

WHITE FIRE

A CALL OF CTHULHU MYSTERY

PLAYERS' BACKGROUND

It is **MAY 192-** and Sothorby's are holding an auction of rare books from a private collection in their London showrooms. The players have failed to obtain a 1st. edition copy of "Tristram Shandy" and are idly watching the bidding as the auction draws to a close. The final lot is of several obscure medieval texts; to everyone's surprise, the opening bid is £5 and rises quickly. The contest is between a slight, anaemic man and the noted anthropologist **Sir Charles Ashley**. As the bid reaches £75, the former turns and strides out of the room with a curse. Sir Charles, having paid, comes over to you.

"I say, aren't you old Halifax's boy?" he enquires correctly. "Thought so. Knew you when you were a squalling infant. What on earth brings you to Sothorby's? Never mind, you can tell me over lunch. By all means bring your friends with you."

Over a meal at Boodle's, the exclusive club in St. James's Street, Sir Charles chats about "Old Halifax" (one of the party does actually know Sir Charles from long ago), and explains his presence at the auction: There was an extremely rare text on **Indian folklore** in the final lot, which he was compelled to obtain, Indian myths being Sir Charles' special interest. After lunch, Sir Charles invites the party to stay at his Suffolk Mansion this week-end, to celebrate a special occasion: "Susan, my eldest chi...daughter is getting married on Sunday and she'd be glad to recquaint herself with you, I'm sure."

KEEPER'S BACKGROUND:

This scenario is designed for three or four characters with little or no knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos. It is intended to be run by an experienced GM, however, as there is lots happening throughout the adventure. The connection with the occult is tenuous, but the references to Bealing's ghost story are documented folklore. The village does exist; however much artistic license has been used with the maps and inhabitants. The only GM tips I can give are that before you begin play make sure that you know what happens when and with whom, and during play try to keep things moving. There should always be something happening in and around the house: don't let the players wait around. If you find that events are moving slowly, feel free to introduce the next event in the story.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

Arriving at Ipswich station on Friday evening, the players are met by Sir Charles' chauffeur and are driven 5 miles to Bealings House in the village of Bealings. They are met by Sir Charles and shown their rooms, where they are left to dress for dinner.

BEALINGS HOUSE

Bealings House is a large Georgian brick mansion surrounded by several acres of grounds. It is pleasantly (and quietly) situated, giving a good view over the gently undulating Suffolk countryside. The house is separated from the nearest road (a quiet country lane) by a field in which a curious stone structure is visible (see the section on the pyramid, following). There is another car parked in front of the house as the party arrive; it belongs to **Colonel Parker**, another of Sir Charles' guests.

The house has two floors and a cellar. Ceilings are 10' high on the ground floor and 8' high on the upper floor. Most rooms are tastefully furnished and comfortable: Sir Charles is clearly a man of elegant upbringing and financial means. The house is fitted with a telephone, electricity and running water. Certain rooms (as indicated on the plan) are fitted with bell-pulls which are connected, via a series of wires running close to the ceiling, to a number of labelled bells located in the kitchen. These are used to summon servants but have a curious history...

ROOM DESCRIPTIONS

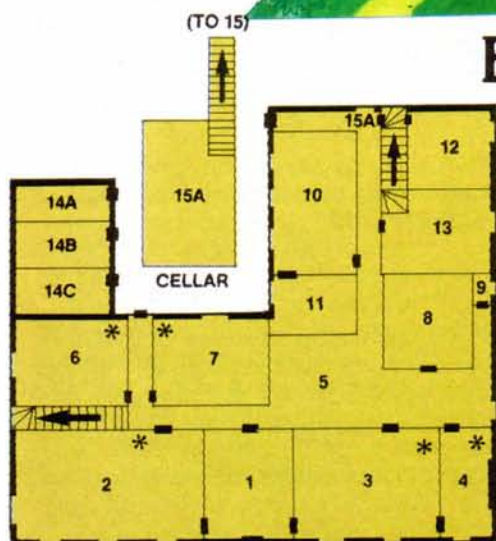
1. **HALL**. Contains a table and two chairs, as well as ornaments on the walls. It is clearly a "formal" room and not used for living in.

