even her parents, though they looked after her well enough, treated her coldly. One night when she had been quite young her father had come home drunk and he and her mother had argued loudly. It had ended with him shouting that he 'wanted his real child, not the Cuckoo, Not the Changeling.'

When he had stormed off and while her mother wept softly, the word Changeling seared into her heart.

Now a grown woman, she had gotten used to being different. Sometimes she imagined that she could understand the words of birds, or she would become transfixed by the shape of a tree branch and stand still for hours. She also never lied, even when it would mean a beating for her from her father. It was not out of any conscious morality, she just never considered doing it. She was always an outsider, but had found a place at the edge of village life which suited her, herb collecting and simple healing. She was distrusted by most, yet they came to her in need and so did not cast her out. She had become used to her life, settled, until the strange man arrived.

He was tall, wildly handsome and brightly dressed, yet she could not get over the feeling that he was at the same time none of these things.

'Good morning child,' the fellow charmed. 'Would you like to know who you really are?'

They had been walking for some time, although she could not remember the start of the walk, or even agreeing to go with him. A cold shard of doubt, fuelled by the tales of her village, rushed through her. He was clearly *wyrd* and probably one of the *Sidhe*. He would suck out her life, or trick her into marrying a goat, or turn her into a toad. As the panic welled up in her, she braced herself to run from him.

'Stop,' he cried sharply, then continued more gently. 'Stop child, there is much I would show you.'

He reached out his hand and as it touched her arm, the world flashed into a new vision. He was short and grotesque, his clothes still bright, but now ill-fitting and garish. His transformation was but a small part. Birds became winged people, mice drew swords and insects sang suddenly in strange intelligible voices. Every hollow filled with staring eyes and even some of the trees grinned with wild mouths and winked where knots had become eyes. And amidst all this was the Old Fae gate, a long overgrown ancient archway which the villagers superstitiously avoided. But now it shone. Its great stone pillars pulsed with gold, intricately inscribed with swirling symbols, glyphs, runes, and ... was that Ogham ... the language of the Druids ? A sense of childlike love and curiosity pulsed from it with a heart-like beat, and other tides stirred, darker yearnings, like forbidden desires; danger and hunger as well as light and power.

'My name is Rhonnine,' said the creature. 'If you wish it I will show you some of your true heritage. The choice now is yours, if you come with me you may find things that are to your benefit. Yet I will not promise that, nor even that it is safe. You may walk away and continue your half-life; you may even find happiness, of a sort.'

Without hesitation she walked through the gate. Just as with her honesty, it was simply what she had to do.

And the world changed and she was elsewhere.

'Now child, listen to me. Though your life is not in danger, your health is far from secure, I have what promises I can from the Ladies of Winter and Summer that you will be returned by Beltain, but Beltain is not necessarily the year away that you think it to be, The Queen was very careful in her words. You are to become a member of her household, to learn and to watch. Do not, if you know what is good for you, engage in any form of conversation beyond pleasantries and politeness. Is that clear?'

Without waiting for her response Rhonnine continued. 'I will give you this promise. All the binding I place upon you from this moment on, will cease once you jump through the Beltain fires. You must know what it means to make a promise in these lands.

'I wish you to promise me something, I need you to understand an important lesson. Promise me you will not breathe until I let you.'

The moment she agreed, she could not breathe. With pleading eyes she glared at the creature. Had she been tricked? Did he mean her death? All the time he just looked at her, and even as she felt

herself slipping away, she cursed herself for making such a foolish promise.
Rhoninne turned his back on her as though to walk off, leaving her to die, cold and alone ...
'I release you from your foolish promise... you may breathe',
And she could, gulping huge lungfuls. Her terror gradually subsided.
'You will NOT get out of such promises as easily. Do I make myself completely clear?'

Though it had been early spring the other side, here it was deep winter. Somehow this was more than just a winter, it was The Winter. Every snowflake, every hill, tree and rock was perfect, orderly, able to kill, murderously beautiful.
By looking closely she could catch glimpses of creatures hidden in the snow, behind every rock, tree, bush.
Rhonnine turned to her and without smiling said, 'Winter knows you are here, and wishes to meet you without delay.'
Once more he took her hand and together they made a single step. Suddenly the land became darker and they were no longer in the place they had been. The mountains that had appeared many leagues away a moment earlier loomed above them.

High above then a great hall could be seen. Like one the Ard Ri might feast in with his Fianna, but even larger, more ornate and somehow part of the surrounding rock, not apart from it. With another step they were on its threshold. Now a handsome well-dressed fellow once more, Rhonnine turned to her before entering.
'Remember what I have said. Don't eat or drink anything unless freely given, and establish this fact before any acceptance. Remember, do not thank anyone for anything. Yes, express an opinion, clarify, but a thank you implies that you have been given something and that you are grateful.
'You have no power in this place. With no power to protect yourself then you cannot afford to offend anyone. We may not be able to lie, but truth and honesty are rather different. You have been invited by Winter, and are my guest. Knowing what you are – and knowing that you are not entirely Milesian – should give you some immunity. But anyone who is offended when you speak the truth must, by our guesting laws, come after me rather than you. And I can protect myself. Remember, winter is about order and law, even when it does not look like it.
Do you understand what I have said?'
She nodded.
'Good, I want you to remember Child, there are lots of creatures in these lands who are not fond of Milesians - and you are close enough to a Milesian for them to bear you no goodwill. If you step too far out of bounds, they would have you dead first and leave me to seek justice later.'

And with that he stepped through the door. Following him a moment later she woke suddenly in the moss covered hollow of the old gate stones, now as they had always appeared. The dew of the early morning dampened her dress, but she barely noticed. It was a warm spring morning.

The dream of the night before was still bright in her mind. There had been a frail old lady and a terrible glorious queen. Had they been the same person? And what of the handsome Rhonnine, where was he now?

His last words hung, half remembered.

'Well done Sister, the Queen was impressed. Now it begins.'

7. Other important stuff.

Bits what do not fit anywhere else.

7.1 Experience and Fame

In previous versions of the rules we tried many skills and improvements to the three levels of experience: unproven, proven and renowned. However, although we liked the feel of the titles, the game mechanic was clunky so we have stripped it right away. Thus, for the most part, these are just titles of import. Although being famous does affect how powerful you are in some respects, it is more about how much respect you will get from others.

7.11 Becoming Proven

For Warriors

Proven warriors can be relied on and their honour is known. To be proven, a warrior must be acclaimed so, either by their chief, the overall war-leader in a battle or by a bard. The decision to make someone proven should not be based on one action, but rather on an overview of a number of events. The time it takes to become proven depends on how active and conspicuous a person is. Boasting is definitely encouraged. However, decisions should be based on at least three events and no more than seven. If you think you are being overlooked, up your profile. For warriors, being proven has no game mechanical advantages, but is an excuse for the person to be centre stage when they are acclaimed so.

For Wyrd Weavers

A proven wyrd weaver has to have become better attuned to the wyrd, which gives a small game mechanic bonus in the time it takes to restore wyrd. However, it is also an indication of personal power. Becoming a proven wyrd weaver is a ref-led decision and depends largely on how active a player has been. If you are part of a group of wyrd users some formal declaration or ritual is appropriate. As an aside, being declared a Druid is another step above proven, but below renowned. This has no benefits in the game mechanic, but has other obvious advantages, not the least of which is that of being allowed to wear the druid's white, which marks you out above most people (see section 2.6 Druids).

For Smiths and Craftsmen

To become a proven craftsman a person must have produced an apprentice piece (an item of great craftsmanship). The task of making such an item is normally set by a master but can be set by a god, a priest, or another appropriate person. Being proven in a craft has some small benefits in the time it takes to mend items (see 3.1 Armour Repair) and also allows for making a great item (see 3.2 Making Special Stuff). Because craftsmen are also either warriors or wyrd weavers they can progress to proven separately in their chosen discipline. The time taken to become proven is a ref-led decision, but it will be the player's master who finally declares the attainment to all by showing off the apprentice piece.

For Bards

Fame for bards depends largely on the size of the word hoard (see 3.42 Word Hoard), although their reputation as either a wyrd weaver or a warrior is still important to them. It is said that a proven bard need never want for food, drink, or someone to share their bed, but then that may be because the bards themselves have said it. As with craftsmen, becoming proven as a bard is a ref-led decision, though they may also be proven separately as warriors.

7.12 Becoming Renowned

A few characters have performed such great deeds that their fame is sung of in every mead hall in the land. Everyone but the dumbest bumpkin has heard of them and they will be sought out for their skills and wisdom. It is, however, very rare; there are fewer than a dozen living renowned players in the game at present.

Becoming renowned is the same for anyone and it is a ref decision.

There are small game advantages to being renowned:

A renowned warrior can use a Gáe Bolga. Note that it is occasionally possible to learn the use of the Gáe Bolga without becoming renowned. Thus all renowned warriors can use one, but not all users of one are renowned.

A renowned wyrd weaver can recharge the wyrd twice as fast as a proven user.

A renowned craftsman can make truly marvellous objects.

The real impact of being renowned is that your name itself will precede you. A warrior will terrify his enemies, a wyrd weaver will cow his opponents on his reputation alone and a craftsman will be employed by the great and good.

7.2 Downtime.

Dumnonni is a LIVE action system, which means that most important events must happen in game time. However, we do have a relaxed attitude to out-of-game activity. We do not wish to spend time organising out-of-game events for your character, but of course you should feel your character is doing something between events, and these 'doings' will fall roughly into the following categories.

- 1) Characters may just get on with doing whatever they normally do. Their lives are exciting at events. Outside event time they have a default lifestyle. It is up to you to make sure that it does not have a big effect (except for character development for in-game play). This should be the norm for most characters most of the time.
- 2) You may have to deal with an off-stage (out of game-time) situation in a way which does not really change anything but gives some story background for the next event. This could drive your behaviour, either during the event before, when you might get other characters to agree to help you, or at events after the down-time, when you may be able to tell of the results of your deeds. In such cases you should inform the refs of what you are intending to do and probably we will let you decide how it works out. There may be in-game repercussions if what happens sparks an idea in one of the plot writers. This should not be regarded as a hindrance – it isn't an imposed penalty, it is part of the fun of role-play. As one player of ours once said, 'There isn't much point in being a Celtic hero, if there aren't ridiculous difficulties!'
- 3) You might want to do something which could have in-game consequences and therefore need ref arbitration. If you decide to go raiding, for instance, then probably you will come back with extra bling and some new enemies (both cool things in-game). If you manage to talk to important characters off-stage, then we will suggest how you are to be received and it is likely to have in-game consequences. Most of the time, however, if your proposals are reasonable and in the spirit of the game, we will let you get on with it. A good example of this is the case of Meran the Pathelonian, who took to returning the masks of defeated Firbolg to Conn, their king. By so doing he won the respect of the Firbolg and the bardic name "Bringer of Tears".

In general our policy is that if something would be cool to do off-stage, it would be even cooler to do live, so if possible we will engineer it to happen during an event, rather than in downtime. This is especially so when your idea involves other player characters, as well as you. If you think this is the case, speak to us, and we can make magic happen. Please recognise that our time is limited, but speak to us.

A word of caution – although we are a small system with not that many players, we cannot commit to bespoke events for the personal plot of your character. However, Just as with Character plot hooks, if you have a cool idea which incorporates other player characters and npcs and grabs the attention of a plot writer, They may run with it. Sometimes such player-led ideas become major plot-arcs.

7.3 Written Languages, Runes, etc.

For the people of Dumnonni the ever changing world is a sacred mystery. The land is understood by the tales told about its inhabitants, not its geography. This oral tradition is the core of what is Dumnonni and, with each telling, the world itself changes, so maintaining its vitality. Fixing a story is like chaining it down and robbing it of power.

To explain this further, it is important to understand that Dumnonni is not civilised in the way Rome is civilised and tries to control the world. The roads are not straight, the land is not safe and friendly, events are unpredictable, especially when *wyrd* or the gods become involved, and its people do not live passive and ordered lives (see '2. The Celtic Paradigm').

This means that written language is a very dangerous and sacred thing. Those who do not understand this risk angering the Fae, stifling the *wyrd* and corrupting the very land itself. This is one of the reasons why the Romans, who are the only peoples in Dumnonni to keep complex mundane written records (in Latin), find themselves on the receiving end of Celtic anger (see 6.6 Romans and Romano British), though there are many others.

7.31 Latin

As explained above it is dangerous to use Latin or even admit to knowing how to read. For ease of use anything written in English is assumed to be in Latin and should therefore be treated with suspicion and caution.

The Ogam (Tree) Alphabet and Calendar

The Celts do have a sacred written alphabet, which also corresponds to a calendar. For our purposes we have simplified it to fit modern calendar months, so there are 12 consonants which represent the months, (Coll represents the whole of the summer) and 5 vowels which represent holy days. There are also 7 other letters not associated with the calendar, a tree, or any form of significance. We have rearranged the order of the Ogams slightly to make it easier than previous versions of the game.

Ogam		Name	Tree	Month/Day	Significance
Consonants					
	B	Beithe	Birch	January	Glamour/Love
	L	Luis	Rowan	February	Protection
	F	Fearn	Alder	March	Fire
	S	Saille	Willow	April	Female, Death, Water
	H	Huath	Hawthorn	May	Bad luck and cleansing
	N	Nuin	Ash	June	Water and air
	D	Duir	Oak	July	Earth and Air
	T	Tinne	Holly	August	Good Luck
	C	Coll	Hazel	All summer	Wisdom and knowledge
	Q	Ceirt			
	M	Muin	Vine	September	Intoxication, Joy, Madness and control
	G	Gort	Ivy	October	Language and persuasion
	NG	Getal	Reed	November	Mending
	ST/S	Straif			
	R	Ruis	Elder	December	Healing, medicine
Vowels					
	A	Ailm	Silver Fir	Imbolc	Birth, Creation and enchantment
	O	Onn	Gorse Bush	Beltane	Protection from and removal of Magic
	U	Ur	Heather	Lughnasa	Blessing and self-control
	E	Edad	Aspen	Samain	Protection
	I	Idad	Yew	Samain Eve	Death and decay
Others					
	EA	Ebadh			
	OI	Oir			
	UI/W	Uillenn			
	IA	Iphin			
	AE	Emancholl			
			Mistletoe	The sacred tree was too holy to have a name. Its association is with power, magic and destiny.	

The Norse (Saxon) Futhark

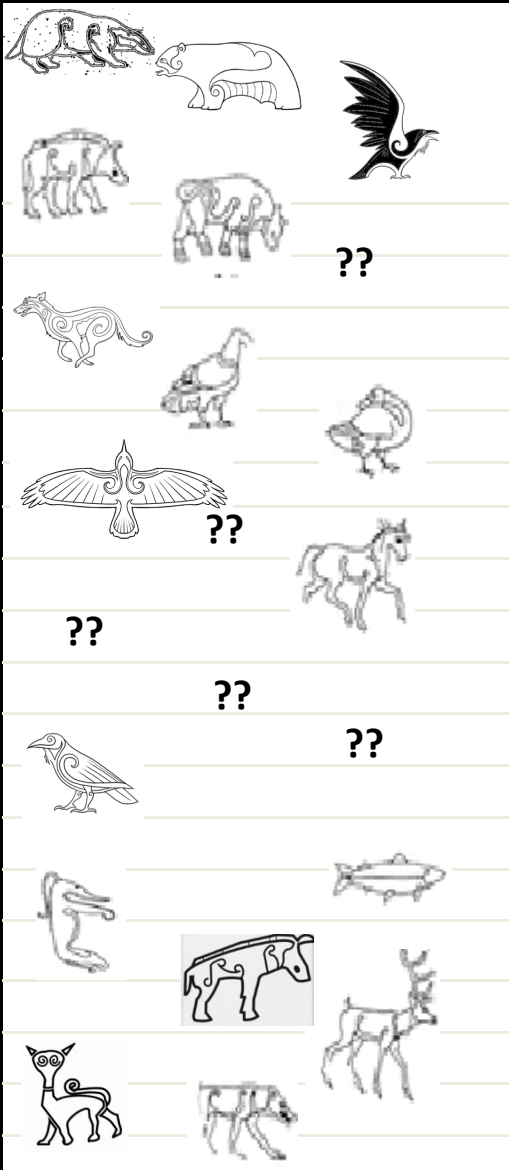
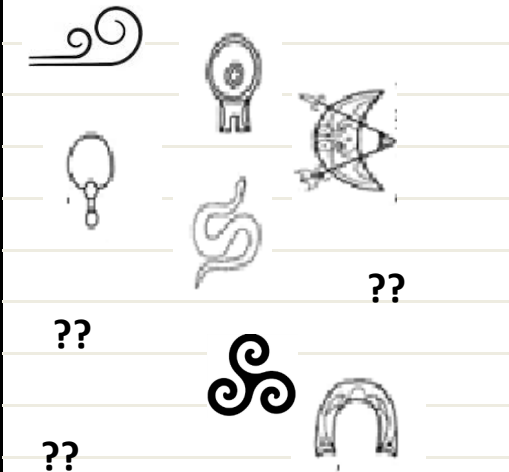
The Norse runes are very magical. Their power was won by Odin when he was hung for nine days and nights from Yggdrasil, the World Tree. They can be used for fortune telling, spell casting and simple writing. They are split into three groups or aettirs (eights) along with the one the blank rune of Odin. The Saxons have a slightly altered Futhark here shown in Brackets where it differs from the Norse. There are also eight more Runes in the Saxon Set here erroneously described as Cynric's Aettir.

Frey's Aettir		Name	Significance
	F	Fehu (Feo)	Possessions (Goods, cattle, etc.)
	U	Urus (Ur)	Strength
	Th	Thurisas (Thorn)	Gateway
	A	Ansus (Os)	Signals, messages, signs of the gods
	R	Raidho (Rad)	Communication, journeys, Skalds
	K	Kenas (Ken)	Opening, touch
	G	Gebo (Geofu)	Partnership, gifts offering to the gods
	W	Wonjo (wynn)	Joy
Hagall's Aettir			
	H	Hagalas (Haggall)	Disruption, bad weather, natures rage
	N	Nausthis (Nied)	Constraint, need, necessity, hardship, sorrow
	I	Isa (is)	Standstill, ice, cold
	J	Jera (Jara)	Harvest, bounty
	P	Perthro (Pertra)	Initiation, mystery, secrets
	EO	Eihwas (Yr)	Defence, bows
	Y	Algis (eolh)	Protection
	S	Sowilo (Sigel)	Wholeness, understanding
Tyr's Aettir			
	T	Tiwas (Tir)	The warrior, victory in battle
	B	Berkano (Beroc)	Growth, new life, fertility
	E	Ehwas (Eoh)	Movement
	M	Mannas (Mann)	The self, man
	L	Lagas (Lagu)	Flow, water, the sea
	Q	Ingwas (Ing)	Fertility, creation
	D	Dagwas (Daeg)	Breakthrough, prosperity, fruitfulness
	O	Othala (Otael)	Separation, loss of possessions
Blank		Odin	Destiny

Cynric's Aettir		Name	Significance
	A Long	AC	Food, Consumption (as in using something up), Hunger
	Y	Yr	Illusion, Glamour, Dishonesty
	Io	Ion	The Serpent, Poison, Lies
	Ea	Ear	Dead, Undead
	Qu	Cweorp	Fire, Destruction, Burnt is Cclean
	K	Calk	Empty Cup, Hollow, Lost
	St	Stan	Stone, Cold, Heavy, Unmovable
	G Hard	Gar	Disease, Hard Choices

The Pictii Samhladh and Ysbryd Glyphs

The Pictii can draw the magic of the spirits into a thing or person by drawing a representation of it. Such glyphs can be carved into wood or stone, and can also be painted on with woad, or even blood. Each had special resonance and it is possible to draw a quite complex picture with more than one glyph in order to create the desired effect.

