

The Seagate Times



Issue 36 - Autumn 802

Isle of Undead Cleansed of Infestation

Guild Party Destroys Controlling Sphere - Hope for Dark Circle?

A recent Guild adventuring party has eliminated the threat of an undead invasion of Gwydonia, and quite possibly, all of Alusia. As readers will recall, Gwydonia is a large island far to the south-west of Seagate, beyond the equator, which rose from depths two years ago. This island encompasses many of the ruins of Ancient Pasifika, the exploration of which formed part of the party's brief. Their main objective however, as outlined by their employer, Mr California Smith of the Gentlefolk's Exploratory Society, was to find and rescue persons missing from a colony on the island.

After a minor incident involving a sahuagin attack on their vessel, the party arrived safely at the island, which they describe as desolate and unfit for human habitation - at least until somebody works out a way to remove the accumulated salt of thousand years under water. They made their way to the colony site, and discovered evidence to suggest that attempts were being made to use magic to remove the salt. Papers found at the site indicated that the Guild may have been involved in this project. However, there was no sign of any personnel. There was evidence of an affray, but no bodies were to be found.

It was later that night, when they were camped in a newly-created cave some distance from the colony that the party gained their first clue what had actually happened to the colonists. They were disturbed by the sounds of an earth elemental approaching underground and had to relocate the camp, catching glimpses of undead creatures in the darkness, lit by the reddish glow of Mt Felicity in eruption.

Next morning, the party spotted a cave further up on the flanks of the mountain. This they investigated, and dealt to a number of undead, whose aura read as "True Ghouls". Some of these creatures were clearly ancient, but others were much fresher, and were able to be identified as some of the missing colonists. Following this, the party investigated further, and found the ruins of series of temples to the Ancient Gods of Pasifika, beyond which were signs of a ruined necropolis. Here they investigated a crypt which had walls of bound earth, defeated the guardians within, collected the loot and left, only to be confronted by a horde of True Ghouls with big crossbows, and too many mages. So the party made a hasty exit.

The adventurers returned, refreshed and prepared for a running battle, emerging victorious - which is more than could be said for the undead binder's troupe of terracotta golems which continued to march blindly across the landscape towards the ruined city beyond the necropolis.

The party set out on this route, ran straight past the undead minions, and entered the city from the rear. There they dealt to the Undead King upon his dark throne, followed rapidly by the Undead Queen below. Then it became a simple matter of exposing the spherical artefact which was controlling them to the direct rays of the sun. This device had been infused with the power of Nerull, a Greyhawk deity. It can only be supposed that this deity had attempted to gain a foothold in our plane at some time in the distant past, and was now taking the opportunity to seek revenge for the actions of Guild parties on Greyhawk in the last few years.

These undead were not ordinary. This reporter has learnt that many of them were able to act independently, and intelligently, utilising advanced military tactics to achieve their objectives. The orb maintained a link to the Negative Material Plane, letting them operate in daylight, and bound their undivided loyalty to Nerull. We advise adventurers to be vigilant against any further intrusions of this deity on Alusia.



Elsewhere in This Issue

News in Brief

Bestiary

Puzzle Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

Felicity after discussing using a volcano, earth elemental and saturated earth to blow up part of the island:

"That's not exactly what you call a delicate weapon."

The Dark Lord on his Dark Throne on the Isle of Gwydonia where the Shadows roamed....

News in Brief

Guild Tax Scandal Uncovered

Evidence has been uncovered that several high officials in our Guild has been involved in land speculation using Guild finances, without informing the membership. Promissory notes, addressed to the Gwydonian Company, were found at an encampment located on Gwydonia which the names of these officials as well as representatives from other major merchant cartels. This encampment, until recently, was engaged in experiments in reclaiming the land, currently barren and full of salt, to a state where it would be suitable for cultivation and settlement. Could this have been the first steps in a plan to move the Guild to land that it could claim for itself?

Request for Assisted Deicide

The Alusian demon Cain has grown in power since being reborn into godhood last winter, but has also been doomed to suffer greatly, and has grown tired of his own existence. Cain is now an insubstantial revenant bound to Alusia, draining life from his surrounds and creating powerful 'revenant' vampires as he feeds. Cain has turned to a mystic religion, and wishes to avoid harming any creature, living or undead. He claims he wants to be destroyed without increasing his karmic burden further, as this is his best chance for nirvana. However, whoever destroys Cain will gain the same curse that currently dooms him to being a life-draining outcast. If the curse is lifted, seven rogue gods will return from the Outer Darkness where they went to comfort the goddess Luci, who was afflicted with the same curse when she and Cain were one, and had to flee from Alusia. If Cain dies, his revenant vampire minions and their followers threaten to open a second undead front on the baronies, which are still struggling to contain the Dark Circle. Cain is both the only force that is holding them back, and their main protection. A number of demons appear interested in indirectly assisting Cain, notably Asmoday, his reputed father, but no Powers or their magic can approach within a mile of Cain.