2. **MAIN SITTING ROOM**. richly decorated without being ostentatious. This is the room that the Ashleys use when entertaining guests; when on their own or talking informally they prefer to use either room 4 or 7. There is a "secret" passage between here and room 6, hidden behind a dummy bookcase and going under the stairs: There is nothing malicious or evil about it's presence, though the Ashleys may concoct a legend or two to amuse guests.

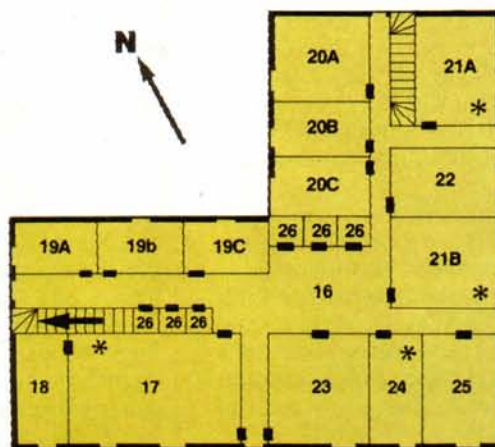
3. **DINING ROOM**. This room is formally set out today: the table is decorated and there is enough space to seat 20 people. Food is brought in from the kitchen on trolleys. The Ashleys eat all their meals in here.



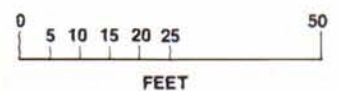
BEALINGS HOUSE



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



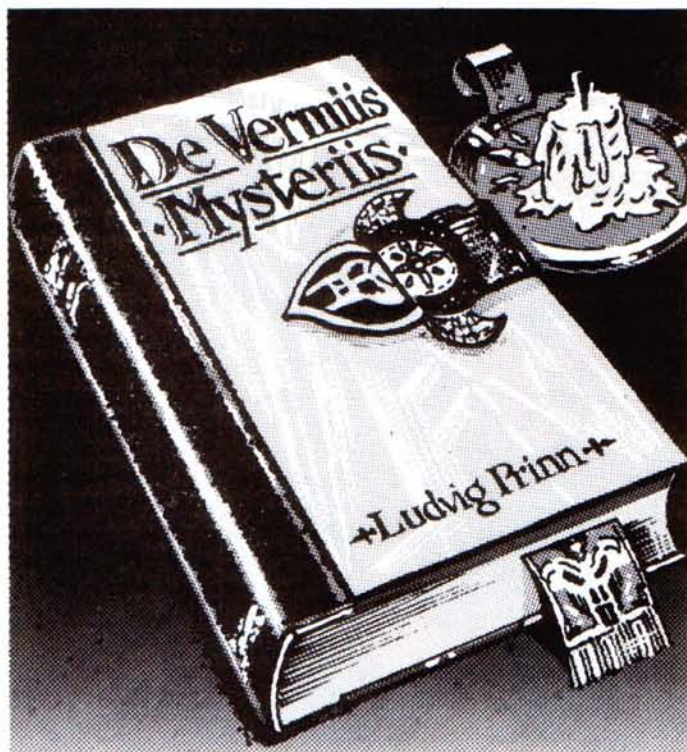
- KEY
- STAIRCASE (ARROW IN DIRECTION OF UP)
 - WINDOW
 - DOOR
 - BELL-PULL
 - Le. PASSAGE UNDER STAIRS. THIS WILL BE EXPLAINED IN THE ADVENTURE.

4. **MORNING ROOM.** This is a small sitting room which catches the light from the morning sun. It is comfortable and contains a sofa, several chairs, a writing desk and a bookcase which houses several miscellaneous novels.

5. **PASSAGEWAY.** This area is a junction between the Ashleys' living area and the servants' quarters. The floor here is polished wood partly covered by an Indian rug. There is a small table for the morning mail.

6. **STUDY.** This is where Sir Charles keeps his books and writes his theses on Indian myths. The walls are lined with bookcases, mostly relating to India, but on the otherwise empty shelf there are two indetical copies of a small book entitled "**Bealings Bells: An Account of the Mysterious Ringing of Bells at Great Bealings, Suffolk in 1834**" by Major Moor.