Animal Samhladh	Name	Significance
	Badger	Building, sanctuary, ferocity
	Bear	Strength
	Blackbird	Flight, song, travel
	Boar	Stubbornness, fortitude
	Bull	Fecundity, stamina
	Crow	Awareness, intrigue
	Dog	Cooperation, hunting
	Eagle	Foresight, pride
	Goose	Wisdom, temperament
	Hawk	Sharpness, speed
	Hare	Speed, agility
	Horse	Travel, the Otherlands
	Osprey	Clarity, accuracy
	Otter	Water, happiness
	Ram	Argument, attack
	Raven	Wisdom, death
Tree Samhladh: These have the same meanings as the Ogam.		
Other Samhladh		
	Wind	
	The Sun	
	The Moon	
	Star	
	River	
	Mountain	
	Fire	
	The Sea	
	Door	
	Ice	

7.4 Economy

It is an honour to us to be hospitable, and the greater our generosity the greater will be our renown, and our fame, and our glory.

King Arthur, in the tale of Culhwch and Olwen

The economy of Dumnonni Chronicles is not based on monetary trade, the buying and selling of goods and services that is the basis of modern society (although such transactions may sometimes occur). Items of value are present and are constantly exchanged — it is the reasons for doing so that are important. Generosity is one of the chief virtues of Celtic (and Norse or Saxon) society; the display of wealth and the giving of gifts is an important means of establishing a hero's reputation.

Inherent to this attitude is the idea that any exchange must be two-way – for example, warrior who are healed would be expected to give something in return to the healer, the quantity depending upon their personal wealth and generosity. Likewise, a smith might expect payment of some sort for repairing a warrior's armour. Even a minor 'gift' from one of the common folk — the bringing of news or building of a fire, for example — should be repaid; it would be dishonourable for a hero to be in debt to a commoner. It is particularly wise to be generous to bards, as it should ensure that they speak highly of you and your deeds. This is regarded as a perfectly normal interaction and there is no dishonour in 'buying' a bard's praises (although it helps if they bear at least some relation to reality).

Also expected would be an exchange of gifts to accompany major social and political interactions — chieftains and lords encountering each other will often hand over valuable items. To be generous, both to one's friends and one's enemies, demonstrates a hero's power and honour. A lord should also be generous to his followers, rewarding them for their good service; however, should a warrior be fortunate enough to come into wealth it is only fit and proper to hand over a good proportion of it to his lord.

The handing over of valuable gifts is also seen as a perfectly honourable solution to a dispute, however serious the subject of the feud might be. The payment of a fine in treasure to the relatives of someone believed to have been murdered is a long-standing cultural tradition (known as weregild by the Saxons and Norse). People might choose to pay that fine so as to end the dispute, even if they do not feel they were in the wrong. Indeed, they might be ordered to do so by their lord in order to end the conflict. (Note that the family and people of the dead are bound to end any feud upon the making of the payment.) In these cases the size of the payment depends upon the importance of the victim. For example, Aelsca of the Brigante was required by his queen Cartimandua to pay a helmet of treasure to the relatives of a man he killed, even though he believed him to be a usurper to the throne of the Brigante — the queen preferred to have the matter finished. Other disputes, be they over land, cattle, personal slights or injuries, can all be settled by payment, if both parties agree. (As with weregild, a lord might instruct his followers to take such a course so as to end a conflict; the lord might even put up the payment himself.)

The level of reparation appropriate in any particular case is variable. The injured party might make a particular demand, the supposedly guilty party could choose to make an offer, or a lord might order his followers to offer or accept a specific payment. If you are guilty you may actually enhance your honour by making a generous offer, and if the offended party rejects a reasonable offer it may well be seen as a dishonourable act. In the case of disputes over compensation, the druids are the final arbiters, although for a case to reach the level of haggling is in itself somewhat dishonourable.

Those who cannot afford to give gifts can offer their service instead — a poverty-stricken warrior might swear to aid a healer or smith who had helped him. Generosity in this case is also important — hedging around the promise with conditions, for instance "I'll help you as long as it's not too dangerous and doesn't upset my mum", is a form of meanness and dishonourable. Impoverished heroes would be best advised to find themselves a wealthy and generous lord who can settle such debts for them.

What is important about this economy, in the context of playing DC, is the role-playing opportunities it encourages along with further immersion in the culture of the heroic-mythological setting. As the astute reader will have realised, it is 'broken' as a functioning system as wealth will tend to accumulate in the hands of those characters who have clear services to offer, such as bards, healers

and smiths. The solution is simple: the players of these characters hand in the majority of their wealth to the referees during time out at the end, or beginning, of an event. This simulates such costs as tools, fuel, herbs, upkeep of shrines, everyday living and such, but the complexity of actually running a 'real' economy is considerable for little return in terms of gaming fun. The people at the top of the chain, lords who should have steady income streams from raiding, farming etc, will also not be served well by this system, so we endeavour to top them up from the treasure returned by those who have accumulated it. However, if you want to appear a properly rich lord try to bring some bling that you do not mind giving away.

Wealth can take the form of coins, glass beads, jewellery, hack silver, cloaks, rare food and drinks, weapons and armour etc. Note that the value of these items is enhanced if they were themselves gifts from a renowned person or if they have been used extensively by the gift-giver — an interesting story to make the point is always welcome. There is no restriction on players bringing whatever items they wish as the purpose of the economy is to encourage role-playing in the alien culture of DC. If you wish to play someone who is wealthy and has plenty of valuables to flash around, that is fine; just as good as wanting to be someone who is poor and trying to get richer. In fact, the cultural expectation of generosity serves in many ways to even out imbalances of wealth — if a warrior with bags of wealth goes to a smith to get his armour repaired he would be expected to gift far more than an impoverished warrior.

The organisers will also introduce valuables into the game world and create plot lines in which they might be significant. The more bling you bring to events the better, so raid the charity shops and bring a hoard. The only word of caution is that, just as with our kit, we want any riches to fit the look. So if you have any doubts about it show your stash to a ref first. DC may also be able to buy certain items (e.g.: replica coins and beads) at wholesale prices so if you intend to purchase these it may be worth going through us.

Another possibility is to have items that you own out of character given to you in character. Thus your lord could give you your splendid helm or sword as a gift for great deeds. You could have the local smith "make" your new chain shirt for you. Or you could even give it to the refs at the beginning of the weekend and get it gifted to you at an appropriate time during play.

For many days the feast of king Lovernius was served continuously to all who would enter. Finally when the celebration had come to an end, a poet arrived too late for the feast. He composed a song for the king, praising his greatness and lamenting his own late arrival. Lovernius was so pleased with this poem that he called for a bag of gold and tossed it to the poet as he ran beside his chariot. The bard picked up the bag and sang a new song, proclaiming that even his chariot-tracks gave gold and benefits to his people.

Athenaeus, concerning the Celts

Hrothgar gave Beowulf an embroidered banner of gold, a helmet and a hauberk, in reward for his victory. Many saw the jewel-studded sword of honour presented to the hero... the gifts were so costly that in accepting them he need feel no shame... Few men have presented four such treasures of gold over a banqueting table with so much goodwill... In addition Hrothgar ordered eight horses with golden bridles to be led... inside the hall. Upon one was a saddle cunningly inlaid with jewels. This was the king's war-saddle, which Hrothgar used when he went out to battle... The king of the Danes now delivered the horses and weapons into the keeping of Beowulf, and told him to use them well. Thus the renowned prince... repaid Beowulf for his combat with Grendel in horses and gold, with a generosity of which every honest man must approve.

Beowulf

Then the healer woman took a pair of pincers and tried to pull out the iron arrowhead, but it was stuck and would not budge. Also it showed but little, the wound having swollen. Then Thormoth said: "You cut in, to reach the arrowhead, so that I can take hold of it with the pincers and pluck it out". Then Thormoth took a gold ring off his arm and gave it to the healer woman, telling her to do with it as she pleased: "It came from a noble hand," he said, "King Olaf gave me the ring this morning." Thereupon he took the pincers and pulled out the arrow. It had barbs on it and there were fibres of

his heart in it, some red and some white, and when he saw that he said: "Well has the king fed us. I am still fat about the roots of my heart". Thereupon he leaned back and was dead.

Snorri Sturluson's account of the Battle of Stiklastathir

Matholwch of Ireland... was told of the maiming of his horses [in Bran the Blessed's stables]... thereupon he left for his ships... Bran said "make known to him that he shall have a sound horse for each one of those spoiled. And along with that, as an atonement to him, he shall have a staff of silver, that shall be as thick as his little finger, and as tall as himself, and a plate of gold as broad as his face. And make known to him... that it was against my will that it was done..."

The messengers went after Matholwch, and they reported those words to him... He took counsel. The counsel they thought of was: If they should reject that, they were more likely to get greater shame than get a greater reparation. And he resolved to accept it. And they came to the court in peace.

The tale of Branwen, daughter of Llyr

7.5 Gods and Festivals

7.51 The Celtic Pantheon

The gods worshipped by the Celtic peoples of the Dumnonni Chronicles are many and varied; only those currently most prominent are listed below - over time, other deities may come to the fore. There are dozens more either worshipped by individual tribes or associated with particular features of the landscape, especially rivers. Historically, records of nearly 400 different gods have survived, mostly in the form of inscriptions.

These gods appreciate being treated with respect in the form of ritual and sacrifice. The nature of the sacrifice varies depending upon how bloodthirsty the deity is - giving up precious goods is often acceptable. They may sometimes intervene for the benefit of those who follow them but are just as likely to demand tasks from their worshippers or be entirely deaf to them. On occasion they choose to appear in the realm of the living - a perilous time for mortals. It has been known for them to manifest themselves within one of their worshippers, a great honour that is not without risk.

The deities of the Celtic pantheon tend to have quite wide and varied spheres of influence that often overlap with other gods. Amongst the leading male gods their skill in all fields - war, crafts, culture - represents an impossible ideal for noble warriors to aspire to.

Goddesses are often arranged into a three-part division of 'Maiden, Mother, Crone'. The Maiden embodies youth, beauty, innocence and enchantment, the Mother fertility, power and protection, the Crone wisdom, endings and death. One goddess may to represent all three aspects or three individual goddesses might fulfil the different roles..

Note that the Tuatha would consider most of these deities to be their ancestors; this does not gain them any especial favours from the gods who seem to prefer worshipful mortals to distant relatives.

7.511 Greater gods

The Morrigan - the great queen, raven of battle

Goddess of war, battle and frenzy. She also has powers of healing and shape shifting. She delights in inciting conflict and feasts upon the slaughter.

The Dagda - the good god, all father, lord of great knowledge.

An omni-competent god - 'good' describes his talents, not his morality. His club is so vast that dragging it across the ground leaves a furrow like a boundary ditch but he also has a cauldron of fertility and plenty. At times he is foolish, greedy and lecherous - qualities that endear him to mortals.

Lugh (loo) - the long-handed, master of many arts (also Lugos and Lleu Llaw Gyffes).

Another god of many talents - youthful, handsome and shining brightly. He wields a spear in battle, hence 'long-handed'. He is also associated with the growing of crops and his holy day of Lughnasa (see below) celebrates the ripening of grain.

Goibniu (gov-noo) - the smith (also Gofannon) -

As his name implies, the god of smithcraft - particularly the making of weapons and armour. He fights on occasion and is also famed for his skill as a brewer.

Cernunnos - the horned one

The lord of nature, god of wild beasts and plants. He is depicted as a man with stag's antlers, generally wearing or carrying a sacred torque. Those who hunt should show him and his children due respect.

Brigit – the exalted one (also Brigantia)

Goddess of fertility, agriculture, healing, poetry, fire and smithcraft. Her holy day is Imbolc (see below) and celebrates the beginning of Spring. As Brigantia she is the patroness of the Brigantes, a powerful tribe who follow female rulers.

Manannan mac Llyr (also Manawydan fab Llyr)

A god of the sea and rivers; he is also a traveller, trickster and wielder of shape-shifting and illusory wyrd. Often aids mortals, generally as a teacher and adviser. His crane-skin bag, containing wondrous treasures, is famed and much sought after.

Belenos – bright shining one (also Bel and Beli Mawr)

A god of the sun and healing springs. His holy day is Beltain (see below) when the fires must be danced around sunwise. As Beli Mawr he is believed to be the ancestor of many tribes – the Black Shields for example.

Danu

An ancient goddess generally seen as the mother of all gods and often associated with rivers (hence Danube, Don, Dneiper etc). Much neglected by Milesians, she is particularly important to the Tuatha De Danann who see her as the mother of their whole people.

7.512 Lesser gods

Arawn

A lord of the underworld, owner of a magical cauldron and pack of hounds. Hardly a welcome god but to be respected as a guide and keeper of the spirits of the death. He has been known to swap places with mortals for a time.

Taranis – the thunderer

A god of storms and thunder also associated with wheels and chariots.

Diancecht – swift power, sage of leechcraft

Healing and herbs are the realm of this deity – but this does not always make him gentle and benevolent. When his son proved to be a better healer he slew him out of jealousy, and when his daughter started to arrange all healing herbs according to their properties he destroyed her efforts.

Epona – the divine horse (also Macha and Rhiannon)

A horse goddess associated with the power and speed of that animal as well as the female contribution to agriculture. As Macha she was forced to race whilst pregnant by an arrogant king – she subsequently miscarried and cursed his people as a result.

Ogma – honey tongued (also Ogmios)

A god of poetry and eloquence; the inventor of the ogham alphabet. Also famed as a champion and for great physical strength.

Creidhne and Luchta – artisan and wright

Brothers of Goibniu (see above) they work in precious metals and wood respectively, delighting especially in making and decorating jewellery, weapons and armour.

Fianait – the deer

A goddess of the forests and the beasts within them – more detached from mortals than Cernunnos and unwilling to accept their incursions into her realm.

Mabon – the divine son (also Maponos)

Associated with youthfulness, poetry, song and hunting. He is sometimes a seducer of mortal women, bringing down curses on those who reject him and their lovers.

7.513 Enemies

These deities are worshipped by the enemies of Culhaven and, as such, are seen as evil by them – their followers clearly would not agree. Little is known of their true nature but all are associated with violence and destruction.

Crom Cruach – the bloody-crooked one, the lord of the mound.

Known to demand heavy sacrifice – the first-born children and animals – in return for good harvests; a strange combination of death and fertility. Although few who do not worship him would admit it, his sacred festival is Samhain (see below).

Net - The war god of the Fomorians.

Associated with violence and ruin. He is a grandfather of Balor (see below) but also, at times, consort to the Morrigan.

Domnu

The mother goddess of all the Fomorians. Despite her evil reputation some people of other races worship her, notably the Tuatha de Domnu.

Balor – the baleful eye

The foremost leader of the Fomorians, the gaze of his dreadful eye is capable of destroying armies. Also twice slain – firstly by Lugh at Moytura and lately by the high king Cascorach outside Culhaven – his cult remains strong, led by fish-headed priests. His severed head and other parts of his body are rumoured to be powerful relics.

The Callach – the sea hag, the noble crone

As this goddess' names indicate, what she represents varies depending upon one's point of view. To her enemies she is associated with tempestuous seas, violent storms and the deadly cold of winter; to her followers she is their protector from the ill effects of winter. In recent times she was allied with Balor.

7.514 Festivals

The four main festivals of the Celtic year fall on the cross-quarter days – spaced in between the solstices and equinoxes. They are associated with various aspects of the agricultural and sacred calendar, which may stall if the correct rituals are not carried out at the appropriate time. Fires, feasting and contests are carried out at all these festivals, with differing emphasis at each one.

Note that these festivals generally take place on the first day of the months indicated but for the purposes of Dumnonni Chronicles may be shifted to the nearest event.

Imbolc (i-molk - February)

This festival marks the first stirrings of warmer weather as the days become longer and ewes fall pregnant with spring lambs. In her role as a fertility goddess this day is particularly sacred to Brigit. She is said to often be present on the night before Imbolc and may bless bandages left out for her. The Callach (see above) also ventures out on this day. If the weather is good that is a sign she wishes to collect plenty of firewood for poor weather in the rest of the year. Other forms of divination and watching for omens are advisable at this time. Any fires lit represent the growing warmth of the sun and the promise of better times to come.

Beltaine (May)

The most important festival of the calendar, marking as it does the end of the dark half of the year and the beginning of the light half. It is a good time for new beginnings – alliances, marriages, campaigns etc. The sun god Bel is remembered at this time as the sun starts to reach its full strength. Great fires are lit at this time – they should be danced around in a sunwise direction, and leapt over for luck and fortune. Great games and contests are held at Culhaven at Beltaine; visiting peoples are expected to bring competitions and offer prizes. A druid known as the Knotty manifests himself to preside over the occasion.

Lughnasadh (loo-nas-a - August)

A festival marking the ripening of crops, apparently first declared by Lugh in memorial of his foster mother who died after clearing all of Ireland for agriculture. As well as the usual fires and feasting it is often marked by sacred combats between champions representing Lugh and famine or blight. Sacrifices of food are also made to ensure the success of the harvest.

Samhain (sow-in - November)

The end of the old year and the beginning of the new; also the boundary between the light and dark halves of the year. At this time the veil between the mortal world and the otherworlds is at its thinnest, having many consequences for Samhain night. It is a good time for ovates to contact the dead, being able to call even unwilling spirits to them. Many of those who have passed on chose to wander on this night, some are benevolent but others may be hungry for the warmth and vitality of the living. Also, many otherworldly beings may visit the mortal realm at this time – sidhe from their mounds as well as monstrous animals and beasts. Even great heroes may be defeated and lost if they dare to venture out on Samhain night – better perhaps to stay within well-lit halls and ignore the world outside.