The party who visited Cain have come up with a plan:

1. Organise payment from interested parties including Cain, Asmoday, and several duchies.
2. Remove Cain's godhood, breaking his link with the Eastdale gods.
3. Lift his doom.
4. Kill him before he decides life is good again.
5. Kill all his followers before they scatter.

If any guild party is in a position to complete steps 3 or 4, please check that all previous steps have already been completed, to prevent unwanted destruction. If any guild party has any idea how to attempt any of the steps, please contact the guild librarians.

Further research will continue throughout the autumn quarter.

Balrog Beaten Under Mountain

A returning Guild party have told us of their defeat of a balrog, or a similar entity, in the old dwarven city of Highcastle. This entity had allied with a tribe of goblins, who are currently in residence, after staging a revolt and overthrowing the dwarves.

The balrog was described as a 20ft tall fiery entity, covered in metal slag and glowing from within. The heat from it was comparable to standing near a very hot metal furnace and the smell was sulphurous as it issued poisonous fumes. So the party decided to attack with ranged weapons and spells as well as a Darksphere and an earth elemental.

Upon its defeat, it changed into a lump of molten mithral which sank and melded with the rock below. We can only suppose that is its hibernation state as the party were sure it had not actually died.

It is unknown at present if the defeat of the balrog will allow the dwarves to retake their ancestral halls.

Noble Returned Safe and Sound

A Guild Party was employed by Eddric Earl of Pevensy, to find and rescue Godric, his eldest son. Godric went missing after setting off to hunt down a tiger, reported to be in the woods around Buxton.

The party investigated and had the good fortune to find the guardsmen sent to rescue Godric, led by master Gwerbet. He had been wandering the woods for the last two weeks, unable to progress or retreat. He told the party of how they would travel from their last encampment only to arrive back a couple of days later, always entering from the opposite side of the camp they left. The party were able to determine that they (and presumably Godric before them) had wandered into an enchanted area.

What the party thought of as a prison area proved to be an ancient defence gone awry. It was - by effect, keeping an entire kingdom of elves imprisoned in their own lands, or at least limiting their options of travel beyond those borders. The party agreed to collect the necessary ingredients for a ritual to remedy this situation - four paws of a griffon and a collection of herbs.

One of the party had a great idea, that helped them to ensnare a griffon in short order. He suggested that they string ropes in a spider's web fashion and lure the griffon in to the net with an illusionary pony. They refined the ropes into a weighted net and made it invisible. This strategy was effective, and the party soon had one captive griffon.

The party then set out to find the rare and strange herbs - which proved more difficult than you might think. Looking for a very small orchid parasite on a birch in an entire forest is not simple. However, the party were able to enlist the aid of dryads and other assorted faerie folk, and returned to the elves with the required herbs. The ritual was performed and the party free to take Godric back to his loving parents who rewarded them handsomely.

Serra:

“Pass me that bottle. If these are creatures of the Night, I think we can sleep in until mid-afternoon!”

After Rowan backfires Wall of Dust..

“I always thought the description of a ‘dusty maiden’ was a misprint”

Tussock:

“Let’s go and borrow Bune’s library card.”



Balrog!

The Adventurer's Guide

Oops, I Just Incinerated My Friends

There are times in every adventurer's career when accidents happen or when a flunky fails to resist when ordered to. In our case, we were a rescue party hosing down some wights and night gaunts with twin fireballs from the E&Es, fire bolts from the Namer and hellfire from the Witch. Once the ash settled, we realised that two of the undead were adventurers we were here to rescue. Fortunately, their rings & amulets hadn't melted much, so we could identify the cinders.