Should the party ask Sir Charles about the small books, or read a copy overnight, they learn that on 2nd February 1834, the bells used for summoning the servants in Bealings House began to ring of their own accord. This continued intermittently until late March of that year. Major Moor, the owner of Bealings House at that time researched the phenomenon carefully. He collected evidence of other phantom ringings from around Britain, and collated this into the book above. The book was printed in 1841 and makes great bedside reading.



On a table in the room are the books which Sir Charles bought at Sotherbys. These are not yet catalogued (which the players will not know unless they scour through his record books). Should anybody wish to steal or borrow a title, Sir Charles is unlikely to notice, unless it is the book on Indian Myths. Apart from the volume on **Indian myths**, there is a volume of **restoration comedies**, a copy of Boswell's **Life of Johnson**, book VII of **Paradise Lost** and several early printed works; three in Latin, one in French and one in English. One of the Latin ones is a copy of the arcane **De Vermis Mysteriis**, by Ludvig Prinn. Sir Charles is not aware of its nature and intends to sell it when he is next in London. However, there are people who will risk life and limb to obtain this arcane profanity.

There is a "secret" passage between here and room 2.

7. **SMALL SITTING ROOM.** This is the room the Ashleys use when alone; comfortable, informal and slightly untidy.

8. **OUTDOOR ROOM.** Which is a polite name for 'junk room.' Sir Charles keeps his shotguns (two), stalking rifle and fishing rods here. Sarah's riding tack and her old doll's house are here, surrounded by sandstone carvings of Indian sculpture, mounted wild boar heads, a stuffed parrot and the like.

9. **LAVATORY.** No description needed.

10. **KITCHEN.** Large, warm and friendly like its main occupant: Mrs. Bilner the cook, who is usually gossiping with one or other of the maids. Something is always boiling on the stove or baking in the oven. The servants' bells are hung in a line above the door and are labelled: there are twelve in all (the nine indicated on the map, the front door, and the two rear doors). They are infrequently used and tend to cause alarm and general panic when they are.

11. **LARDER.** This is where the food is kept: it is currently extremely well stocked because of the forthcoming wedding.

12. **LAUNDRY.** This room contains a water boiler, a large sink and a rack to hang the drying clothes on. It can only be reached by going under the stairs (see Room 15).

13. **MAIDS' ROOM.** The room that Emily and Mary, the two maids, share. It contains two beds, two cupboards, a table, some clothing and little else.

14. These are **OUTHOUSES**, used for storage. (a) contains coal and dry firewood, (b) has miscellaneous gardening tools and (c) is currently empty.

15. This is a **PASSAGE** which leads under the rear stairs to 12. However, there is another door leading off it which goes to the cellar under the house.

15a. **THE CELLAR.** It is dark, damp and cold with no lighting. It contains a large winerack which is well-stocked with various forms of alcohol, ranging from musty ports and brandies to clarets and champagne. There are obvious signs of recent disturbance, particularly around the winerack (it has been re-stocked recently).

16. **LANDING.** A spacious area, from which it is possible to observe most movement between rooms upstairs.

17. **MASTER BEDROOM.** This room is large and contains several cupboards, dressing tables and a double bed. It is very comfortable and tastefully decorated. Sir Charles and Lady Ashley sleep here.

18. **MASTER BATHROOM.** Large and well-equipped. This room and the master bedroom were converted by the Ashleys from three smaller rooms, the only recent major structural modifications that have been carried out by the Ashleys.

19a, b, c and 20a, b, c. **GUEST ROOMS.** These are where the party will sleep. The rooms are comfortable but not richly decorated.

21a, b. **GUEST ROOMS.** For important guests. These rooms have double beds, basins and bell-pulls for calling servants. Colonel and Mrs. Parker are staying in 21b.

22. **BATHROOM.** For the use of guests. It gets a bit crowded in the mornings.

23. **SUSAN'S ROOM.** A fairly typical room for a girl in her late teens in the 1920's: comfortable and tastefully decorated.