7.52 The Norse Pantheon

The Norse gods are somewhat more organised than those of the Celts – most of them have much clearer roles and they are more hierarchical with Odin sitting firmly at their head. However, they are also bound by fate and forever prepare for the final battle of Ragnarok when the gods will face the giants and their monstrous allies.

Worship amongst the Norse is led by a godi (go-thee) who may be a wielder of the *wyrd* but is just as likely to be a high-ranking warrior. Tales of the gods and their exploits are spread by skalds (known as scopos amongst the Saxons). The various Teutonic groups follow a very similar set of gods but each tribe tends to elevate one or two deities above all others.

Apart from carrying out the correct rituals and sacrifices the Norse gods are keen to see that their followers live well according to their standards of bravery and honour. However, it is a point for debate whether displaying cunning and trickery to achieve victory may be as important as more noble values – particularly when dealing with foreigners or dishonourable opponents.

The gods do on occasion involve themselves in the affairs of mortals, sometimes to aid them but often to trick or use them in some way. In recent years tales have been told of the Norse gods taking mortal form and spending some time in Dumnonni, even involving themselves in the war between Culhaven and Balor.

7.521 Greater gods

Note that most of them have many names, in the case of Odin over 200 – learning them is part of the skald's art (Saxon equivalents are in brackets)

Odin – All Father (Woden, Wotan)

The undisputed leader of the gods – associated with battle, victory, lordship, wisdom, prophecy, poetry and magic. He gathers the souls of the heroic dead in Valhalla in preparation for the final battle. He sacrificed one eye in return for knowledge and hung himself for nine days, impaled on a spear, in order to gain the magical runes. Noble warriors and skalds in particular worship him.

Frigg – The Beloved (Nerthus)

The leading goddess, her realms are, fertility, plenty, motherhood and the household. Through her nine handmaidens she is a healer; also, she has great knowledge but tends to keep it to herself. She is by no means passive in her role – when her husband Odin is absent his brothers may not take up his rule unless they consort with Frigg. Like the goddess, it is not unusual for Norse women to rule within the home.

Freyja – The Lady (Freja)

As important a goddess as Frigg to many, she is associated with beauty, love and wealth but also war and lust. Furthermore, she is a mistress of shape-shifting and magic, known as *seithr* and regarded as a feminine practise by the Norse. She collects half the souls of the heroic dead in her hall at Folkvang and, when angry, her rage shakes the whole realm of the gods.

Thor – The Thunderer (Thunor, Donar)

Amongst many Norse peoples Thor is the most popular deity. His rule over turbulent storms matches his love of fighting and unrivalled strength. He can be gluttonous and slow on the uptake, which perhaps explains why he is most revered by churls – freefolk between slaves and nobility in society. Such is his bluff honesty that he is regarded as the overseer of oaths – they are often sworn on an object associated with Thor, and his temples often hold a gold arm ring for the purpose.

Tyr – The Maimed God (Tiwaz)

A god for warriors, famed for his sword skills, shrewdness and, above all, bravery. He sacrificed his right hand in order to imprison the monstrous wolf Fenrir and subsequently learned to fight even more keenly with his left.

7.522 Lesser gods

Frey – The Lord (Frao, Ingwe)

This god was defeated by Odin and now remains faithful to him. He is associated with virility, prosperity, fair weather and fertility. He rules over the Ljosalfar (light elves) who, it is said, have occasionally been seen in Dumnonni.

Heimdall – The Illuminator

The watchman of the gods, a role to which his preternatural senses make him eminently suited. When he does travel he is not above supplying mortals with advice, and children, supposedly giving rise to the different classes in society.

Baldur – The Shining One (Baldag)

Odin's most beloved son, he is known for his beauty, good nature and sound judgement. Clearly such a virtuous deity could not last and it is fated that Loki (see below) will bring about his death and ultimately the twilight of the gods.

Njord – The Powerful (Njorth)

An old god, father to both Frey and Freyja, he presides over the sea and winds. Therefore it is sailors, merchants and fishermen who turn to him. His wife chose him having seen only his feet, although it has been said he fathered his children with his own sister.

Idun – The Ever Young (Ideona, Eostre)

The goddess of spring, youth and fruitfulness. Her apples give eternal life and vigour to the gods.

Volund – The Brave (Weyland)

Not quite a god but a hero to whom the Norse turn where matters of smithcraft are concerned. So matchless was his work a jealous king had him hamstrung to prevent him escaping to serve anyone else but Volund took a terrible revenge and made his escape. Proud indeed is the warrior who can claim to carry a sword forged by Volund himself.

7.523 Enemies

Loki – The Ender

Trickster, shape-shifter, father of monsters, foul-mouthed liar and schemer; Loki is nonetheless accepted by the other gods, even taken as a blood brother by Odin – who has more in common with him than the All Father's followers would like to admit. Many mortals also have admiration for Loki, for he gave them fire and the cunning and wits to survive and even triumph against the odds – and does he not use his skills to save the gods from the problems he causes for them? However, he is fated to betray his allies – bringing about the death of Baldur, insulting all the gods in the most vicious terms, and siding against them in the final battle. It is said that Loki even

fathered monstrous offspring with a mortal woman in Culhaven, and brought much woe upon her people and those of Dumnonni by doing so.

Hel – The Grave (Helja)

The daughter of Loki, this grim goddess represents decay, sterility, suffering and dishonour. She rules over Niflheim (Mist home) – the cold and dank realm of torment that is the afterlife for those who fail to die a heroic and honourable death and will join the ranks of the gods' enemies at the final battle. Some say that the half-beautiful, half-rotten goddess has been seen in the realms of Dumnonni and that some mortals have entered into pacts with her.

7.623 Festivals

These festivals take place on the solar equinoxes and solstices in the months indicated. This may be adjusted to fit with the timing of Dumnonni Chronicles events. They are generally accompanied by sacrifice (blot) – usually of animals and precious goods – and the consumption of the animals' flesh at a feast to which the gods are thought to attend. Any godi present or the highest-ranking lord would conduct the necessary rituals; appeals are made to the relevant gods both to bless the all-important annual cycle of agriculture and any tasks, journeys or campaigns the participants might be setting out on.

Ostara (March)

As a spring festival this is dedicated to Idun, with her youthful promise of rebirth and fruitfulness. Warriors would also appeal to Odin to favour their military exploits in the summer months.

Midsummer (June)

Frey is appealed to at this time – to bless the ripening crops and provide suitable weather for the practice of war. It is also when freemen gather at assemblies known as things or moots to settle disputes amongst themselves.

Ingathering (September)

With the gathering of harvest, Frigga is most important to this festival; in addition, thanks may be made to Odin for any victories that have been achieved.

Yule (December)

In the depths of winter, all the gods are appealed to in order to encourage the return of light and warmth. If wealthy enough, mortals sacrifice a boar (Frey's favoured animal) and display its head at the feast. More than will admit it will also appeal to Loki, thanking him for heat-giving fire and the cunning to survive the harsh winter by whatever means necessary.

Dumnonni Kit Ethos - a guide to smuggling yourself into the land of the Dumnonni.

(Mark Mathews)

Someone once told me that the key to creating and assembling a really good set of live role play costume and props for a character was to treat it as a disguise, the question being; How can I best disguise myself as the person I am trying to portray within the place they live? Think of yourself as a spy who needs to submerge into foreign surroundings by dressing as suitably as possible and carrying all the tools and equipment that represent the role to be played. This set of clothes and equipment is often collectively referred to as your kit. As stated in the look and feel section in the foreword, and emphasised throughout the guide, we have a clear vision of how people should look. A quick read of the guide below and a look at our web site's gallery will set you on the right track. (See also our Right/Wrong sketches at the back of this book.)

Forethought and attention to detail will go a long way here and contrary to what some might tell you it does not necessarily have to cost a fortune.

Starting out.

Crew need not worry about kit to begin with as we can outfit them but we expect that after a couple of events they should start outfitting themselves with the basics and eventually achieve the minimum kit standard themselves, The more kit crew bring for themselves the more there is to go around to look cool in and be warm when its cold.

Players should meet the minimum kit standard before playing though odd bits of kit can be lent out by arrangement.

Dumnonni Refs will always be happy to guide you in costuming yourself appropriately.

Think first of materials. We want materials that are or closely resemble the materials of the time, woolcloth, leather, fur and plain woven fabrics; fun-fur, leatherette and polyester will be burned. Then read about and (even better) look at illustrations or reconstructions of the things you want to make or buy, choose with care what most closely resembles the culture and period you wish to represent and then allow a little art to the outcome, adding things that, although they might not technically be period-correct, do look in keeping and add to the kit as a whole.

One important consideration is that of colour. In productions such as Band of Brothers and other films where a tone needs to be set the visuals are run through a process in post-production that bleaches out some of the colour and heightens others to obtain a visual theme that is reminiscent of the images of that time to help us in our immersion. It works well.

At Dumnonni Chronicles we try to keep to a palette of muted natural shades (particularly brown). This can then be accented by the odd flash of colour or pattern on cherished items. Try to avoid anything too shiny but instead find a matt or textured alternative. Dominant colours such as black or red always look wrong and shiny black leather just looks too modern and so is not accepted. Adhering to these standards aids greatly in maintaining an ancient, hand-crafted feel, even if not entirely historically accurate. We are after all in the business of re-enacting mythology, not history.

In aiming for a historic look while accentuating the stylistic elements that strike us as looking good in our modern age we create a sort of parody but hope that, like all good parody, it is an acknowledgement of appreciation of that which we emulate.

If the look and feel seems right then it is.

Minimum requirement.

The minimum we require from a player, and the standard crew should aspire to is the standard kit:-

Trousers (woolcloth, loose)

Tunic (woolcloth, sleeved, hem just above the knee for best simple look)

Belt (Plain leather with a plain non-modern looking buckle)

Boots (plain leather boots without modern markings)

For first-time crew, the only thing you really need kitwise is boots (as above) and we can provide the rest, but regular crew tend to build up a small wardrobe of their own as its nice to have warm clean kit to put on that doesn't smell of someone else's armpits. and the more you bring yourself the more club kit there is to go around.

If you play then we do expect you to make an effort within your budget. Most basic bought items can be manufactured at home with a little effort and in fact the best kits have usually been 'punked together' from a mixture of things both bought and made.

Players will of course need their own latex weapons but crew can draw weapons from the club stash.

The next bits of kit to consider getting are:

Woolcloth cloak with a penannular brooch (rectangular, keeps you warm at night)

Cloth undershirt (because woolcloth can be itchy)

Replica boots. Viking boots are getting cheaper, look the part and are practical.

Never-ending Story.

Collecting your kit is almost a hobby in itself. Soon you will realise that there is always a fur-lined hood on a leather yoke that you need to make, or another sheathed dagger that needs buying for your belt, or you really need those pendants and horn beads to dress up that bit of leather armor you had someone make for you.

Welcome to costume dependency!

8. Crewing

One of the things Dumnonni prides itself on is the number and quality of crew we attract. Without these wonderful people it would not matter how good the kit was, how great the site looked, or how well the events were written.

We regularly get 40 or more crew for an event and have at times had over a hundred. This means we can do the truly epic 'cast of thousands' stuff. In combat particularly this has a huge impact, as it is our belief that it is cooler, more cinematic and way more fun to kill hoards of enemies with only few blows, than to face a few tough nuts who have to be pounded on to make a battle more than a skirmish. The crew combat rules are designed to provide this (see 4.5 Crew Combat Rules). Just remember:

Dumnonni is not a sport.

The fights are not intended to be fair; the joy of crewing is not winning, but adding to the fun of the players (who pay real money for the privilege). You may think this point over-laboured, but it could otherwise be possible to misunderstand the point of the combat rules. A good way to think of it is as being an extra in an epic movie –looking fierce and dying dramatically is what counts. Indeed, for all the interactions in the game, you are there to challenge the players, but with the intention of making them and their part in the epic look good.

People who crew Dumnonni, indeed all larp, get pleasure out of different things and as long as you like doing at least one of the following you are going to have fun.

Fighting: There is an awful lot of this at most events and many crew come just for this. You should think of yourself as a stuntman out to die dramatically. The better you get at it and making the players look good, the more kudos you will earn from crew and player alike.

Acting: As well as the acting that goes into being a fearsome foe, there is also an opportunity to do one of the numerous talking roles (almost never involving hammy Irish accents) that interact directly with the players. If you like doing improvisational drama then this could be for you.

Backstage: in order to make it work well there are a lot of jobs which happen out of sight of the players. These include such things as organising kit for monsters, make-up, helping roadie kit about and general organisational stuff. This is the most overlooked part of crewing and one which can be much fun. It is also the crew role that is likely to keep the refs happiest and therefore earn you ref kudos (which is far more valuable than your run-of-the-mill kudos).

8.1 How We Like to Do Things

While we don't want to work you ragged, please do give as much effort as you are able, as the more crew are involved the more fun everyone has.

Throughout the day there will be time to kick back and eat, socialise and generally chill. When we need you, there will be a crew call and you should come to find out what the fun is. In particular, we intend to have a crew brief at 10am and 6pm each day, though the Friday night brief is often later by default.

Because it is important to control the pacing for the players, please don't go up to the fort unless you have been put in by one of ref team. Don't wait to be asked, offer your services; there are often small roles to be played that involve a trip to the fort.

8.2 Things Not to Do

Two things in particular have caused contention in the past and so, rather than beat around the bush, they are mentioned here for your edification.

Intoxication: We are not puritans, but over-indulgence has, in the past, caused people to perform under par. This has included drunken people who thought that alcohol had made them god's gift to role-playing, people who were unsafe to fight, as well as hangovers keeping crew out of events the following morning. Be responsible about it please. **Note also that we have to enforce a strict no underage drinking rule.**

Inaction: This is often related to the above in that over-indulgence or just lack of sleep keeps you in your bed of a morning. Bad weather also seems to have an effect on the roll-call. If you are struggling to emerge from your tent, please make an extra effort. You'd be surprised how well a quick battle in the morning gets the circulation going and clears the head.

Crewing is fun too. By Evie Faulkner

Right, so being crew is the best of everything. It involves fighting, plot talking, character-building and generally having a good time. It is fantastic fun as you get to experience so many different aspects of LARPing, and Dumnonni Chronicles (DC) has such an amazing feel and atmosphere that you never want to leave.

At DC we aim to make everything as realistic as we can whilst keeping everyone safe, so here are a couple of things to bear in mind.

There are several parts to DC as mentioned before, one of which is fighting. In this the aim is not to actually hurt the other people, crew or players, but to make it look good. In the action you need to 'pull your blows', and by this I mean make it look like you are hitting harder than you are. This means that it still looks good, but no-one gets badly hurt. If you do find that a player or someone else is hitting you too hard and it's a problem, then maybe mention it to a ref at a later point; sometimes if players get too scared by us they may forget to pull their blows, and same goes for crew too. However, do remember to avoid head hits or pod hits; they hurt regardless of how powerful the blow.

As crew members we are expected to make sure everything we do makes the players look good. So in battle, if a player does a swing with an axe or an arrow-shot which you think you could make look epic, do just that; show them an epic death. It's actually a lot of fun!

Act and react. In DC we don't count our hits out loud, to keep it more realistic; the way we do it is mostly through logic. As mentioned above, make things look good. A small light tap on the arm is not going to kill you, but that doesn't mean you ignore it. React accordingly, e.g. be in pain and don't use said arm to swing your sword etc. If it is something you gauge that you could die from, then there is your chance to show off your epic reactions and deaths.

However, when you're dead, you're dead. The dead don't talk, fidget, giggle or any other very alive things like that. Try to keep still and quiet. If you are in a painful position, or a possibly dangerous one (e.g. in the middle of a crowded battle bit), then by all means move to a safer place to be still there. Otherwise, wait for the call of 'Thank you, Dead Monsters/Crew', pop up your hand to show you're currently not in play, and move off to the pre-arranged respawn/meeting place. This all helps maintain the amazing atmosphere DC has and keeps it running smoothly.

Keep in character. When you're in the fort, Culhaven, or in any in-character area/situation you must stay in character. This means following your plot and roles, as well as keeping conversations in character, both the things you say and how you say them. However, it also refers to costume etc, so not wearing modern accessories, i.e. watches, or coloured trainers; stick to the basic DC approved kit, again helping to keep its realistic look.

React to the DC 'calls'- (please refer to the DC calls section). This is mostly for everyone's safety, but it also helps keep the event running smoothly, making it a better experience for everyone.

The evenings are often a chance for people to chill out and socialise out of character in the 'plastic camp' or in character in the fort (e.g. as a peasant or a plot character (NPC)). However, don't drink so much that you cannot function the next day or so that you cause problems for yourself or others (crew, refs or players).

There isn't a set bedtime at all, but do think about how much sleep and energy you need to keep going all weekend as you will miss out on things if you sleep in. In the morning there is a 'crew call' at around 9am and things start from then on. The refs and other crew members always need as much crew as they can get to make the plot as fantastic as it always is, and the players need people to make things happen 'to' them. If all the crew members slept in because they were up too late the night before, then there'd be no LARPing for hours.

One of the most important things to remember is to have fun and enjoy it! It is an amazing experience, so get stuck in and do some fantastic LARPing!

Being an NPC (Heather M Clayton)

Playing an NPC (Non Player Character) at Dumnonni is brilliant fun and a wonderful opportunity to challenge your role-play skill whilst working with the ref team to assist in the plot evolution.

Like the incidental characters who turn up in movies as friends or adversaries of the heroes NPCs are all manner of people; from someone who can guide the players through the story offering them clues and answers to the big bad guys they need to rally against.

Live role-play characters have all the complexities that people do in reality and NPCs are required as the plot hooks and colour to demonstrate this. The village does not just contain the 20 individuals who happen to be there for that event but is filled with meaningful characters who make it their home and enable the community to survive.

A hero is not just a person with a spear and a backpack but has a particular history that has led to this heroism. If you are NPCing a character from a player's background you are demonstrating the person they once were. This is often a big revelation to others and there is responsibility in playing this role. The NPC allows the player character the opportunity to show others that their personality has some depth and that there is more to them than skill with the axe or their ability to consume mead.

It is massive fun. It provides the opportunity to get your teeth into some juicy role-play and enables you to spend time with the players seeing their game develop. You may be a long-term NPC, someone who stays with the players for a while, or you may be an incidental NPC, someone who turns up occasionally, but in all cases you create a connection with the players and it is important to remember that it is ALL about them. As an NPC you are there to enhance their game, make them feel the plot at a deeper level than a combat encounter can provide and give them the attention that makes the game personal to them. By playing characters that can incite a range of feelings you give them a reason fight and struggle through the wilder times of the DC dark ages.

An NPC gives a plot line a purpose, a character depth and a story evolution, for without those a role-play game is just a series of combats for no particular purpose and becomes an exercise in calisthenics. Great for the cardio but the drama is lost.