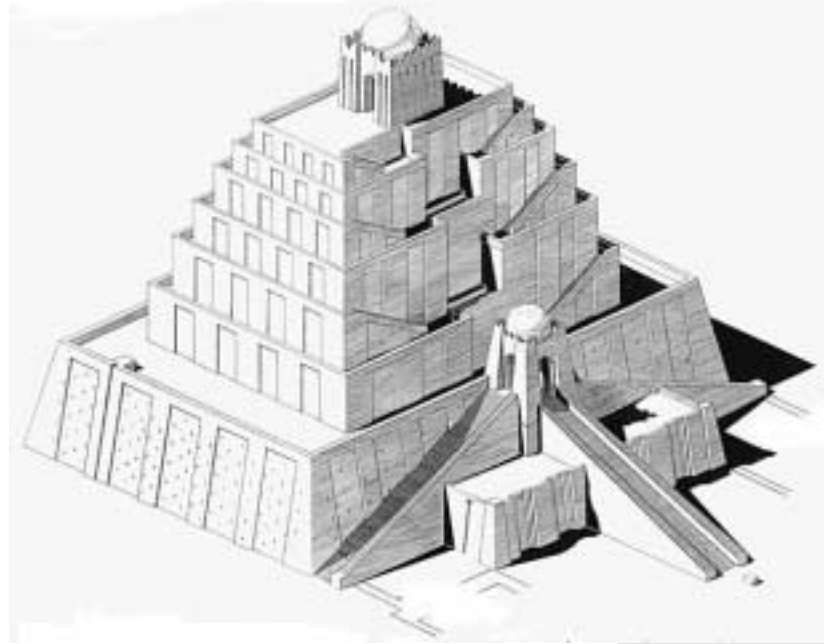
After recovering the rest of the bodies, we had to restore the victims from greater undead ashes by nightfall, without resurrection. This was our approach:

1. Collect the ashes with a small broom.
2. Move out of the necromantic demon's temple.
3. Get a full description using talk to dead with our patient, and use our imagination to fill in gaps.
4. Find a living animal of the same weight - preferably a kindred spirit (we found reptiles worked best).
5. Make the animal into a familiar by binding the spirit using runic spirit glue.
6. Use molecular rearrangement and permanency to change the patient into their previous form, or near enough.
7. Use a wish or favour from any omnipotent mage or Outer Power to link the body & spirit more tightly, so that dissipation won't kill the patient.

This approach is not recommended instead of normal resurrection.

Recommended behaviour in a Necromantic Ziggurat - NOT!

- Enter on White Lotus Day.
- Sacrifice your blood on the main altar in return for favours from the demon.
- Kill the undead temple guardians.
- Raise zombies to assist in gathering the loot.
- Summon a wight to turn the surviving party into undead.
- Combine with remaining temple guardians to ambush the rescue party.
- Spontaneously turn into piles of fine white ash.
- Whine because you didn't get to keep the loot.



Tips for success

When talking to recently-created undead, try not to tell them about powers that they may not yet know they have.

Send out the party member who isn't carrying a spare set of plate mail to do the scouting.

Speed is the adventurer's friend.

Wildfires is a great spell - you can run up and over the wall before they realise you're coming! It's also possible to cast on the run - if you are being carried by another party member.

Tunnelling is a wonderful way to make an entrance from an unexpected direction. But bound earth is designed to bottle up adventuring parties.

Always try to have an exit. More than one exit is even better. You never know when you'll need it.

Golems make great trap-detectors - and they're much more expendable than adventurers.

Active resistance is one sure way to make sure somebody backfires - just hope that it's not you.

"I'm a friend of your son - donate our pay to his church" - GoK negotiates with total strangers.

Grendel:

"The advantage of being a mindmage is you don't need your eyes."

Viola:

"Could someone defile the altar for me - I can't go on holy ground."

Starflower's Bestiary

Ghastly Ghouls...

Ghouls are undead creatures, once humanoid, which now feed on the flesh of corpses. They lack the ability to drain so are considered to be lesser undead.

Although the change from human to Ghoul has deranged and destroyed their minds, ghouls have a terrible cunning which enables them to hunt their prey most effectively. This is most especially the case with True Ghouls, which although they are certainly not sane, display considerable intelligence, planning, and co-ordination in their attacks.

Ghouls are vaguely recognisable as once having been humanoid, but have become horribly disfigured by their change to Ghouls. The tongue becomes long and tough for

licking marrow from cracked bones, the teeth become sharp and elongated, and the nails grow strong and sharp like claws. Ghouls attack by clawing with their filthy nails and biting with their fangs. Their touch causes most humanoids to be instantly rigid and unable to move unless they resist the negative energy causing this paralysis. Fortunately it wears off after a short time, and in any case, elves and other faerie folk are immune.

Ghouls are apparently created when humanoids are killed by a ghoulish attack. Obviously, this must be avoided if the victim is devoured by the Ghouls, and faerie folk again appear to be immune.

Ghouls and ghouls are most frequently encountered around graveyards, where they can find plenty of corpses on which to feed. Ghouls (and ghouls, as described later) delight in revolting and loathsome things - hence the terms "ghoulish" and "ghastly."