24. **NURSERY.** Now used mainly for storage purposes, it contains old toys, parts of Sir Charles' collection of Indian artefacts and other paraphernalia not stored in Room 8.

25. **SIMON'S ROOM.** The door to this room remains locked. In any guided tour of the house, it will be 'skipped over.' Any questions regarding the room will be greeted with "That room is empty. Very empty." Lady Ashley may become emotional. The room is similar to Susan's but has not been used for some time: the furniture is covered with dust sheets and smells musty.

26. Various **CUPBOARDS**, containing an assortment of clothes, hats, shoes and other garments. At least two are devoted to Susan's dresses.

THE GROUNDS

Bealings House is contained by 15 acres of grounds, including a small area of woodland. It is fairly isolated: the main part of Bealings village is half a mile away and Woodbridge, the nearest town, is three miles away. There are other houses nearby, including several local farmhouses, but they are not easily accessible and do not have telephones.

THE PYRAMID

In the field between the house and the road is a strange stone construction: a four-sided pyramid rising to ten feet high. It is constructed with odd pieces of local stone; two small millstones are visible in its base. On top of the pyramid is the carved sandstone head of an Indian god or goddess with three faces (pointing approximately north, south and west). The whole construction is subject to weathering. If Sir Charles is asked about the pyramid, he will explain that it is a three-headed Shiva (the god of destruction and reproduction). This type of statue is rare in India (Unlike this example, Shiva usually had three eyes and four arms); this one was brought to England by Major Moor, a former owner of Bealings House who worked in India during the early nineteenth century. If the curious nature of the structure is mentioned in the presence of any of the servants or local people, they will tell the party that the head is of an Indian devil and that Major Moor, who was mad, buried his Indian treasures in a vault under the pyramid. This story is untrue as far as the players can tell: there is no sign of an entrance to such a vault in the pyramid, and Sir Charles will forbid any attempts to investigate by excavation.



MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Sir Charles Ashley

A tall man in his early sixties, Sir Charles is a retired banker. He lives 'comfortably' in Suffolk with his family. He has a passionate interest in Indian folklore and is writing a book on the subject, which he intends to publish privately. Apart from knowing the father of one of the characters, he is quite influential in polite society and his daughter's wedding will be a large social event. As a wedding present, he has bought her a large Indian diamond (The White Fire) set into a necklace. Sir Charles is friendly and trusting, and although he knows a good deal about the supernatural and has a slight superficial knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, he is skeptical about such stories...

STR10 CON13 SIZ16 INT15 POW8 DEX10
APP14 EDU19 SAN40.

Skills: Read Latin 60%, History 60%, Occult: 30%, Archaeology 60%, Cthulhu 7%.

Lady Ashley

Lady Ashley is younger and smaller than her husband, 'though not by much'. She has a friendly and engaging personality and runs the household, keeping the servants in order, attending to bills and so forth. She resents having moved away from the social whirl of London and spends much of her time shopping in Ipswich (six miles away), gardening or reading. She does not share her husband's interest in India and considers it a waste of time.

STR8 CON10 SIZ13 INT13 POW5 DEX12
APP13 EDU17 SAN25.

Skills: None relevant.

The Hon. Simon Ashley

Simon Ashley is the eldest child of Sir Charles and Lady

Ashley. He stands to inherit the estate when his father dies. Four years ago, having just left Oxford with a 1st in Classics, he disappeared, never to be heard from again. The Ashleys do not know if he is alive or dead: Sir Charles suspects the latter; his wife hopes for the former and Susan tends to become very emotional at the mention of his name. He is not talked about, yet there is much evidence to tell players that another child has existed; if they do not take the hints offered in the scenario, then describe portraits of a handsome young man in the house, or tell the character who knows Sir Charles that he vaguely remembers an older child in the family; a boy. The players should enquire about him on Friday or Saturday (a good GM can arrange this) and be told the painful facts in an emotional scene, preferably with Lady Ashley in floods of tears.

STR14 CON14 SIZ16 INT15 POW10 DEX13

APP14 EDU20 SAN50.

Skills: Read Latin 80%.