As an NPC you are the refs' number one device in creating an atmospheric, dramatic, and meaningful event. Sometimes this is an exercise in psychology as you learn the individual player's drives and adapt your role-play style to meet theirs but always you work with the refs, feeding back the information they will need to plot and following their instructions. NPCing is challenging and it can be intense but you will have an amazing time doing it.

A Brief History of Dumnonni

This can only be seen as the briefest overview of events in the lands of Dumnonni since Athea was set upon the throne as the first Ard Ri of the Free Peoples in response to the Fomorian threat. The first events happened in the early 90's in real time, which means that the intervening years are far too rich in stories for them all to be written down.

The following chronicle of events should in no way be taken as gospel; undoubtedly, much of it is wrongly remembered and could be interpreted differently. Given that our tastes and vision for Dumnonni have changed somewhat in the last 20 years, we have edited out some events and characters which would detract from a consistent theme. Some names we have altered for the same reason, a prime example being that Antonio is now Antonius. And the most extreme example of this, which is only spoken about in hushed tones, is that we used to allow Drow.

Athea's Reign

Athea's reign as the first Ard Ri revolved around the cementing of the Free Races into an alliance against the Fomor.

- The Free Races met to elect an Ard Ri to counter the Fomorian threat. The spider clan, not liking either of the proposed candidates, put forward their own: Athea.
- Athea was crowned the first Ard Ri of the Free Races, supported by Beorn Ericson.
- Cynrain took the stolen sword of Nuada (Clíamh Soluis) from the Fir Dolm king, Crunmar mac Agnomar, in single combat. He carried it without drawing it until the return of Nuada.
- Athea called the free people to name a new Queen's champion and also to celebrate the handfasting of her old champion, Antonius, to her cousin, Erwyn, who was mysteriously with child.
- Beorn betrayed the Free Races, putting on one of the nine great helms of the Fomor, and led an army against the Free Races.
- Beorn was eventually slain.
- Maeve refused to join the Free Races, but claimed comradeship with them –even as she sent her Connacht to attack them.
- Hrafan arrives, unified the Norse and joined the free peoples.
- Nuada ap Nuada, son of Erwyn, appeared as a young boy. He was declared to be Nuada returned and travelled among the Free Races, performing deeds to gain his bardic names. Cynrain returned his sword to him and fostered him for a year.
- Cernunnos gathered the Red Branch warriors, including Indeg Bluejaw and Cascorach, and set them tasks. They completed them and he named them the *Children of the Bitter Spear*.
- Athea was mortally wounded but Antonius gave his life to save her.
- Athea abandoned the Free Races for her love, now in the lands of the dead. Cynrain took her there. He was told that he must find his own path back from the lands of the dead and was lost for some time.

A year with no King

- Rhyme, an evil and twisted Bard, boasted that his power was such that he could steal the tales of a hero from the memories of the people. He was challenged on this and caused all to forget the tales of Cynrain.

- Cynrain returned from the lands of the dead. Now ragged and forgotten, he went by the name of Fearadach. Finally tracking down Rhyme, Cynrain challenged him and was mocked. Rhyme declared that if Cynrain wished his stories to be returned he must attempt to take them from him. Cynrain tore out Rhyme's tongue and his stories and his name were returned.
- Indech, son of Domnu, led the Fomor armies against the Free Races. He was treated poorly by the Free Races when he asked for hospitality, and this triggered a growing discontent among some of the warriors of the Free Races (Blue Jaw, Cynrain, Cascorach, Connal). This discontent was to grow and later cause many old warriors to leave the service of the new Ard Ri.
- Indech defeated several champions of the Free Races before being killed in single combat by Cynrain.

The Short Reign of Conal

Conal of the Tuatha became Ard Ri for two days, but stepped down because of the tensions between the elder races and the Sons of Mil.

- Brom and Culhaven arrived and became leaders among the Sons of Mil.

The Reign of Danuli The Peaceful

Danuli's reign revolved around the growing tensions between the elder races and the Son's of Mil. As she tried to negotiate and resolve things, the accusation that she had abandoned 'The Old Ways' destroyed unity.

- Danuli became Ard Ri and struggled to cope with the demands placed upon her.
- Conal of the Bloody Hand slew Indeg Blue Jaw and ordered the death of many Bristling Boar Picti to protect a Tuatha secret. They died at the hands of their brothers in arms, Brom and Culhaven. The drum being forged to unite the Free Races was broken by the deed.
- Brom and Culhaven led the population of Dumnonni in flight from the approaching doom to the protection of the assembling army of the Free Races gathering for Beltain.
- The first battle between the Elder Races and the sons of Mil: Conal of the Bloody Hand, Cynrain and Cascorach, along with several other warriors of both the Elder races and the Sons of Mil, declares that they would take no part in the battle and stood watch, stating that they would slaughter any who broke the bonds of honour. The Sons of Mil won decisively and the Elder Races were pushed back. Before the battle, disgusted by the breaking of oaths by the Elder Races, Cynrain washed the Tuatha woad from his face and declared that he would never wear it again. Cascorach, Cynrain and others, saddened by the low behaviour of Danuli and some of her court, left the lands and became the Dubh Derach.
- Maeve brought a host of Connacht to capture Haven, but was repelled. Culhaven died at the Siege of Haven and its name was changed to honour him.
- The second Battle between the Elder Races and the Sons Of Mil: Nuada Ap Nuada, armed with his father's spear, led the Elder Races in a host to 'take control' of the 'unruly' Sons of Mil. Danuli sacrificed herself to quench the spears' thirst and save her people. Many Tuatha refused to fight with kin against blood brothers. Most believed that their time had passed and fighting this battle broke oaths sworn after their defeat two years earlier. For them this would surely bring doom. This time the free races submitted to Nuada.

The Reign of Nuada Ap Nuada

His rule was harsh as he committed all the resources of the land to defeat the Fomorians, caring naught for those crushed by his ambition.

- Most of the remaining heroes refused to serve him and became outlaws. Their numbers were few as the two great battle had seen the deaths of almost all of the old order of heroes, champions and kings.
- Nuada ap Nuada was slain in battle and the Spear of Lugh taken from his hand.

The Anarchy

With no High King and the Fomor showing no sign of slowing the Free People broke into self-preserving clans.

- At its lowest point many of the great heroes and leaders of the Free Races were captured by the forces of Ucha of the Scaly Hide, the latest great general of Balor's host. Though they escaped it was only to flee and lick their wounds.
- Tigernmas, a powerful priest of Crom Cruach, set fire to many wicker men full of human sacrifices. In so doing he hoped to call powerful ancient Fomor to Balor's aid.

The reign of Cascorach

The seven years of His rule were largely about the build-up of Balor's mighty host and Cascorach's attempts to meet it.

- Cascorach returned and he was persuaded by Jill Dream Weaver to become Ard Ri in order to rally the Free People.
- The Fen Picts moved from their watery fastness to attack Culhaven.
- Stars fell from the sky and where they landed stones were found of dark and terrible wyrd. Domnu herself claimed all menfolk who had seen these stones could not face her, but the warrior women of the Free Races drove her off with protection set into jewellery made by Sigvald the smith.
- The Blackshields arrived, swore fealty to the Ard Ri for land, but soon after lost their king, O'nean to Ucha of the Scaly Hide. Hywell Pendoweran (Son of O'nean) became king.
- Camulac, the Brehon, called a moot at Dun Culhaven to face this threat. Also, guardians had to be appointed for Nuada's children; Druids of both the Free Races and Fomor know that they have the great wyrd of the endless knot woven into their bones.
- Added to there were tales of great unrest in the Sea Wolf lands. It was said also, that the Bretwalda who had kept peace with the Free Races had disappeared, probably murdered.
- Uthcha was slain by Cynan Moyal.
- In a rage Hywell slew two druids and was forced to become *Forsaken*.
- Cascorach married Daria, the Sidhe Princess, and an accord is made between the Summer Throne and the Free Races.
- With many unsure of the motives for attacking in the first place, the Fen Picts declared that they had what they wished and that their war was over.
- Two great Saxon warlords, Aethelhelm and Dior, started vying to become Bretwalder, now that it was felt that Deanne will not return.
- Aethelhelm tried to find the spear head of Gungnir, that pinned Odin to the tree of Woe.
- Dior sought support from the Ard Ri. Aethelhelm did likewise, but when it was refused he resorted instead to force. He was eventually slain.
- Queen Maeve asked for the aid of the Blackshields in retrieving a long dead druid's skull, but earned their enmity when she stole it from them rather than honouring her agreement.
- Tigernmas sought shelter with the Free Races, fearing that both Balor and the Fomor he had helped to summon would come hunting him.
- Cethlin, Balor's bride, pretended a need for protection, when really she was seeing her nephew and niece, the twin children of Ethni and Nuada, and kin to Balor.
- By trickery and sheer force, Cethlin's son, Lorkan Breehands, briefly took Dun Culhaven, but Cascorach, leading a force of just seventeen, drove them out.

- Muckle Mary Gyp stole Bull's son, Gwidion, her great grandson.
- Gwidion grew up in the Otherland to become a vindictive and evil Fae prince. He gained a reputation for torturing the creatures of the Otherlands with iron and led an army of 'Lost Children.' And because Gwidion wore the stolen torc of the Summer King, he could not be harmed.
- Prince Ki, took the name of Bull's son, Gwidion, and was made king of the Blackshields.
- Hywell went mad and formed the *Bloodshields*, a terrible mimicry of the Blackshields. They murdered and raided, but were intent on the subjugation of the Blackshields to the 'rightful king'.
- Cethlin sent the Tuatha de Domnu to destroy Culhaven. At the Battle of Four Feathers, Culhaven was overrun and many heroes were slain, but the Tuatha king, impressed by their valour, let the remainder live.
- Both sides found that their dead could not cross to the afterlife and the Tuatha king agreed not to fight until this had been resolved.
- Cethlin's fury was so great that she demanded the Tuatha attack again, but the king could not lead his men, so had to watch them being slaughtered.
- Balith the Ovate broke the ban to the afterlife, but the Tuatha king, now immortal, fought Cascorach and lost. Cascorach kept his eyes in a bag of salt, so that the king was blind.
- By undoing the magic that allowed Muckle Mary Gyp's daughter to have a mortal child, Prince Gwidion was made vulnerable. He was then slain by 'King Gwidion' and Bull, his father, using Kin Slayer, the cursed sword.
- Lorkan Bree Hands, Son Of Balor, 'gifted Culhaven' with the Teeth of the World. These great standing stones bend the ley lines with their power.
- Lorkan, armed with the Spear of Lugh, brought a host to attack Culhaven. He was death geased to be slain only by ravens and so impervious to all attack. It was clear he was quite mad, not wanting the power of Dumnonni as his father had wanted, but its total destruction!
- Lorkan was slain by the Henhugh. The Romans followed his last wishes and put his life blood on the stones, unaware of the harm they do. The land was corrupted by Lorkan's madness and rage.
- Cascorach, mad with the rage of Lorkan's blood, left his careful plans for the defence of the Free Races and attacked the Fomorian army. Cynrain found him amid a great battle and persuaded him to return.
- The Summer King was lost and had to be rescued from Cythral.
- Muckle Mary's war in the Fae realms reached a tipping point and Morgana, the Winter Queen, was forced to flee to Culhaven.
- The Summer King tricked Muckle Mary into becoming the Summer Queen and thus bound her to her role.
- It was discovered that the twin children of Nuada, who Maeve is protecting, were also, through their mother's line, nephew and niece to Balor himself. It became known that they were, in some way, Balor's bane.
- Aillil, Maeve's consort, ran away with the twins fearing that she might do them harm.
- Cascorach led a mission to reclaim the twins and brought the girl child back to Culhaven, but the boy fled.
- Maeve slew Aillil in a rage at his betrayal.
- Balor led forth his greatest host, taking and despoiling the great Dumnonni plains, as well as capturing Almu of the White Walls after a long siege. The land was blasted and burnt – even now it is still recovering.
- It was revealed that The Lady Brea was a descendant of Bres the Beautiful.
- Balor's host arrived at Culhaven and laid siege to it.

- As a result of the sacrifice of Raif, Thorvald, and Cando upon the Stones, Balor's wyrd weavers could not break the defences of Culhaven and the siege lasted until the heroes, answering the Ard Ri's call, arrived and lifted it.
 - In addition to his Fomorians, Balor's army was swollen by Norse, Romans and Scotia.
 - Roman engineers built a huge fort for Balor's army, adjacent to Culhaven itself.
 - The battle that followed was long and desperate, but ended with Cascorach plunging the Spear of Lugh, coated in the blood of Balor's kin, into the Fomorian's chest.
 - As it was also the end of Cascorach's seven-year reign, he was sacrificed to the land.
-

A Year with No King

This year was the aftermath of Balor's Great War.

- Massan, Balor's last great general, rallied the Fomor and kept control of much of the plains won in the war.
 - Bree carved out her Kingdom of many peoples.
 - Balor's head was taken by Fomorian Priests.
 - The Corpse Goose Goblins, with their near dead servants, started making mischief with the stones.
 - Slough Cul ceded half of the lands of the Dumnonni to the newly arrived Clan Morna.
-

The Reign of Pengar (Bull)

Bull's reign was taken up with the return of Donn Under the Hill and the reclaiming of the plains from Massan's Fomor. Strictly speaking his reign has not ended. Instead he was laid low by the Saxon Rune magic and sleeps in a hidden place until his return.

- Athea has been rescued from Cythral, with much loss of life, including Bull's brother Conn. It was assumed she would take up the role of Ard Ri, but she chose Bull to take her place on the throne. She returned to being Queen of Dumnonni only.
- Slough Cul, at the behest of the Druids' circle, moved the Fae Gate to outside Culhaven. In so doing, he earned the enmity of many of the Sidhe and just as he finished, he was pulled into the gate by some monstrosity.
- The Fae Gate had become unstable and started opening apparently of its own accord.
- The Arveni were asked by the Winter Throne to rebuild the gate.
- Slough Cul returned and either slew Muckle Mary Gyp, or freed her, depending on your point of view.
- Slough Cul was slain to make recompense, the new High Druid Cul Cruachwin, was chosen.
- For a year Bull travelled the land, but a great *ban* was placed upon him for not avenging the death of a bard. This meant that no word was spoken of him and no stories were told of him. Many began to forget who their Ard Ri was.
- Taliesin broke the ban by encouraging a great tale-telling and forcing Bull to promise to make good.
- Bull summoned the Free Races to fight Donn Under the Hill (See 6.1 The Elder Races for details).
- Conn returned as a vengeful revenant, set on the destruction of all his brothers still living in the world.
- Conn married Hel and the two attacked with an army of the cursed dead of Norse and Celts, from Niflheim and Cuthral respectively.
- Conn was trapped in the Fae Gate and then given 'the soft death' by his brother and friends.
- Hel was drawn out by the torture of Jarl Svanni, who has magical ties to her. The Norse negotiated with her and she retreated once more to the cold land.

- The White Bear, Queen Bree's Many Peoples, and the Scotia attacked the lands of Maeve.
- The Clan Morna attacked the lands of White Bear in support of Maeve. They dug up the barrow of the White Bear hero, Kia Shadow Walker.
- Kane, the White Bear war leader was lost in the mist during the war.
- The war went badly for Maeve and for now the White Bear controls the lands to the sea.
- Massan, the Fomorian leader was rumoured to have a 'terrible weapon' which could burn armies to dust.
- The Brigante, Catuvelauni, and Icenii attended the Beltane festival and got Bull's agreement to take back the plains.
- While the armies of the Free Races marched to meet Massan head on, a small force went deep behind enemy lines to find and destroy the weapon. They succeeded and also killed Massan and many of his housecarls, 'the drowned ones'.
- Massan's army, without their general to lead them, was defeated and scattered by Bull.
- Queen Bree remains in control of a large part of the plains. She claims they are under her protection, but it seems she has given quarter and succour to much of Massan's fleeing army of Romans and Fomor. She also controls the part of Dumnonni which was until recently controlled by Clan Morna.
- At Beltain, King Oswald of the Usipeti Married Fouloula Daughter of Maeve and many friends and enemies attended.
- Having taken the head of Balor, the Drune Lord Manix fed upon its power and became engorged with it. He seemed mad with power and lust for destruction. He was taken by the druids back to Inis Mon where he may or may not have been dealt with.
- Saxons, new through the mists, and lead by the enigmatic Norseman Hakon Grimson, swell the fleet of the sea-wolves and begin raiding almost everyone.

Yet more Saxons, using a new rune magic which attacks the very land, change balance of the Saxon raiding. It has become a full blown invasion. Maeve was been captured or killed and the Lands of the White Bear were only protected by a bloody winter campaign. The Saxons also attack elsewhere, including but not exclusively; The Seal Road and the far Isles in the north; and the Saxon Wolds, The lands of the Arvenni, and the Fianna in the south.

The Rule of the Culcascorach.

Elisif the Sorceress, was the great magic power behind the attack of the Saxon host. Her magic uses the dark runes of Cynric's Aiter. By stealthy means she has cast great runes upon the kingdoms of Dumnonni and thus, by the mystic connection of it rulers to the land, curses upon all the kings and queens that oppose her. These runes are terrible in the effect and, as the embodiment of the Land, Bull is effected by each and every one of them. By taking the weight of the curses upon himself, he was able to alleviate the effects on both the land and its people, but the cost was to lay him low. Athea, in secret, carried him into safety, where as I write, he still sleeps fighting the enemies of the Free in his dreams.

With the Ard Ri suddenly gone, the Cul Cascorach took command of the shaken remains of the Free Races.

- Each of the Cul Cascorach, due to their connection to the Land, was branded by one of Cynric's runes and each suffered a curse from it.
- The runes also prematurely aged many of the kings and queens including Athea and Cartomandua.
- A new Winer King is born to Luna, mother of the fae gate.
- Elisif used a glamour to disguise herself as Athea and, by fooling the Dumnonni people into rebelling against the heroes of the Free races, took control of Culhaven and set about a terrible ritual using the trapped Bloody stag Samlaich (Great spirit).
- Elisif's magic, also caused great worms to attack all ships not protected by her magic. These 'Keel Worms' are drawn from the power of Crom Cruach.
- It became known that the secrets of Cynric's Aiter and thus the power of Elisif's magic was hidden in his great moon staff.

This is the same staff which the high druid had and Con used to raise an army of the undead some years back. However, trying to bring it to Culhaven, The Cul Cruachwin is killed and the Staff taken.

- Though defended by a terrible ghost fence and much dark magic, as well as a host of Saxons, Culhaven is recaptured in a daring night raid.

- At Beltane,

Turalach Ap Net of the Cul Cascorach is chosen to serve as temporary high King for a year and a day, in the hope of Bull's return.