Ghoul packs are always hungry and attack without fear. Fortunately, they don't appear to cause adventurers to run in fright like many other forms of undead. These creatures are immune to mind-affecting spells such as sleep and charm, and are relatively unaffected by sunlight. Silvered or magical weapons are essential when dealing with ghouls and their relatives. As always when hunting undead, the well-equipped adventurer should be wearing an Amulet of Jade or of Chalcedony. It should keep them at bay, unless of

course you are operating in the Dark Circle or in an area of similar effect.

The lacedon is a marine form of the ghoul. Lacedons are sometimes found near marine ghosts, particularly ghost ships. Lacedons are less common than ghouls because of the fewer corpses available for them to feed on, but they can often be found swarming around recent shipwrecks in rivers, lakes, and oceans.

Ghosts are so similar in appearance to Ghouls as to be completely indistinguishable from them, and they are usually found only with a pack of Ghouls, often as the leaders. They are certainly somewhat tough, and harder to destroy, however. When a pack of Ghouls and Ghosts attacks it will quickly become evident that Ghosts are present, for they exude a carrion stench which can cause retching and nausea in any who approach.

Worse, the ghost shares the ghoulish ability to paralyzation, and their attack is so potent that it will even affect elves. Beware if you ever see a Ghoul which looks like it might have been an elf, because it is almost certain to actually be a Ghost.

Ghosts, like Ghouls, are unaffected by spells like sleep and spells do not affect them. Unlike Ghouls they are especially vulnerable to cold iron which inflicts twice the normal damage. In fact, it is said that a circle of cold iron will actually repel Ghosts, and hold them at bay.



Adam: "We don't need a cushion. We've got an Illusionist."
Gerard: "I'm not THAT soft!"

Silverfoam:
"The enemy is led by someone who appreciates the theatre in theatre of war."

Hammer:
"Who needs constitution when you have style?"

Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:
Women's Rites:
• A=Freya's Weapons
• B = Algernon's Armour
• C = Gloria's Clothing
• D = Henri's Leather Goods
• E = Berthold's Jewellery
Riddles:
First: Beach
Second: Lava
Third: Wave

The Puzzle Column

Party of Five

A Guild Adventuring Party were all of different races, including a giant, and each had a different College. Their names were: Brother Oak, Sir Crayon, Hydrophilia, Kettle and Moonflower.

They returned with a rather odd selection of treasure items. Can you figure out the race and college of each party member, and which item they chose as their first pick?

- The elven Brother Oak is too weak to use a sword, and already owns a Ring of Reluctance.
- Moonflower delights in being a witch.
- The water mage who chose the Elastic Sword is neither an orc, nor a knight.
- Hydrophilia was taken by the Boots of Slipperiness.
- The dwarf got the Bag of Holes.
- The human mind mage did not chose an item of apparel.
- The Cloak of Visibility was the wrong colour for the fire mage's taste.

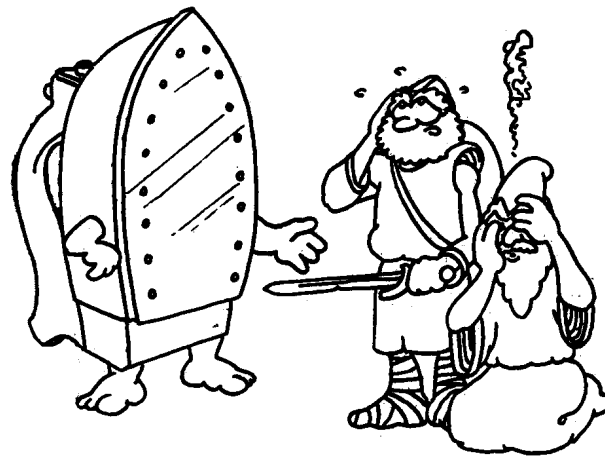


Riddles

A hoard of rings am I,
but no fit gift for a bride;
I await a sword's kiss.

Thousands lay up gold within this house,
but no man made it.
Spears past counting guard this house,
but no man wards it.

My step is slow, the snow's my breath
I give the ground a grinding death
My marching makes an end of me
Slain by sun, or drowned in sea.



"It's aura says it's an Iron Golem!"

Get the Power of Fire and Light!

Fire College Invested Items:
Dragonflames Rk 10
Weapon of Flames Rk 10
Also Rank 8 Weapons.



Now with added Radiance for
Positive effect on dark creatures.

Prices negotiable.
Please contact Flamis at the Guild.