Susan Ashley

Susan is nineteen, attractive and on the verge of marrying **Stephen Brooke-Cannon**, a young and successful lawyer who is staying with his parents in Ipswich. She is still a shy debutante but if cultivated, will open up and talk freely and charmingly (particularly about Stephen). She is a little nervous about the wedding and hopes that everything will go quietly.

STR9 CON10 SIZ13 POW8 DEX13 APP15

EDU17 SAN40.

Skills: Ride horse 35%.

Colonel Andrews

An old friend of Sir Charles, and Susan's godfather, Col. Henry Andrews has recently retired from the army where he was stationed in India. He shares Sir Charles' enthusiasm for India but tends to share his interests with monotonous persistence. He and his wife are to sleep in room 21b.

STR13 CON11 SIZ12 INT10 POW9 DEX14

APP8 EDU15 SAN45.

Skills: Drive 70% Anthropology 30%.

Mrs. Andrews

The Colonel's wife is overshadowed by her husband: she is meek and timid and seems surprised that anyone would want to talk to her. She scares easily and has a tendency to faint when shocked.

STR8 CON7 SIZ10 INT11 POW8 DEX10 APP9

EDU14 SAN40.

Skills: None relevant.

Lady Russell

Arriving on Saturday, Lady Russell is Susan's godmother. She is a large woman with a strident voice, expecting to command the centre of attention. She comes from a family recently fallen on hard times and will endeavour to let everybody know this. She also tends to talk endlessly about the social scene in London; who is doing what with whom. She will sleep in 20a..

STR10 CON10 SIZ14 INT9 POW10 DEX8

APP10 EDU16 SAN50.

Skills: None relevant.

Captain Harry Crane, the Best Man

Captain Crane is another army man. He met the Ashleys through Simon, whom he met at Oxford, and remains a firm friend. He is withdrawn, yet friendly if approached, but will remain enigmatic. He stays in room 20b, or in Simon's room (suitably aired) if 20b is occupied by a player.

STR16 CON15 SIZ16 INT13 POW12 DEX12

APP13 EDU18 SAN30.

Skills: Drive 40%.

Hugh Pode

Hugh is the nephew of Lady Ashley and an old "friend" of Susan's. He is ingratiating and intrusive, entering into conversations with little to say. He should be played as an irritating obstruction. He will stay in room 20c.

STR12 CON11 SIZ11 INT12 POW6 DEX11

APP9 EDU14 SAN30.

Skills: None relevant.

OTHER HOUSEGUESTS

They will arrive on Saturday: the sample above are designed as personalities with whom the players may engage in conversation, ask questions, become suspicious or friendly toward. Feel free to introduce more personalities of your own choice. There will be other wedding guests who will stay with nearby friends, in hotels in Ipswich or who may visit just for the wedding ceremony (mainly from London).

JOSHUA ASTER

The players should not discover the intruder's true identity until the finale. However, both Simon and Captain Crane knew Aster whilst at Oxford. It is possible that photographs may stir the Captain's memory.

**STR14 CON12 SIZ13 INT18 POW17 DEX14
APP6 EDU21 SAN12.**

Skills: Read Latin 35%, Listen 50%, Drive 60%, Anthropology 90%, Cthulhu 26%.

ASTER AS A GHOUL :

**STR20 CON15 SIZ17 INT16 POW17 DEX12
APP3 EDU21 SAN00.**

Skills: Drive 20%, Listen 60%.

THE SERVANTS

The characters would normally not meet the servants, but due to the odd situation this weekend it seems likely that they will talk to some of them.

Arthur Bilner

Arthur Bilner is the butler and has worked for the Ashleys for twenty years. He is never informal and knows his social position in the household. He, Mrs. Bilner and their son live in the village, but usually do not leave Bealings House before 11pm, and are at work by 7.30 next morning.

**STR13 CON11 SIZ13 INT9 POW10 DEX14
APP13 EDU10 SAN50.**

Skills: None relevant.

Mrs. Bilner

Mrs. Bilner the cook is a large friendly, jovial woman who was born and bred in Suffolk. She runs the household "below stairs" and does all the cooking.