Elisif sends her husband Hakon Grimson with a great host of Saxons, Norse and Crom Cruach's servants, the Drune Lords, to attack Culhaven. They are defeated.

Maeve is rescued/or reborn depending on who you ask and although she is much aged, she is given, possibly unknowingly, a part of many folks vitality and is rejuvenated.

Brea, seeing the opportunity in the battle weariness of the free people, sends Cynan Moyal with orders to capture Culhaven and to put on the Helm of Madness in the battle to make his victory more terrible. Cynan instead agrees to a fight with Cynrain. Each is armed with a Gay Bolga and during the duel each is mortally wounded.

After the duel Mael Iosa the Fomorian general attacked anyway. After much bloodshed he agreed to the battle being decided by a further duel between his champion and one from the free races. His champion was considered undefeatable because of his Geas that he would only be slain by the first of men, but Mil was among the heroes there that day and he gained the victory.

- A terrible fire destroys much of Culhaven and the great throne of the High King, which was the seat of the Lord of Sheves. As the rune which cursed Turalach was the Fire rune and it inflicted him with terrible rages, which he sometimes had no memory of, suspicions fall on him, but there are many other possible culprits.

- Discovering how to remove the runes, if there location in the land can be found, Turalach and a troop of heroes sets out to find them. During a hard fought skirmish many runes are cleansed including the temporary high king's.

At Samhien Elisif returns to finish whatever ritual she was attempting when she captured Culhaven. Much to everyone's surprise and possibly her own, at the height of the ritual she was consumed by the worms of Crom Cruach which she had been using as weapons.

The Reign of Turalach

After a year and a day as nominal leader and with no sign of Bull's return, Turalach was choose by Fleet the Bard of Summer and wearer of the Cloak of Feather as the New high King. Fleet also declared the four other contenders to be joined to the Cul Cascorach.

Turalach's appointment is not universally welcomed, with some dark talk of his Fomorian heritage. Many of the free peoples refuse to bend a knee and the free races seem near to fracturing. Prominent amongst the neigh says are the White Bear, the Catavalani and the Icenii. The Dumnonni also hold off Swearing, claiming they will not until their lands are reunited.

- That Beltane

Brea, mad with grief at the death of both Cyran and Cynan Moyal, brings a huge host of Romans, Scotia, Fomorians and Drune lords. The battles where many and fierce, but in the end Turalach's host won.

Brea, had her heart and her honour returned to her and in her sorrow she was slain by Cal the Tuatha Sygath.

It is prophesied that Kai of the White Bear would, one day also be Ard Ri, but also that he would be 'The death of Klaw'.

Athea adopts Ferrus the gladiator as her heir.

- During the summer it became clear that Elisif's plan had been to waken Crom Cruach and that, in this at least, it seemed she was going to be successful.
- The Ard Ri convinces more of the peoples to swear to him, most prominent among these are the Catavalauni and his own people, the Red Branch.
- Donn the Mad Fir Bholg king choose to side with Crom Cruach in the hope for destruction of all things. It must be remembered though that he still has lucid moments when his wishes are more sane.
- Those who use the wyrd, become aware that the magic is slipping away and that they must horde their power against a dark future.
- The Henge seeds that were planted grown into a procession way which lead to no one knows where.
- The fae, the Drune lords and the Fir Bholg of Don all try to take control of the stones, but Stone wardens are chosen from the Wise of the Free Races, these along with many heroes defend them.
- It is discovered that the procession leads to a barrow which in turn leads into the belly of Crom Cruach himself. Within the belly is trapped the Lord of Tall Sheaves, who is the cause of maggot god's corruption. He is removed, but in so doing The Great Worm wakes fully and begins to consume the world, starting with the magic.
- A year of woes bests the land. Crom Cruach greatest servants, the Lords of Terror, attack the free races. The wyrd becomes even more scarce as the great worm feasts upon it and the free races struggle to create a plan to save the world. Hurtful the Firbolg bard swears to serve the King for a year and a day
- A rejuvenated Athea, free of the Elisif's runes, swears to the Ard Ri and gifts him a new throne. The hite bear also swear to the King.
- Wayland helps forge the children of Iron and there is a battle for the blood of a god. Shonei, god of seaweed, loses the battle and is sacrificed.
- The animal spirits of the northern tribes are driven to attack Culhaven but the White bear find out that it is the work of the spirit monster Prince Midnight and he is trapped in a wooden effigy.
- A Great feast is put on to honour the Lord of high Sheaves whose spirit is will defeat the Wrym.
- The great wrym users of the free races fashion a helm of sheaves, grown for the seed retrieved the wrym's belly which will contain the Crom Cruach's bane. At the feast Meran the Pathalonian puts it on expecting to die, but instead become the channel of the lord. It become clear the lord is in fact a bait which will drawe the worm into the open.
- At Samhain, the end of the world draws near, but the free races have a plan. The druids can trap the woyrm in a broken part of the Otherlands, from which it cannot return.
- The heroes races desperately to collect the Flail of the high sheaves and the children of Iron, which are needed in the trap.
- The druids do great wyrd to open the way to the trap, but at the last minute Cynric with the winter king bound to do his will intervene. In an evil monologue the Saxon sorcerer explain it was all his plan to destroy the world and now it cannot be stopped.
- A battle ensues and Cynric is defeated and killed. The winter king is also struck with the Bear Sword, the Moryenwyn, god killer, His immortality is destroyed and he becomes mortal, much to his fury.
- Madra of The Red Branch accepts the burden of becoming the vessel of the Lord Of The Tall Sheaves. He is Named Marda Leis CuChulainn for his bravery. He and the high druid are trapped in the broken land for ever to battle the wrym.
- The world is saved, but things are still far from over.
- The winter king releases Avatach the bloody from his prison.

Appendix b.

50 Dumnonni tales

1. How Culhaven got its name.
2. How Cascorach lived his final days.
3. How Cyrain gained the name of Battlewinner, and why he does not wear a stripe.
4. The tale of Empty Jarls and Grim Halls.
5. Hel's stolen beauty.
6. How Muckle Mary Gyp became summer queen.
7. The Death of Indeg Blue Jaw at the hands of his friend Connal the high King.
8. Briganti cheese.
9. The tale that can never be told.
10. What happened to the king of Dumnonni before the third Battle of Motura.
11. The sacrifices of Candu, Torvald and Raif
12. The battle of Caer Balor.
13. The bronze doors to the moonlit city and the horn of opening.
14. The forming of the Culcascorach
15. How the Romans redeemed themselves
16. How Bull became Ard Ri
17. The tale of Olaf the Smelly
18. How the Blackshields became forsaken
19. Why the elder races scorned the sons of Mil and what price the Free Races paid.
20. The rising of Tory Island, and the curse of pink crystal.
21. The White Fomorian.
22. The fall of Loken Olafsen at the Bronze gates.
23. How the gods of Asgard were tricked into human form.
24. Bjorn and his bow.
25. The nine Generals of Balor and their nine helms.
26. How Casorach got the name Tribeslayer.
27. How Indeg Bluejaw got his name.
28. When all in the haven was destroyed by the kin of Fenris.
29. Why Leif the skald can never go to Asgard or Niflheim.
30. The betrayal of Beorn and the battle of three shrines.
31. Rhyme and the stolen word horde.
32. The weight of the Loom Stones.
33. The doom of Cynan Moyal.
34. Bull's son and Muckle Mary Gyp.
33. Lorkan Bruehand's calling the Teeth of the world and their corruption by his blood.
34. The tale of the mouse King and Cat-Wounder.
35. The despair of Conn of a hundred Battles.
36. How Red Cap became the Ard Ri's champion.

37. How Athena became queen and stayed with her lover in the lands of the dead.
38. The prophesy of nine queens.
39. Ailill's love and death.
40. How Deluli the peaceful gave her life to quench the Spear of Lugh and save her people.
41. The battle of four feathers
42. Last stand of the seated warriors
43. The journey to the Cythral to save the summer King.
44. The sword in the stone and the tongue of a Bard.
45. The first sounding of the death chant of Bali-mawa at the battle by straw light
46. The Man in a sack
48. The Killing of Kin
49. The Hounds of Culhaven.
50. Callum, the little wooden Hero.

Appendix c.

A list of the renown.

You may not know much about the following people, but unless you have recently come through the mists or are moon-torn you will have heard the following names.

High Kings.

Athea: Also Queen of the Dumnonni.

Deluni the peaceful (Dead)

Conal of the Tuatha: (Gone under the Hill)

Nauda Ap Nuada (dead)

Cacorach, Balor's Bane (Dead)

Pengar (more normally know as Bull) (Laid low by the Curse runes)

Turalach Ap Net: present high King

Other Kings and Queens and chiefs.

Maeve: Queen of the Conaght

Ailill: Consort to Maeve (Dead)

Hrafan Lord of the North: King of all the Norse lands

Magnus the Good: Hrafan most powerful Vassal. (Dead)

Klaw of the white Bear

Gwidion of the Blackshields

Conn of a hundred battles: A King of the Fir Bolg (Dead)

Donn under the hill: A King of the Fir Bolg

Finavar: A queen of the Fir Bolg and Donn's daughter

Bree: Descendent of Bres the beautiful. (Dead)

Fomorians

Balor of the baleful Eye: High King of the formorians (Dead)

Ufchair: General to Balor (Dead)

Lorkan Brue Hands: Mad son of Balor (Dead)

Massan of the Drowning pools: Leader of Fomorian host after Balor's death (Dead)

Indech: Leader of the Fomorian host before Balor woke from his slumber (Dead)

Ethni: Mother of Balor and scheming master mind

Others of note

Rhyme: Infamous Bard

Beorn Ericson (aka the traitor); Betrayed Athea, and was killed but is back.

Taliesin the bard: Great Bard

Cynrain Battle Winner: Tuatha champion (Dead)

Cynon Moyal: Doomed hero (Dead)

Athelhelm: Undead Saxon lord.

Daria: widow of Cacorach and Summer Queen.

Muckle Mary Gyp: The nightmare you frighten you children with.

Morgana: The queen of winter. (Dead)

Clud: ex High druid (Dead)

Slough Cul (Dead)

Culhaven: after whom Culhaven was names (Dead)

Kia Ap Kai: White Bear Hero and member of the Cul Cascorach

Indeg Blue Jaw: Red Branch warrior. (Dead)

Mordaught: The Winter King

Celtic Names

Celtic names sometimes are only the first name with a place or job description. Eg Owen the Wood, or Fionn of Bickly. Adding a person's father by putting Ap between the names is also common. Eg. Lokan Ap Balor. Finally heroes often have bardic names which replace any of the above. Eg Cynrain Battle Winner.

Most Celtic names actually have direct meanings not given here but a quick internet search reveals much, e.g. Osan means little deer.

Male Celtic names.

Abbán	Coinneach	Finnén	Mel	Scolaí
Ádhamhnán	Colmán	Finnseach	Miach	Sé
Aibhne	Comhghall	Fionn	Mochta	Seachlann
Ailbhe	Conall	Fionnbharr	Molaisse	Séadhna
Ailill	Conán	Fionntán	Morann	Seanán
Aimhirghin	Conchobhar	Flann	Muircheartach	Seanchán
Ainbheartach	Conlaodh	Garbhán	Muireadhach	Séighín
Áinle	Conn	Gilleagán	Murchadh	Síoda
Ainníleas	Cormac	Giolla	Murchú	Siollán
Ámhra	Coinneach	Glaisne	Naithí	Sléibhín
Anamcha	Cuán	Gobán	Naoise	Somhairle
Ánrothán	Cúmhaí	Gormán	Naomhán	Suibhne
Aodh	Curnán	Gormghiolla	Neasán	Tadhg
Aodhán	Daigh	Iarfhlaith	Niall	Taichleach
Aonghus	Daighre	Iarlugh	Niallán	Tanaí
Bairrfhionn	Daimhín	Iobhar	Nuadha	Tassach
Bardán	Dáire	Iomchadh	Odhrán	Teimhnín
Baoth	Dallán	Irial	Ógán	Tighearnach
Beag	Deaglán	Labhraidh	Oilithir	Tighearnán
Beagán	Deasmumhnach	Labhrás	Oilleóg	Tiobraide
Breacán	Diarmaid	Lachtna	Oillill	Tíreachán
Breasal	Domhnall	Lachtnán	Oillín	Toirdhealbhadh
Bearach	Donnchadh	Laisrén	Oisín	Tóla
Brion	Dubhaltach	Laoidheach	Olcán	Tomaltach
Brocc	Dubhghall	Laoire	Ólchobhar	Tómmán
Brógán	Dubhghlas	Lasair	Onchú	Torcán
Buadhach	Ealadha	Leannán	Orthanach	Torna
Cairbre	Éamonn	Lochlann	Osán	Treasach
Cairell	Éanna	Lomán	Osgar	Tuama
Calbhac	Earnán	Lonán	Ríoghán	Tuathal
Caoimhín	Éimhín	Lorcán	Ríordán	Uaithne
Cass	Eirín	Lughaidh	Robhartach	Uallachán
Cassair	Eoghan	Mac Nisse	Rónán	Uallgarg

Cassán	Fachtna	Mac Táil	Ross	Ultán
Cathaír	Faolán	Maeleachlainn	Rúadhán	Urard
Cathal	Fearchar	Mainchín	Ruaidhrí	
Cathán	I Feardorcha	Maine	Ruarc	
Ceallach	Feargha	Mael Íosa	Sárán	
Cearbhall	Fearghus	Maolán	Samhradhán	
Cian	Fechín	Maol Mhuire	Scannal	
Ciarán	Feidhlim	Maon	Scannlán	
Cillian	Fiachra	Marcán	Scáthach	
Cináed	Fial	Meallán	Scoithín	

Female Celtic names.

Aillean	Clíodhna	Fionnait	Muadhnaít	Scoth
Ailbhe	Coinneach	Fionúir	Muireann	Scothnait
Áine	Dáirine	Fionnghuala	Muirín	Séanait
Áinfean	Dáirinn	Flann	Muirgheal	Searc
Ainnir	Damhnait	Geiléis	Muirne	Séighín
Aithche	Dearbhail	Gobnait	Naomh	Síomha
Álmhath	Deirbhile	Gormán	Naoise	Sláine
Ana	Deirdre	Gormlaith	Nárbhflaith	Sorcha
Aodhamair	Dairinn	Gráinne	Neacht	Suaibhseach
Aodnait	Dunfhlaith	Grian	Neamhain	Suanach
Aoibheann	Eadan	Íde	Neasa	Taillte
Aoibhegréine	Easnadh	Íonait	Niamh	Teafa
Aoife	Eibhear	Laoise	Nuala	Teamhair
Báine	Éile	Lasairfhiona	Órlaith	Téide
Banbha	Éimhín	Líadan	Órnait	Treasa
Beag	Eirnín	Liamhain	Osnait	Tuamnait
Bearach	Éirne	Life	Rathnait	Tuathla
Bébhinn	Éibhleann	Líobhan	Ríofach	Tuileach
Bláthín	Echna	Luisseach	Ríona	Tuilelaith
Bláthnaid	Eithne	Maol Mhuire	Róinseach	Uaine
Blinne	Émer	Maon	Róisín	Uainionn
Bríghid	Étaín	Marga	Rónnad	Uaine
Brónach	Fachtna	Meadhbh	Rós	Uasal
Caoilfhionn	Fainche	Meallá	Rúadhnaít	Uallach
Cathán	Feidhelm	Míach	Sadhbh	Úna
Ceallach	Feidhlim	Moinnine	Saorla	
Caoimhe	Feme	Móirne	Saraid	
Ceara	Féthnaid	Moncha	Sárnait	
Ciar	Fianait	Mór	Scoithniamh	

Norse Names

Norse names are a first name followed by the father's name for men, suffixed by -son and mother's name suffixed by -dotter for Women, e.g. Snorri Beornson or Helga Frayasdottir. The Norse are often given nicknames, so you might have Hal Bignose, of Figg the Kind. Note that a nickname is not the same as a Bardic name.