What's Hot

Fire Elementals
destroying armies of
ghouls

Terracotta armies
marching to nowhere

Fire-running rings
around the enemy

Fireballed wights

Being a nameless
horror

Fleeing vampires

Seir

What's Not

Fire Elementals being
turned into frogs and
burned alive

Carrying grenades in
floating Force Bubbles

Flying around the
Baronies without a ranger

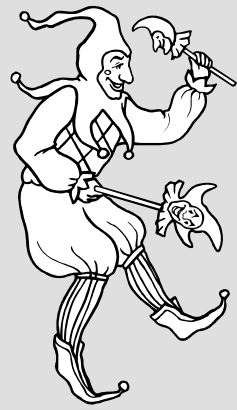
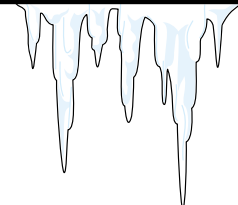
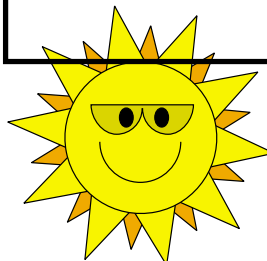
Undead Medusae

Being an unspeakable
horror

Fleeing party members

Uriel

White Lotus Day

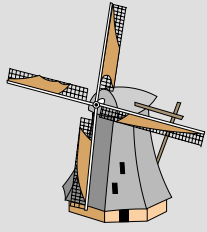


*On Wildfired
golems..*

*"Felicity can
even make
golems climb
walls."*

WordSmith:

*"So, how far is
East?"*



The Rumour Mill

Heard around Seagate...

It's been said that one of those busy bone-shakers has been concentrating on putting the Romancer back into Necromancer. Or was that the "phile" back into necrophile? Either way, can't be any shrinking violet... And perhaps they should be warned:

"The necro found her new boyfriend a blast,
Their romance kindled so fast,
But when she took him to bed,
She found him undead.
Both he and she were a-ghost!"

However, there are worse kinds of trouble. Can we say that getting caught in the process of stealing an archangel's individual true name isn't especially clever? Especially when common sense should tell them there would be some kind of alarm system.

What's this about a certain Fire Mage? Has she got completely batty? Or was that bananas...

There's these demons who have the weird idea that a certain Lady Celestial is an object... And they're willing to pay good money to know where it is.

Now then who's been taking up embroidery?

"I eulogize Arnaud as Scribe:

His chronicles are as technically true as unfetteredly creative. And how
Wonderful to uncover an amanuensis willing to extend the ambit
Of his libel beyond the parochial limits
Of the Guild."

Letters to the Editor

Dear Fellow Adventurers,

I wish to warn you that the Guild Members Menelion and Calavan have, on a recent adventure, put their own interests ahead of those of their companions. I advise against adventuring with either of them. If you do choose to, I suggest that you avoid placing them in situations where their greed could jeopardise other Guild Members or the successful completion of your mission.

Yours sincerely,
Borghoff, son of Praghurst.

Ithilmor to Adam:

"You're a goat. You'll be fine."

*Silverfoam:
"Elementals have no magical aptitude as elementalists can only trap those dumber than themselves"*

GoK: "I saw a black spot, and thought 'that's not a field'."

Wiccan Amulets for Sale

- Amulets of Luck
- increase defence and magic resistance.
- Amulets of Jade
- hold undead at bay.
- Amulets of Carbuncle
- reduce damage from poison



Restorative potions also available.

Please contact Thom at the Guild.

Water College Potions for Sale

Waters of Healing Rk 11 - 500 sp

Waters of Strength Rk 10 - 1000 sp

Please contact Aqualina at the Guild.

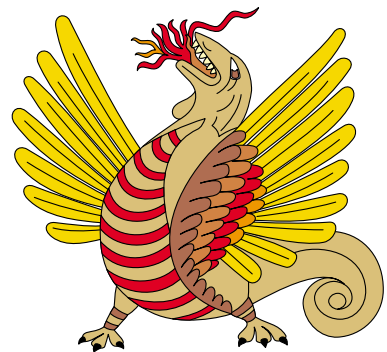


The Last Word

The editors would like to express their grateful thanks to all contributors to this season's issue of the Seagate Times. We remind you that we reserve the right to edit all contributions and to determine what shall and shall not appear in print. Please note that opinions appearing in this document are not necessarily those of the editors or staff of the Seagate Times.

T'ana Silverwind, Editor in Chief, Seagate Times

Ariel Glitterwing Stargazer, Chief Reporter and Astrologer



Contacts:

T'ana Silverwind
Flamis
Aqualina

Jacqui Smith (275-3080)
flamis@ihug.co.nz
Keith Smith (275-3080)
phaeton@ihug.co.nz
julia@drewnz.co.nz

Thom