Male Norse names

Adalsteinn	Eldgrímr	Hallgrímr	Ketilbjörn	Sigvaldi	Thoroddr
Adils	Eldiarn	Halli	Ketill	Skæringr	Thorolfr
Ævarr	Elfradr	Hallkell	Kiallakr	Skagi	Thorormr
Afavldr	Ellidagrímr	Hallormr	Kiaran	Skalpr	Thorsteinn
Alfarinn	Endridi	Hallr	Kiartan	Skamkell	Thorvaldr
Alfgeirr	Erlendr	Hallsteinn	Kiotvi	Skapti	Thorvarðr
Alfr	Erlingr	Hallvarðr	Klængr	Skarphedinn	Thorvidr
Ali	Erpr	Hals	Klaufi	Skati	Thrainn
Alrekr	Eyfrodr	Hamall	Kleppiarn	Skefill	Thrandr
An	Eyiarr	Hamundr	Klyppr	Skeggi	Thrasi
Ani	Eyiolfr	Haraldr	Kniukr	Skialdbjörn	Throndr
Ari	Eylausgr	Hardnefr	Knorr	Skialgr	Throstr
Arinbjörn	Eymundr	Harekr	Knotttr	Skidi	Tindr
Armódr	Eysteinn	Hasteinn	Kodran	Skioldulfr	Tiorvi
Arnaldr	Eythiofr	Haukr	Kolbeinn	Skolmr	Torfi
Arnbjörn	Eyvindr	Havardr	Kolbjörn	Skoþti	Torradr
Arngeirr	Falki	Havarr	Kolgrímr	Skorageirr	Tryggvi
Arngrímr	Finnbogi	Hedinn	Kolli	Skorri	Tyrfingr
Arni	Finngeirr	Heggr	Kollr	Skuli	Ulfar
Arnis	Finni	Helgi	Kollsveinn	Skumr	Ulfhedinn
Arnkell	Finnr	Herfinnr	Kolr	Smidkell	Ulfkell
Arnlausgr	Finnvarðr	Hergils	Kolskeggr	Smidr	Ulfliotr
Arnliotr	Fleinn	Hergrímr	Konall	Snæbjörn	Ulftr
Arnmodr	Floki	Heriolfr	Kori	Snorri	Vadi
Arnoddr	Flosi	Herlausgr	Kormakr	Snortr	Valbrandr
Arnorr	Forni	Hermundr	Krumr	Sokki	Vali
Arnridr	Fostolfr	Herrødr	Kugaldi	Sokkolfr	Valthiofr
Arnsteinn	Freysteinn	Hersteinn	Kvistr	Solgi	Vebjörn
Arnthorr	Freyvidr	Hiallkarr	Kylan	Solmundr	Vebrandr
Asbjörn	Fridleifr	Hialmolfr	Lambi	Solvarr	Vefødr
Asbrandr	Fridmundr	Hialti	Leidolfr	Solvi	Vegestr
Asgautr	Frodi	Hildir	Loftr	Soti	Vekell
Asgeirr	Galmr	Hiorleifr	Mani	Soxolfr	Veleifr
Asi	Galti	Hiorr	Mar	Stafngrímr	Vemundr
Askell	Gamli	Hiortr	Melpatrikr	Starkadr	Verlidi
Askr	Gardarr	Hlenni	Modolfr	Starri	Vermundr
Aslakr	Gaukr	Hlodver	Moror	Steinarr	Vestarr
Asmolfr	Gautr	Hnaki	Mottull	Steinbjörn	Vesteinn
Asmundr	Gautrekr	Hoggvandill	Naddoddr	Steinfidr	Vestlidi
Asrødr	Geiri	Hogni	Nagli	Steingrímr	Vestmadr
Asvaldr	Geirleifr	Holmkell	Narfi	Steini	Vethormr
Atli	Geirmundr	Holmsteinn	Nefsteinn	Steinmodr	Vethorn
Audolfr	Geirolfr	Holti	Nereidr	Steinn	Vidarr
Audr	Geirr	Hordr	Niall	Steinolfr	Vifill
Audun	Geirrodr	Hoskuldr	Oblaudr	Steinrodr	Vigbiodr
Avaldi	Geirsteinn	Hradi	Oddbjörn	Steinthorr	Vigfuss

Avaldr	Geirthiolfr	Hrærekr	Oddgeirr	Storolfr	Viglundr
Avanger	Geitir	Hrafn	Oddi	Sturla	Vigsterkr
Balki	Gellir	Hrafnkell	Oddleifr	Styrbjorn	Vilbradr
Bardi	Gestr	Hrafsi	Oddmar	Styrkarr	Vilgeirr
Bardr	Giafvaldr	Hrani	Oddr	Styrmir	
Barekr	Gils	Hrappr	Ofeigr	Styrr	
Bauger	Gisl	Hreidarr	Ogmundr	Sulki	
Beinir	Gisli	Hreinn	Ogurr	Sumarlidi	
Bekan	Gizurr	Hrifla	Olafr	Surtr	
Bergr	Glædir	Hroaldr	Oleifr	Svanr	
Bergthorr	Glumr	Hroarr	Oli	Svardkell	
Bersi	Gnupr	Hrodgeirr	Olmodr	Svarthofdi	
Bialfi	Gormr	Hrodmar	Olvir	Svartkell	
Biarnhedinn	Grani	Hrodolfr	Ondottr	Svartr	
Biarni	Greniadr	Hroi	Ongull	Svavarr	
Biartmarr	Grettir	Hrolfr	Onundr	Sveinbjorn	
Biolan	Grimkell	Hrollaugr	Orækia	Sveinn	
Biolfr	Grimolfr	Hrolleifr	Orlygr	Sveinungr	
Bjorn	Grimr	Hromundr	Ormarr	Svertingr	
Bjornolfr	Griotgardr	Hrossbjorn	Ormr	Tanni	
Blæinger	Gripr	Hrosskell	Orn	Teitr	
Bodmodr	Griss	Hrutr	Ornolfr	Thangbrandr	
Bodvarr	Gudlaugr	Hunbogi	Ospakr	Thengill	
Bogi	Gudleifr	Hundi	Osvaldr	Thidrandi	
Bolli	Gudmundr	Hundolfr	Osvifr	Thiodarr	
Bolverkr	Gudrødr	Hunrødr	Otkell	Thiodolfr	
Borkr	Gudthormr	Hvati	Otryggr	Thiostarr	
Botolfr	Gufi	Hyrningr	Ottarr	Thiostolfr	
Bragi	Gunnarr	Illugi	Ozurr	Thodrekr	
Brandi	Gunniorn	Ingialdr	Radormr	Thoralfr	
Brandr	Gunnlaugr	Ingimundr	Ragi	Thorarinn	
Brattr	Gunnolfr	Ingolfr	Ragnarr	Thorberger	
Breidr	Gunnsteinn	Ingvarr	Raudr	Thorbergr	
Briningr	Gunnvaldr	Ísleifr	Raudulfr	Thorbjorn	
Broddr	Guttormr	Ísolfr	Raumr	Thorbrandr	
Brondolfr	Gyrdr	Ísraudr	Refr	Thordr	
Bruni	Halfr	Ívarr	Reistr	Thorfidr	
Brusi	Hængr	Jatmundr	Reyrketill	Thorfinnr	
Bryniolfr	Hæringr	Jatvardr	Rodrekr	Thorgautr	
Dagr	Hafgrimr	Jofreidr	Rognvaldr	Thorgeirr	
Dalkr	Haflidi	Jokull	Rongudr	Thorgestr	
Darri	Hafljotr	Jolgeirr	Runolfr	Thorgils	
Drafl	Hafr	Jon	Sæbjorn	Thorgnyr	
Dufnall	Haftorr	Jorundr	Sæmingr	Thorgrimr	
Dufniall	Haki	Josteinn	Sæmundr	Thorhaddr	
Dufthakr	Hakon	Josurr	Samr	Thorhalli	
Dugfuss	Haleygr	Kadall	Saxi	Thorhallr	
Dyri	Halfdan	Kalfr	Sigarr	Thorir	
Egill	Halladr	Kali	Sigfastr	Thorkell	
Eidr	Hallbjorn	Kalman	Sigfuss	Thorlacr	
Eilifr	Halldorr	Kari	Sighvatr	Thorleifr	
Einarr	Hallfredr	Karl	Sigmundr	Thorleikr	
Eindridi	Hallgeirr	Karli	Sigtryggr	Thorliotr	
Eirikr	Hallgils	Karr	Sigurdr	Thormodr	

Female Norse names

Ægileif	Fregerdr	Ingridr	Svanlaug
Æsa	Fridgerdr	Ingunn	Thiodgerdr
Aldis	Geirbiorg	Ingvoldr	Thiodhildr
Alfdís	Geirhildr	Ísgerdr	Thora
Alfeidr	Geirlaug	Jarngerdr	Thorarna
Alfgerdr	Geirny	Jodis	Thorbiorg
Alof	Geirridr	Jofridr	Thordis
Arnbiorg	Gerdr	Jora	Thorelfr
Arndis	Giaflaug	Joreidr	Thorey
Arneidr	Grelod	Jorunn	Thorfinna
Arnfridr	Grima	Kadlin	Thorgerdr
Arngerdr	Groa	Katla	Thorgrima
Arngunnr	Gudbiorg	Ketilridr	Thorhildr
Arnkatla	Gudlaug	Kiolvor	Thorkatla
Arnleif	Gudleif	Kolfinna	Thorlaug
Arnora	Gudny	Kolgrima	Thorleif
Arnthrudr	Gudridr	Mæva	Thorlot
Asa	Gudrun	Melkorka	Thorny
Asbiorg	Gunnhildr	Mioll	Thorodda
Asdis	Gunnvor	Moeidr	Thorunn
Asgerdr	Hafthora	Myrgiol	Thorve
Ashildr	Halla	Myrun	Thorvor
Asleif	Hallbera	Nidbiorg	Thraslaug
Asny	Hallbiorg	Oddbiorg	Thuridr
Asta	Halldis	Oddfridr	Tofa
Astridr	Halldora	Oddlaug	Ulfeidr
Asvor	Hallfridr	Oddleif	Ulfhildr
Audr	Hallgerdr	Oddny	Ulfrun
Bera	Hallkatla	Ondot	Valdis
Bergdis	Hallveig	Ormhildr	Valgerdr
Bergliot	Hallvor	Osk	Vedis
Bergthora	Heidr	Otkatla	Velaug
Biargey	Heimlaug	Raforta	Veny
Biollök	Helga	Ragnheidr	Vigdis
Biorg	Herdis	Ragnhildr	Vilborg
Birna	Herridr	Rannveig	Vilgerdr
Bot	Herthrudr	Reginleif	Yngvildr
Botey	Hervor	Riupa	Ýrr
Bryngerdr	Hialmgerdr	Sæhildr	
Dagrun	Hialp	Sæudr	
Dalla	Hildigunnr	Salbiorg	
Dis	Hlif	Salgerdr	
Dyrfinna	Hrafnhildr	Signy	
Edna	Hrefna	Sigridr	
Eirny	Hrodny	Snælaug	
Eydis	Hungerdr	Solveig	
Eyia	Idunn	Solvor	
Fastny	Ingiborg	Steinunn	
Finna	Ingigerdr	Steinvor	
Fiorleif	Ingileif	Svana	

Viking Nicknames

Abandoned	Coward	Fur-trader	Laggard	Scowler	Tax-collector
Ale-Lover	Crippled	Gash-skull	Lamb	Scrawny-runt	Thin-beard
All-Wise	Crooked	Gaudy	Lame	Screamer	Thistle
Arsonist	Crooked-arse	Gelder	Large	Sea-farer	Thorn-Foot
Axe	Crow	Generous	Lean	Seer	Thud-beam
Bad	Crow-nose	Gentle	Leech	Serpent-tongue	Thunder
Bad-mouth	Curly-head	Giant	Level-head	Shaggy-breeches	Timber-quaker
Bad-poet	Cut-cheek	Giant-bane	Limp-leg	Shaggy-head	Tinkle-scales
Bald-pate	Dandy	Girlish	Long-chin	Sharp	Tongue
Bare-leg	Dauntless	Glad	Lucky	Sheen-mane	Torpid
Barker	Deep-minded	Gold-beard	Lust-hostage	Shield	Travel-hard
Battle-tooth	Desirous-of-beer	Gold-bearer	Mad	Shifty	Travel-shirt
Bear-cub	Downy-nose	Good-cheer	Marksman	Shipwright	Tree-leg
Beardless	Dreamer	Gossip	Mercenary	Short	Trickster
Bellower	Dream-reader	Grave-robber	Mighty	Short-penis	Troll
Berserk	Drowsy	Gray	Mixing-horn	Shrieking	Troublesome Poet
Berserks-bane	Duel	Great	Much-sailing	Sickly	Trout
Billygoat	Eagle	Great-slasher	Oaken-crook	Silk-Beard	Trustworthy
Bitch	Earl's-skald	Gripe	Old	Skerry-blaze	Twig-belly
Bitter	Earth-long	Grovelling	Oppressed	Skinny	Twist-foot
Black	Elder	Hag's-nose	Orphan-poet	Skull-cleaver	
Black-brows	Elegant	Hairy	Ox-might	Sledge-hammer	Uninspired
Black-troll	Eloquent	Hairy-Cheek	Paunch	Sleeper	Unjust
Bladder-bald	Evil	Half-troll	Peacock	Sleet-Nose	Unlucky
Blind	Excrement	Handsome	Peevish	Slim	Unwashed
Blind-Snout	Fair-hair	Hang-stocking	Pelt	Smith	Upright
Blue-tooth	Farmer	Hard-rule	Piglet	Smooth-tongued	Valiant
Blusterer	Far-travelling	Haven-key	Pock-marked	Snake-in-the-Eye	Very-wise
Boar	Cleft-palate	Hell-Hide	Poet	Snow-shoe	Vicious
Boneless	Clumsy-boor	Helmet	Pouch-back	Sorcerer	Victorious
Bow-swayer	Clumsy-foot	Heron	Prick	Sour	Viking
Braggart	Codfish-biter	Hoary-head	Pride-of-the-benches	Speedy	Virtuous
Brave	Cold-mouth	Hog-Head	Proud	Spike	Wag-beard
Bristle-beard	Coward	Honest	Raging	Split-stick	Walker
Broad	Crippled	Horn-breaker	Ram	Squinter	Weak
Broad-bearded	Crooked	Horse-fly	Rash	Stink-fart	Whale
Broken	Fast-traveller	Horse-gelder	Raven	Stooped	Whale-might
Builder	Fat	Horse-head	Red	Stout	Whiskers
Burned	Figurehead	Horse-penis	Red-cheek	Stout-hearted	Whistler
Button-arse	Filthy	Hound	Red-cloak	Straw	White
Cairn-breaker	Fish-hook	Howler	Rich	Strong	White-cloud

Careless	Flat-foot	Hump	Ring-slinger	Stump	White-leg
Champion	Flat-nose	Hunchback	Rooster	Subtle	Wild-man
Chest-butter	Foal-forehead	Illegitimate	Rutter	Surprise-attack	Winker
Chieftain	Foolish	Impressive	Sad	Swarthy-old-man	Wise
Child-Sparer	Forest-nose	Insignificant	Salmon	Swarthy-skin	Witch-breaker
Cleft-palate	Fork-beard	Iron-side	Sarcastic	Swift-eyed	Woe-snout
Clumsy-boor	Fortunate	Jawbone	Scar-leg	Swine	Wolf
Codfish-biter	Fox	Keen	Scatter-Brain	Tall	Wood-skull
Cold-mouth	Fringed-cloak	Knob	Scoffing	Tangle-hair	Worm-tongue

Saxon Names

Saxons only have given names. If someone wants to distinguish between two people with the same name they add the person's occupation, home village or, for married women, the husband's name. For example 'Wulfstan the Smith', 'Wulfstan of Brycgstow' or 'Aethelburg, Wulfstan's wife'

Male Saxon names.

Acca	Aculf	Adalaver	Adalbert	Adelgar	Aefic	Aegelbriht
Aelfferth	Aelfgaerd	Aelfgar	Aelfgeat	Aelfheah	Aelfheard	Aelfhere
Aelfnoth	Aelfred	Aelfric	Aelfsi	Aelfsig	Aelfsige	Aelfstan
Aelfweard	Aelfwig	Aelfwine	Aelfwold	Aelfyeat	Aelle	Aelmaer
Aescferth	Aescwig	Aescwine	Aescwulf	Aethelbald	Aethelberht	Aethelbrlht
Aethelferth	Aethelgar	Ae-thelgeard	Aethelgeat	Ae-thelheard	Aethelhelm	Aethelhere
Aethelhun	Aethelbryht	Aesc	Aelfun	Aelfmaer	Aegelric	Aethelmaer
Aethelman	Aethelmod	Ae-thelmund	Aethelnoth	Aethelraed	Aethelred	Aethelric
Aethelsige	Aethelstan	Aethelstand	Ae-thelthryth	Aethel-weard	Aethelwig	Aethelwine
Aethelwold	Aethelword	Aethelwulf	Aethere	Atheric	Ahlred	Aidan
Aldfrith	Aldhelm	Aldred	Aldulf	Aldwine	Alf	Alfhun
Alfred	Alfwold	Alhhun	Alric	Anna	Anwynd	Arcenbryht
Arcil	Arnwi	Asser	Athelstan	Athelwald	Athulf	Baegmund
Baegstan	Baeldaeg	Bald	Baldred	Baldric	Baldulf	Baldwin
Bass	Bealdread	Bealdric	Bealdwulf	Bede	Benesing	Beocca
Beonna	Beorhtferth	Beortfrith	Beorhthelm	Beorhtlaf	Beorhtmaer	Beorhtread
Beorhttric	Beorhtsige	Beorhtstan	Beorhtweald	Beorht-weard	Beorhtwig	Beorhtwine
Beorhtwulf	Beorn	Beornhelm	Beornmod	Beornnoth	Beornraed	Beornred
Beornulf	Beornweald	Beornwig	Beornwulf	Beorthulf	Berhtred	Biede
Blecca	Boneval	Bosa	Botulf	Brand	Bregowine	Brid
Briht	Brihteah	Brihtnoth	Brihtred	Brihttric	Brihtwold	Brinin
Brorda	Brunstan	Brunwine	Burhred	Bumoth	Byrhthelm	Byrhtsige
Byrhtnoth	Byrhtwold	Byrnstan	Cadwallon	Ceadda	Ceadwalla	Ceawlin
Cenbryht	Cenred	Centus	Centwine	Cenwalh	Cenwulf	Ceol
Ceola	Ceolbeald	Ceolheard	Ceolmund	Ceolnoth	Ceolred	Ceolwald
Ceolwulf	Ceorl	Cerdic	Cnebba	Coenbeorht	Coenhelm	Coenraed
Coenric	Coenwulf	Colbrand	Cola	Cole	Colinan	Criba
Cumbra	Cutha	Cuthbald	Cuthbert	Cuthbriht	Cuthraed	Cuthred
Cuthwine	Cuthwulf	Cwaspatric	Cwichelm	Cymen	Cynebriht	Cyneferth
Cynegils	Cyneheard	Cynehelm	Cynemund	Cyneric	Cynestan	Cyneweald
Cyneward	Cynewulf	Cynred	Cynric	Cyssa	Daegbeorht	Daeglaf
Daegmund	Daela	Dearlaf	Dearmod	Dearsige	Dereheah	Deor
Deorweald	Deorwine	Deorwulf	Draca	Drythelm	Dryhtweald	Dude
Dudda	Dudoc	Dudwine	Dunn	Dunnere	Dunstan	Eaborht
Eadbald	Eadbriht	Eadgar	Eadhelm	Eadhun	Eadmaer	Eadmund

Eadnoth	Eadred	Eadric	Eadrige	Eadsige	Eadstan	Eadulf
Eadwacar	Eadweard	Eadwig	Eadwine	Eadwulf	Eafa	Eaha
Ealdbriht	Ealdulf	Ealdwine	Ealdwulf	Ealhelm	Ealhere	Ealhheard
Ealhstan	Ealmund	Ealread	Ealsige	Ealstan	Ealwine	Eanbald
Eanfrith	Eanmund	Eanraed	Eanwulf	Eappa	Eardwulf	Earnulf
Earnwig	Eastmaer	Eastmund	Eata	Eawig	Eawulf	Ecceard
Ecga	Ecgbeorht	Ecgbryht	Ecgferth	Ecgheard	Ecglaf	Ecgulf
Ecgwulf	Edgar	Edwin	Egbalth	Elda	Elesa	Eohric
Eomer	Eoppa	Eormenric	Eorpwald	Eowils	Ercenberht	Ermanaric
Ermenred	Esla	Feologild	Fordraed	Forthere	Forthred	Fraena
Framric	Freawine	Freothogar	Frethi	Frithegist	Frithewald	Frithogyth
Frithstan	Gadd	Gamal	Garulf	Garwig	Garwulf	Gewis
Gifel	Gifemund	Gis	Gleadbeald	Gleadwine	Goda	Godbeorht
Godcild	Goddaeg	Godhere	Goding	Godlamm	Godloef	Godmari
Godraed	Godric	Godrum	Godsbrand	Godscalp	Godser	Godstan
Godsunu	Godwig	Godwine	Goldwine	Grimbold	Grimcytel	Guthere
Guthlaf	Gyric	Gyrth	Harold	Heafoc	Heahbeorht	Heathwulf
Hebeca	Heca	Hedde	Hengest	Herebeorht	Herebryht	Hereferth
Herefrith	Heremann	Heremond	Hereraed	Herewig	Herewulf	Hering
Higbald	Hildraed	Hildsige	Hildulfr	Hildwine	Hlothere	Holman
Horsa	Hrothgar	Huna	Hunbeorht	Hunberht	Hunfrith	Hunlaf
Hunman	Hunraed	Hunsige	Hunstan	Hunwine	Hussa	Hutha
Hwaetman	Hwaetraed	Hwita	Hygeberht	Hygebryht	Hygelac	Hygeraed
Iaenberht	Ianberht	Ida	Ifa	Ifing	Iflwine	Ine
Ingild	Inguc	Ingwald	Inwona	Iothete	Ithamar	Lanbeorht
Lanferth	Leodmar	Leodulf	Leodwald	Leofa	Leofdaeg	Leofgar
Leofgod	Leofhelm	Leofhyse	Leofing	Leofmaer	Leofman	Leofnoth
Leofraed	Leofric	Leofstan	Leofsunu	Leofthegn	Leofweald	Leofweard
Leofwig	Leofwine	Lilla	Liofa	Ludeca	Lytelman	Maccus
Mae-genraed	Maegla	Maethelweald	Manleof	Manna	Manni	Mansige
Mantat	Mantican	Manwine	Merehwit	Merewine	Mildred	Moll
Morcaer	Morkere	Mul	Nothelm	Nun	Odda	Offa
Ohter	Orc	Ordbeorht	Ordgar	Ordheh	Ordlaf	Ordric
Ordulf	Ordwig	Osbeorht	Osbern	Oscytel	Osfram	Osfrith
Osgar	Osgood	Oshere	Oslac	Oslaf	Osmaer	Osmed
Osmund	Osred	Osrice	Osulf	Oswald	Osweald	Oswi
Oswine	Oswiu	Oswold	Oswudu	Peada	Pehtwine	Penda
Pendraed	Peohtweald	Phytwin	Plegemund	Port	Praen	Pusa
Puttoc	Raedmund	Raedwald	Raedwine	Raedwulf	Raegnold	Rilberht
Rothulf	Saebeorht	Saebyrht	Saeferth	Saeger	Saemaer	Saeric
Saewine	Saxulf	Scrocmail	Scurfa	Seaxbeorht	Selred	Seoca
Seolwine	Sexhelm	Sibbi	Sibyrht	Sicga	Sideman	Sidrac

Sigebriht	Sigebyrht	Sigeferth	Sigehelm	Sigelm	Sighere	Sigulf
Siric	Sithric	Siward	Smala	Smeawine	Snell	Snelling
Spearhafoc	Sperman	Sperling	Stanmaer	Stigand	Stithwulf	Stuf
Swetric	Swithulf	Sygbald	Tatwine	Teothic	Theobald	Theodric
Thurcytel	Thurferth	Thurstan	Tidgar	Tidhelm	Tidraed	Tidwine
Tidwulf	Tilwine	Tilwulf	Tirweald	Toglos	Tohrwulf	Torhthelm
Tredewude	Tunberht	Twicga	Ucede	Uhtraed	Uhtred	Ulf
Ulfcytel	Ulfertth	Wada	Waebheard	Waedel	Waehlheard	Waeldhelm
Waldere	Waltferth	Wen- delbeorth	Weohstan	Werhtherd	Whitgar	Widia
Wiferth	Wig	Wigelm	Wigferth	Wigheard	Wighere	Wiglaf
Wigmund	Wigthehn	Wigulf	Wihtgar	Wihtgil	Wihtmund	Wihtred
Wihtsige	Wilbeorth	Wilferth	Wilfred	Wilmund	Wilnoth	Wilsige
Wilwulf	Wine	Winebeald	Winebeorth	Winedaeg	Winegod	Winegar
Winemaer	Winenoth	Wineraed	Winfred	Wipped	Wistan	Wlencing
Womaer	Won	Wulf	Wulfgar	Wulfgeat	Wulfheah	Wulfheard
Wulfhelm	Wulthere	Wulfherr	Wulflaf	Wulfmaer	Wulfnoth	Wulfraed
Wulfric	Wulfsige	Wulfstan	Wulfweard	Wulfwig	Wulfwine	Wynbeorht
Wynhelm	Wynraed	Wynsige	Wynstan			

Female Saxon names.

Aebbe	Aedwen	Aelfgyfu	Aelfgyth	Aelflaed	Aelfswith	Aelfthryth
Aelfwyn	Aethelburg	Aethelburh	Aethelflaed	Aethelgifu	Aethelswith	Ae- thelthryth
Agatha	Agnes	Ailred	Beadohild	Bebbe	Beorngyth	Berhtgyth
Bucge	Ceolburh	Cuthberg	Cuthburh	Cuthswith	Cwenburg	Cwenburh
Cyneberg	Cyneswith	Cynethryth	Eadburg	Eadgifu	Eadgyth	Ealhild
Ealhswith	Eanflaed	Eangyth	Eawyn	Ecgfrida	Ecgfrithu	Edith
Emma	Ercongota	Ethelflaed	Frythegith	Frithugyth	Geatfleda	Godgifu
Godgyth	Gytha	Heiu	Herelufu	Hild	Hilda	Hildeburg
Hildegard	Hildelith	Hildegyth	Hildithryth	Inga	Leofgifu	Leofgyth
Leoflaed	Leofrun	Leofwaru	Maethild	Mathilda	Matilda	Mildrith
Nothgyth	Oedilburga	Osgyth	Osthryth	Raenmaeld	Ricola	Rienmellt
Rymenhild	Saegyth	Saehild	Seaxburg	Siflaed	Waerburh	Wealhthe- ow
Wihtburg	Wulfwaru	Wulfwyn	Wynflaed	Ymma		

Pictish Names

There are almost no recorded Pictish female names, but as male names are often Celtic in origin it would seem reasonable for women to have Celtic names.

Male Pictish names

Achiuir	Cind	Entifidich	Ila	Talargan	Urmund
Achivir	Cinge	Epidii	Ini	Tallorcen	Uroican
Aenbecan	Ciniath	Epinii	Iogenan	Talorc	Urpant
Alauna	Cinid	Erilich	Itharnan	Talorc/an	Urpont
Alpin	Cinioch	Erip	Ithernan	Talorcan	Uruip
Aniel	Ciniod	Ero	Itis	Talorcen	Usconbuts
Arcois	Cinioiod	Erop	Lemannonius	Talore	Uuid
Argentocoxus	Cint	Erp	Leo	Talorg	Uuid
Arilith	Circin(n)	Eru	Loc	Talorgen	Uurad
Artbranan	Cirigh	Etharnan	Longus	Tamia	Uurad
Artcois	Constantini	Ethernan	Lossio	Tang	Uuradec
Bannatia	Cornavii	Fecir	Loxa	Tarain	Uuradech
Bargoit	Crautreic	Fet	Lugi	Taran	Uurcich
Beli	Creones	Feth	Lutrin	Tarl'a	Uuredeg
Bili	Cruidne	Feth	Mailcon	Tarvedum	Uurguist
Bili/File	Cruithne	Fib	Malaius	Tavae	Uurgust
Blieb'lith	Cum	Fidaich	Maphan	Tharain	Uurgut
Bliesblituth	Decantae	Fidaich	Melcon	Tina	Uuroid
Boderiae	Dectotr'ic	Finechta	Morbet	Tolarggan	Uurthinmoc
Bolc	Denbecan	Floclaid	Morbrec	Tuesis	Uuthoil
Bred	Denbecan	Fodla	Morleo	Tui	Uven
Bredei	Deo ardivois	Forcus	Muin	Udrost	Vacomagi
Brei	Deocillimon	Fortrend	Muircholaich	Uecla	Varar
Breidei	Deocilunon	Fortrenn	Munait	Uen	Veda
Brete	Deoord	Fuidid	Munaith	Uerb	Venicones
Breth	Deordiuois	Gadbre	Mund	Uerb	Verturiones
Bridei	Deort	Gaed brechach	Murtholoic	Uerd	Verubium
Bridiuo	Deototreic	Gailtram	Nabarus	Uetla	Vipoig
Briduo	Derelei	Galam	Naiton	Uidid	Vipoig namet
Broichan	Derilei	Galan	Namet	Uidnuist	Virvedrum
Brude	Deva	Galanen	Nechtan	Uip	Vist
Brude	Devana	Gant	Nectan	Uip	Vnuist
Bruide	Dicalydone	Garnard	Nectan	Uipo	Volas
Budros	Dio Cassius	Gart	Necthon	Uipo ignaviet	Wdrost
Buthud	Diu	Garthnach	Necton	Uirolec	Wid
Buthut	Diuberr	Gartnaich	Nectonius	Uist	Wirguist
Caelis	Diuperr	Gartnait	Nectu	Uleo	Wirp

Caereni	Domech	Gartnait	Nehhton	Unen	Wrad
Cailtarni	Domelch	Gartnaith	Oinuist	Ungust	Wradech
Cait	Domnall	Gartnart	Olfinecta	Unuist	Wredech
Cal	Donnel	Gede	Olgudach	Uoret	Wrguist
Caledonii	Donuel	Gest	Onnist	Urcal	Wroid
Caledonii	Drest	Gilgidi	Onuis	Urcind	Wthoil
Caledonius	Drosten	Girom	Orcades	Urcint	Wurgest
Calgacus	Druisten	Girom	Orrea	Urcnid	
Canaul	Drust	Giron	Ougen	Urfecir	
Canutulachama	Drust/an	Gnith	Pant	Urfeichir	
Canutulahina	Dumna	Grid	Peanfahel	Urfet	
Carnonacae	Eanfrith	Grith	Pont	Urfeth	
Carvorst	Eddarnnonn	Guidid	Pretanic	Urgant	
Castantin	Elfin	Gurcich	Pritani	Urgart	
Ce	Elpin	Gurid	Ru	Urges	
Cemoyd	Emcat	Gurthimoth	Scetis	Urgnith	
Cemoyth	Emchat	Gurthinmoch	Smertae	Urgid	
Cennaleph	Enfidaig	Gyrom	Taezali	Urgrith	
Cimoiod	Enfret	Idarnoin	Taezalorum	Urguist	
Cimoith/ Ciniath	Enfreth	Ignaviet	Taixali	Urmuin	

Sources.

Internet.

Wikipedia: a great resource, particularly if you want to play one of the tribes we have mentioned but not detailed.

Kate Monk's dictionary of names at <http://tekeli.li/onomastikon/> although we have included long lists of names in this book, these ones are truly massive.

Our website, www.dumnonni.com, for our cool gallery, forum, contact details and up-to-date dc goings on.

The Tir Nan Beo site: <http://www.tirnanbeo.com/>. For our sister game in the Netherlands.

The unofficial Dumnonni Facebook group: for the heat of social media on the topic of DC.

Game resources.

Gurps

- *Celtic Myth*: practically a must read for a concise background of Celtic mythology.
- *Vikings*: a good primer, but possible not as good as the Runequest 2 one.

Pendragon:

- *Pagan Shore*: loads of good detail about Ancient Ireland and Celtic culture.
- *Saxons*
- *Beyond the Wall*: Picts
- *Land of Giants*: A good look at the Beowulf era of Scandinavia.

D20,

- *Slaine*: for obvious reasons.

Runequest 2

- *Vikings*: an excellent Norse primer.

Good versions of epic cycles.

The Tain, by Gregory Frost

An easy read about the characters of the Cattle Raid, honour battles, hospitality and geas.

Beowulf, by Seamus Heaney

As well as being a good story it is filled with Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian customs, from boasting to welcoming guests to your hall.

The Mabinogion, (Oxford World Classics) by Sioned Davies

A reasonably new translation and, in my opinion, much better than the Lady Charlotte Guest version.

Reference.

Gods and Fighting Men of Ireland, by Lady Augusta Gregory.

19th century, but one of the best sources of Celtic myth there is.

Celtic myths and legends by T.W Rolleston.

Osprey do a number of very nice books on the period:

- *Celtic warrior*
- *Pictish warrior*
- *Rome's Enemies (2) – Gallic & British Celts*
- *Arthur and the Anglo-Saxon Wars*
- *Viking, Norman and Saxon*
- *The Vikings*

The Norse gods, by Neil Gaimen

One of many good retellings of stories about the Norse gods.

Heroes, Gods and Monsters of Celtic Mythology by Fiona Macdonald

Nicely illustrated small book giving an account of the most common Welsh/Irish legends.

Celtic Mythology by Geddes & Grosset

A fabulous beginner's tome with all the pre-Milesian stuff well mapped out. Not perfect but a much easier read than most.

Horrible Histories

Full of lightweight and fun facts.

- *Cut throat Celts*
- *Vicious Vikings*
- *Smashing Saxons*

The Viking Art of War by Paddy Griffith

A great book analysing how the Vikings did war. This was researched both from sources and by experimental archaeology with re-enactors.

Novels.

Way of Wyrd by Brian Bates

Foundation book for wyrdd use – see Mark Langford's essay.

The Saxon Chronicles and *The Warlord Chronicles* by Bernard Cornwell

Great descriptions of Celt, Saxon and Norse peoples and a very heroic feel to the tales.

On Raven's Wing and *Lion of Ireland* by Morgan Llewellyn

The lives of Cuchulainn and Brian Boru respectively.

The Boudica Series by Manda Scott

It contains excellent examples of Celtic honour and shows how hospitality works. It demonstrates the Celtic ethos and the need to honour the gods.

The high deeds of Finn McCool by Rosemary Sutcliff.

500AD (A Year in the Dark Ages) by Simon Young

Written as a practical survival guide for the use of civilised visitors to the barbaric islands of Britain and Ireland.

Graphic novels.

The Book of Conquests and *The Silver Arm* by Jim Fitzpatrick

Lavishly illustrated retellings of the First and Second Battles of Moytura, and the struggles of the Tuatha De Danann against the Fir Bolg and the Formor.

Slaine by Pat Mills and Simon Bisley

Nearly all are good, but especially *Slaine, the Horned God* and *Slaine, the King*.

Northlanders by Brian Wood

A series of dark and bloody graphic short stories about the Norse in 7 volumes.

Druids by Jean-Luc Istin and Thierry Jigourel

The first three of this excellent French series set in Brittany in the fifth century have been translated into English.

The *Asterix* books by Goscinny and Uderzo

Not to be dismissed because they are supposedly for children.

Films and TV.

Beowulf and Grendel

Not the animated Beowulf, this one has Gerald Butler in it.

13th Warrior

Full of anachronisms and other silliness, but much fun.

The Eagle

Flawed but with some good costume and the seal people are very like our Pictish vision.

Centurion:

Like *The Eagle* this is not a perfect film, but it has a cool feel to it.

Pathfinder

The original Finnish version, not the shit remake.

Valhalla Rising

Love it, hate it or just think it is a plotless mess. It does have some cool imagery.

Viking (TV Series).

Though much of this series will distress reenactors and history buffs and some costuming is weak, the meat of this series is excellent.

What you will need to bring, site rules and how to get there.

The facilities available on site are very basic, so please be aware of the following:

There is NO RUNNING WATER. Please bring all the water you will need with you.

The toilets we have on site are Portaloos. These are a long walk from the IC area and depending on field conditions can be a way off from the OOC camping. As with all portaloos these become very well used over the course of an event and sometimes run out of basics, it is a good idea to bring loo roll and anti-bacterial hand gel is recommended.

There will be a catering van on site for much of Outlore, but at smaller events you will need to bring everything you need to survive.....

Crew registration

It is important to keep closer tabs on who is at our events, for insurance reasons. To facilitate this with minimum faffage we use a crew registration book. Thus when you arrive at the site you should sign in. If you are under sixteen the adult who is responsible for you for the weekend needs to also sign for you.

Children

Dumnonni has always been and will continue to be a place for grownups to come and play. This means we do not run events for children. Families are welcome at Outlore but please be aware that we do not set encounters or entertainment for children. In the past parents have clubbed together to run small kids' adventures but please do not come expecting this to happen. (Our events are devised for adults, and include frequent bad language, large amounts of lrp violence and really scary monsters!)

It is very important to realise that children less than 14 years of age are not covered by our insurance and we cannot take any responsibility for the care of your young. If you bring children it is entirely at your own risk and you will have to supervise them constantly. Kids are not allowed to run around the site unsupervised for a large number of reasons. In particular, children are drawn to pretend violence and if you do not stop them they will try to join in and be at great risk of getting trodden on or crushed. Our players do not want to ACTUALLY hurt each other and would be mortified to hurt your child because it was in the wrong place and at the wrong time. There are other on-site dangers to consider which include a fast-running river and open fires.

If you wish to bring children please contact us through the bookings email in advance. We do try and have a 'quieter' corner for families but this is a limited space. Children are not generally encouraged at events other than Outlore as there is even less they can do.

In brief:

- 0-14 years old: Can come with a parent/adult, but may not fight or be allowed near a battle, and must have full time supervision.
- 14-16 years old: Can play, crew and fight but must have a parent or guardian on site.

- 16+: You're all grown up as far as our insurers are concerned. You can do daft things and it is no one's fault but your own. The one exception is that you still may not drink alcohol!!
- 18+: You can legally drink without voiding our insurance.

Dogs

We prefer you not to bring dogs to Dumnonni events. If this is unavoidable please contact Martin (site@dumnonni.com) to discuss.

- All dogs must remain on leads at ALL TIMES. There are sheep in the field and we really don't want to upset the shepherd.
- Dogs are not to be left tied up unsupervised at any time.
- Dog mess MUST be picked up, bagged and TAKEN HOME.

Parking cars

At the smaller events this is not an issue but at Outlore camping and car-parking space are restricted in order to stop the plastic camp from filling the whole field. Please camp and park only in the designated areas indicated on your arrival.

Plastic camp

Please be quiet after midnight around the plastic camp as we all need sleep (especially Nathan). If people ask for it we set aside an area away from the tents where you can have a noisy fire as late as you like. Sound systems are not permitted at anytime in the plastic camp, or anywhere on the site, as sound carries much further than you think. We have set crew fire pits available for everyone to gather round when not up top role-playing. If you wish to have your own OOC fire please speak with a ref on site. Fires must be raised from the ground on a metal platform at least a foot off the grass.

Fort and other time-in areas: 'The look'.

Dumnonni prides itself on trying to keep the time-in areas as free from modern stuff as possible. Please, therefore, keep all of your 21st century stuff hidden at all times. Please bring authentic-looking eating, drinking and living stuff if you wish to prepare your meals IC. Modern camping equipment is not suitable for IC cooking.

There are a number of private huts and authentic tents in the fort. Please do not go into them without the owner's invitation.

The space for in-character tents in the fort is at a premium so you will need to book well in advance to have any hope of getting a space. To do this, contact Hux (site@dumnonni.com).

Fires must be small and supervised. There are fire-extinguishers and fire-buckets in all the huts. It probably does not need to be said, but please keep out-of-character conversations to a minimum in time-in areas, even late at night!!

Getting to the site from the A30

Turn off the A30 Exeter-Okehampton road at the Whiddon Down Services.

Take the right at the Post Inn towards Winkleigh (A3124).

At a crossroads turn left onto the A3072 towards Okehampton.

Pass a farm on your right and an old mill on your left and then take the next right turn, sign-posted to Exbourne.

Follow this road to Exbourne and turn right into the village at a crossroads.

Go slowly through the village towards Monkokehampston.

After about a half mile take a left turn for Woodhall (this has a curious, fat but empty signpost).

Go easy down the narrow road watching out for S-bends.

Eventually the road goes over the river; you, however, do not, but instead go straight on through the gate into the site.

PLEASE CLOSE THE GATE AFTER YOU.

The post code for the nearest building is: EX20 3QZ

The site is open for crew and players to arrive from 2pm on the Friday of the event. If you would like to arrive before this time please contact us to arrange it.

Quick Reference sheets

Combat

Hits and armour.

Wyrd users: two hits on the body, one on each limb

Warriors: Two hits on all locations.

Type	Examples	Protection
Light armour	Thick leather, cloth padded armour (eg gamerson), furs or 'woading'	1
Medium amour	Rigid leather or ring mail	3
Heavy Armour	Chainmail, lamella, metal scales or lorica segmatata	4
Light helm	Leather or padded	1 extra to body
Heavy Helm	Firbolg mask or a metal helm	2 extra to body

- Note 1: armour can be stacked so wearing chainmail over a leather tunic and a plate helm will give a person 7 points of armour on their body (1+4+2)
- Note 2: Arrow damage goes straight through armour to the appropriate body location. Arrows do not damage armour.
- Note 3: To encourage the use of helms even though head hits don't count, helms add armour to the body instead.
- Note 4: other types of armour will be given armour values by a ref on an ad hoc basis.
- Note 5: woading only works as armour if the location is otherwise unarmoured.

Damage and Death

When a location reaches zero it stops working.

When a location is negative the damage becomes permanent in 10 minutes or less.

Zero on the body means unconsciousness immediately and death in 10 minutes or less.

The death or permanent injury count can be less than 10 minutes because of extreme amounts of damage or obvious action, such as a beheading.

Healing

There are four levels of healing:

Stabilisation: Anyone can hold someone's guts in but only a healer can stabilise a wound so that it does not get any worse and then leave it.

Slow healing: A healer can treat a wound so that it will heal in approximately half an hour.

Cinematic healing: See also wyrd use. To instantly but temporarily remove the effects of a single location is a minor wyrd deed. To do the same for all of a person's wounds is a major wyrd deed and to heal a whole group of people is a heroic deed.

This means that a wyrd healer, before needing to recuperate, can;

heal 3 single locations.

or heal one person of all their wounds,

or by great personal sacrifice heal a whole group of people.

Ritual healing.

Special healing like regrowing a limb or curing a plague can only be done through great ritual (see ritual wyrd).

Armour repair.

Armour can be repaired in three different ways:

Botching it: a piece of armour can regain all its protection in only a few minutes work, but it will only last a short while, even if not hit. After that it will take twice as long to repair properly.

Mundane repair:

A piece leather armour can be repaired in approximate half an hour.

A piece of metal armour can be repaired in approximately one hour.

A smith who is proven can do it in half the above time.

Wyrd Repair: to repair a single piece of armour instantly is a minor deed (see wyrd rules)

Wyrd use

Wyrd deed examples.

Petty: Wyrd users can do as many of these as they like.

- Slow healing of a healer (see Healing)
- Sensing wyrd: Any wyrd users can sense the presence and rough power of the wyrd in people, things and places.
- A bard can calm fear and inspire people
- The general jubbly of being important.
- Navigating the Otherland
- Simple woad painting (see Woad Artist)
- Talking to spirits

Minor: A wyrd user can do three of these before they need to restore themselves.

Examples:

- An instant physical effect on a handful of people, eg tripping them, pushing them back, etc.
- A short term effect on one target, eg causing them pain, putting them to sleep, making them fear you, confusing them, trapping them in one place. These effects can last a couple of minutes or until the caster stops concentrating, depending on the effect.
- Forbidding entry to anyone through a gate, or into a small protected area. This last a few minutes only.
- Wounding someone or breaking something.
- Giving a small bonus to someone, eg strength, extra protection, special sight, wards against wyrd.
- Resisting the wyrd.
- Fast healing a location or instantly repairing a piece of armour.
- Other random things like talking to the recently dead and creating glamours.

Major: A wyrd user is exhausted by one major deed and can do no more deeds before being restored.

Examples:

- All the instant effects can be done to a large group of people.
- All the short term effects for minor deeds can be done to a handful of people, not just one.
- You can wound a handful of people or kill one.
- You can give a bonus to a handful of people.
- You can fast heal all of someone's wounds or repair all of their armour.
- Get creative

Heroic: This can only be done with great sacrifice (see below), either personal or of other people or things of import.

Examples:

- To heal everyone in a group a wyrd weaver could burn themselves out, which means becoming unable to channel any wyrd for the rest of the day and being on negative to the chest (dying unless healed).
- To call someone back to life a wyrd healer can offer his life instead.
- Sacrificing a wyrd-wrought sword could make all swords have the same effects for one fight
- To sweep a battlefield clean of their enemies a Druid can sacrifice a willing king.
- To stop a battle a Bard can offer his voice.

Restoring your wyrd

	The right place	Anywhere	Not meditating
Unproven	1 hour	2 Hours	4 hours
Proven	30 Minutes	1 Hour	2 Hours
Renown	15 minute	30 Minutes	1 Hour

Sacrifice can halve or even quarter the restoration time.

Setting wyrd into a person, potion or thing.

A wyrd user can set 6 minor deeds, 3 minor and one major deed, or 2 major deeds.

It takes the time normally needed to restore wyrd to set such magic. E.g. in the right place and unproven would take 20 minutes for a minor deed and 1 hour for a major deed.

Potion examples: single location salve (Minor deed), all heal (Major deed)

Wyrd duel.

Normally a duel can be resolved purely by the role-playing, but if crew members involved in duels need to indicate they overpower the player(s) they can raise their fist in the air.

Aethewulf the Athentic

Viking, Celtic or Saxon
swords for the posh

He has learnt well and wears
all the comfy authentic gear in

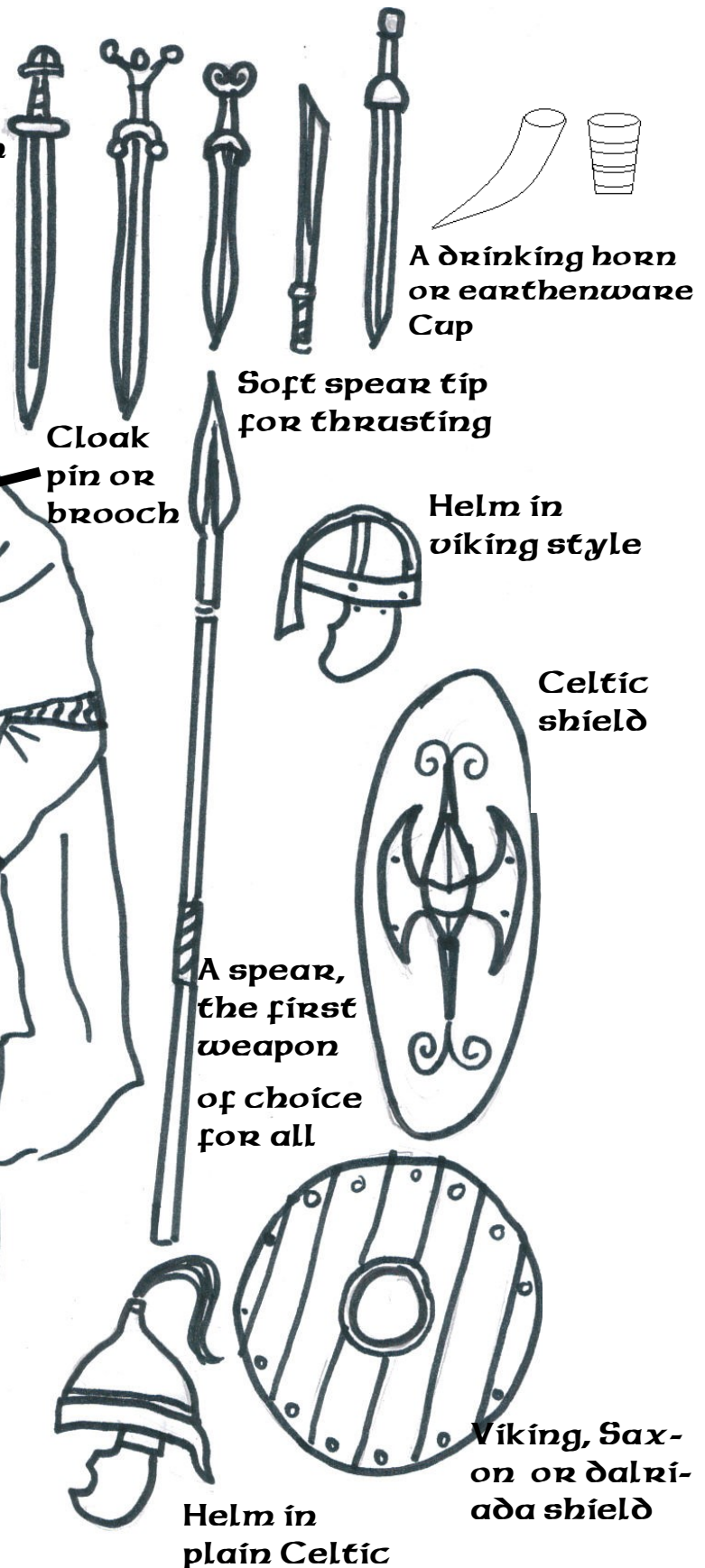
Axe in
plain
viking or
Celtic
style. See
it isn't a
HUGE
double

Wool cloak
of simple
rectangle
or
semicircle
in natural
colours

Brown
leather
belt with
plain or
repro-
duction

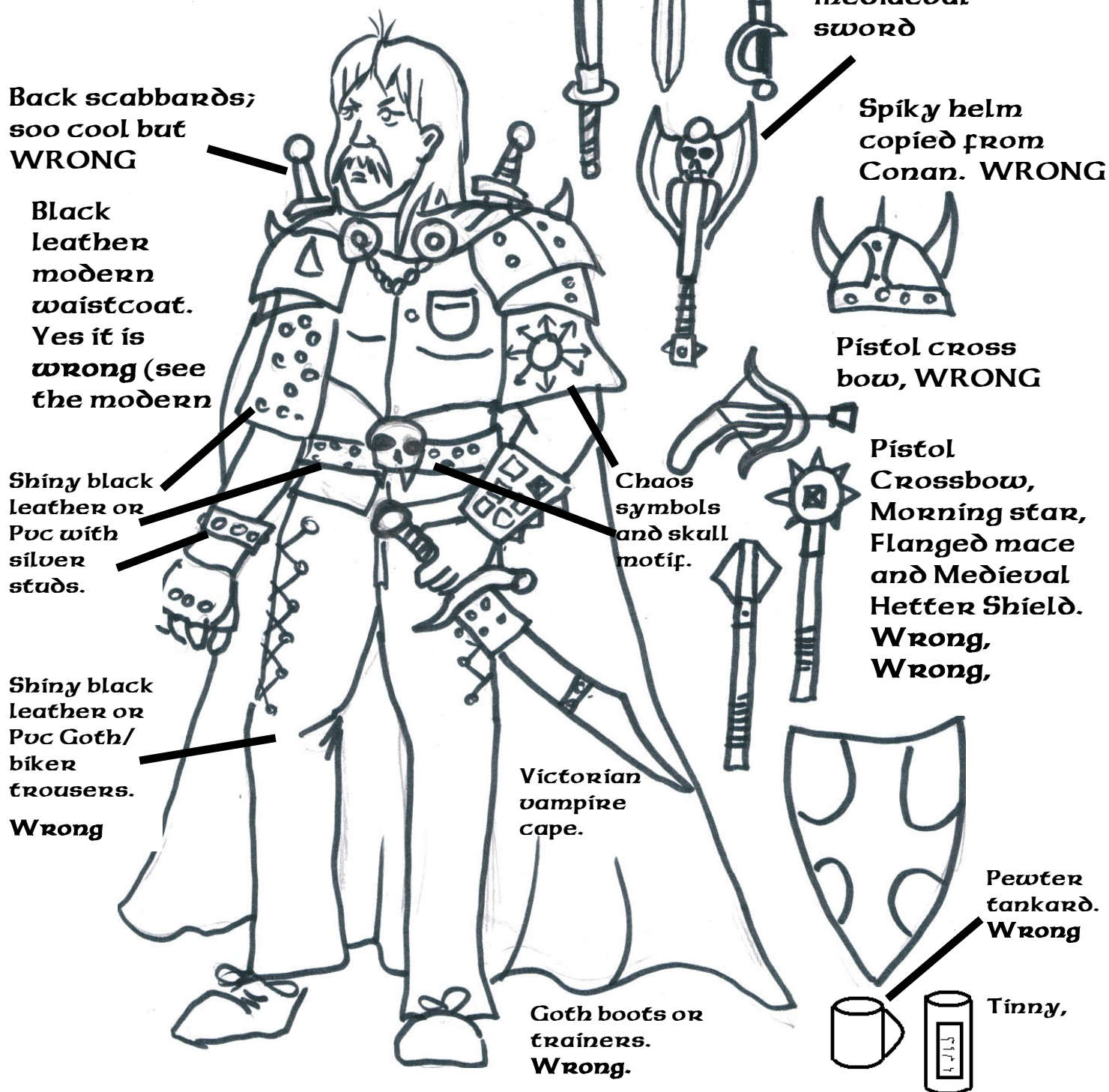
LONG wool
tunic in
natural
colour.

Leather shoes or
boots in a
reproduction style.



Damian the Destroyer

He has not heeded our simple guidelines; and has got it all wrong, Very WRONG.



Appendix h.

Design philosophy.

- 1) The rules should reflect how Dumnonni works at present, with exceptions when we really feel a change to the game is a good thing.
 - a) The combat rules have stayed largely unchanged, but with some streamlining and better explanations of how they work. An example of a combat action which has long been prevalent but not codified is the dying act.
 - b) Character creation has been streamlined and codified, but still allows people to play the types of character that have been played before. The idea that people are either warriors or wyrd users and then extras are added, both fits with current DC characters and philosophically fits the Celtic world.
 - c) The wyrd rules have been rewritten to reflect the way people have been doing freeform wyrd.
 - d) The way people react to wyrd users is changed to be more fun.
 - e) The way the economy works has been explained differently to reflect what actually has been the case at DC for sometime.
- 2) There should only be prescriptive rules for things that would otherwise unbalance the game.
 - a) Rules for combat, healing and armour repair need to be prescriptive.
 - b) Wyrd rules need to set limits on what people can do.
 - c) Hardly anything else needs strict rules.
- 3) The most important part of the guidebook is the description of the background and the way people think and behave.
 - a) Details of the Celtic world view.
 - b) Explanation of the metaphysics of Dumnonni.
 - c) List of famous people and descriptions of the various peoples.
 - d) Lots of flavour to show people what we want.
- 4) Throughout the guide there are essays written by our players, crew and refs to give personal views of aspects of the game. These are carefully labelled opinion pieces as they will not necessarily fit neatly into the more formal rules.
- 5) The rules should also be used to bring people back toward what we want to happen. They should:
 - a) explain clearly what is taking the piss and what is Ning.
 - b) reinforce the idea that players should have a Celtic world view, not a modern one.
 - c) give people enough background for them to know who is who and not make mistakes through ignorance.
 - d) emphasise the necessity for people to stick to the combat rules.
- 6) The long list of individual powers and attributes of different tribes and classes has been removed, but the main rules can enable the same effects. Two examples of this are woad painting (now either a mundane skill for armour or a type of wyrd user) and the White Bear strength feat. (Now the spirit is woken in the white bear by a ghost dance which uses the rules for setting wyrd into a person or thing.)

The Refs and contact details.

Dumnonni is lucky to have a large number of committed and talented volunteers who help run it. As well as the many folk who help out in all sorts of excellent fashions, both big and small, there is a small group who are the oligarchy and that is where the buck stops. This collective is, if not the heart of Dumnonni, then its brain. It is common for people to swap around jobs within this collective and occasionally either people leave or new ones join. However, the contact points for various types of enquiry will remain the same for the foreseeable future.

The currents Ref team are: Mark Matthews, Alysa Freeman, Jon Freeman, Martin Gillard, Lee Taylor, Jon 'The Goth' Valencia De Valence, Mark Langford, Nathan Gribble, Colin Muir, and Heather M Clayton.

Contact details.

Here then are our management roles, their contact addresses and where appropriate the current ref responsible for that post, in no particular order.

Bookings and Finance: bookings@dumnonni.com (Nathan)

Crew: Crew@dumnonni.com (Nathan)

If you want to come and crew or have any questions about it.

Site Manager: site@dumnonni.com (Martin)

Martin organises the site and manages maintenance. He is the person to contact for if you wish to reserve a space in the village for camping during Outlore, or have questions about build weekends and on-site buildings, or want permission to bring dogs onto the site.

Plot team: plot@dumnonni.com (Nathan)

This is the group of trusty souls who weave the web of an event. In practice most of the refs contribute, but the formal team, is Mark L, Nathan and Alysa. This is the contact to use for any questions about plot and also to submit character concepts.

Traders and entertainers: Traders@dumnonni.com (Mark M).

For full details of trading check out our web site.

Kit queries: Kit@dumnonni.com (Mark M)

If you have questions about our kit standards or about a particularly piece of kit being appropriate for Dumnonni, this is where you ask.

On event responsibilities.

Crew Wranglers.

These are the refs and other helpful folk that give out plot, woo up the crew, show newbies how to fight safely and generally make encounters happen. These will be identified to you at the beginning of the event, but are most likely to be; Nathan, Mark M, Martin and Goth.

Crew Shed Team.

These are the people who run the crew shed and organise the giving out and taking in of kit. Please do not get in the way of the Crew Shed Team - their job is hard enough. Do as they say and generally stay out of the crew shed without permission.

Player Refs.

There will often be refs around during the game in order to help manage things and answer on the

spot questions. They will normally be in a NPC role.

Out of event kit management.

These are the people who maintain, refurbish, source and produce our large supply of stuff.

Latex: Mark M

Costume: Mark M

Contributors

The follow folk helped written and/or edit this mighty tome.

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