**STR12 CON14 SIZ13 INT9 POW8 DEX8 APP10
EDU10 SAN40.**

Skills: Occult 1%.

Percy Bilner

Percy is the footman, chauffeur and general dogsbody. He is 22, still attached to Mrs. Bilner's apron strings, but enjoys the company of the other staff. He is secretly in love with Mary, and has recently declared his love to her. No other member of the household or staff know of this affair.

**STR13 CON13 SIZ12 INT10 POW9 DEX13
APP12 EDU11 SAN45.**

Skills: Drive 80%, Mechanical repair 40%.

Mary Fielding

Mary is the chambermaid and is two or three years older than Emily. She is practical, efficient and secretly in love with Percy. She hides their love because she is shy of the ensuing attention it might cause.

**STR11 CON10 SIZ10 INT9 POW13 DEX14
APP13 EDU12 SAN65.**

Skills: None relevant.

Emily Johnson

Emily is the assistant cook and maid. She is young and a little scatterbrained. The rest of the staff regard her as incompetent. She vaguely remembers Simon Ashley and has developed a crush on him during his absence, building his memory into a fictitious love affair, and Simon into a misunderstood poet!

**STR9 CON9 SIZ9 INT7 POW7 DEX10 APP13
EDU08 SAN35.**

Skills: None relevant.

In addition to this assembly, the Ashleys own three dogs; two labradors and a cocker spaniel.

THE PLOT

Having set the stage and introduced the actors, let us now proceed to the drama which is shortly to unfold. When we left the players, they were changing for dinner. As they descend the sweeping Georgian staircase, they are escorted to the main sitting room (Room 2) by the butler, where Sir Charles, Lady Ashley, Susan and the other guests (at this time Colonel and Mrs. Andrews and Captain Crane have arrived) are sipping sherry and engaged in conversation. Dinner is served at 8.00pm and finishes at 10.30pm. Use this time as a chance to let the players meet the other guests, and to find out a little about the Ashleys and their house, though Simon should not be mentioned until the next day. This short interval is the calm before the storm: make the most of it. After coffee and brandy, the household retire to their respective rooms at around midnight.

At 2.30am, the player who knows Sir Charles is roused by the barking of dogs. If he listens carefully he will be able to hear faint sounds of scraping and scuffling from downstairs. If the player pauses to wake more than two people, turns on any lights that can be seen from downstairs or makes any



loud noises, then the sounds downstairs cease; the intruder has left. If a player ventures downstairs silently, he will hear noises coming from the **morning room (room 4)**. Inside, a tall pale man is taking books from the bookcases and throwing them to the floor after a brief examination. When he realises that someone is watching him, his lips curl back from sharp teeth in a snarl of rage. If the player is alone and unarmed, he will be attacked by the intruder. (See intruder's stats in the relevant section). Any players remaining upstairs will hear the noise of combat, and will be roused within d4 rounds. If the player is carrying more than a poker or walking stick or is accompanied, then the intruder will leap through the open window and disappear into the night in great striding bounds, making pursuit impossible. Anybody who sees the intruder and was also at Sotherbys must roll D100; if they score under their INT×3 then they recognise the man as Sir Charles' rival bidder at the auction. A close failure means they get a sense of "deja vu" - they know they have seen the man before, but cannot place where.

The morning room is in chaos, but nothing has been taken. The window has not been prised open, but forced as if by massive strength, and if the intruder killed anyone then it seems the corpse was mauled by some kind of animal. The dogs continue to bark throughout the night.

SATURDAY MORNING

Breakfast is served at 9am and afterwards Sir Charles telephones the police (unless someone died the night before, in which case the police were called immediately). Two officers arrive to investigate.

Later on in the morning (10.00), a team of four men arrive from Ipswich to erect a marquee in the garden (where the wedding reception will be held) and this continues for most of the day. During the morning, Sir Charles will call the party into his **study (room 6)** where they may notice the "De Vermiss Mysteriis" on the table. It is unlikely that they will recognise the book for what it really is, but they should be

made aware that this is where the antique books are stored and studied. Sir Charles tells the players that he suspects that the underworld has learned of the wedding present he intends to give his daughter: a fabulous necklace containing the **Mohenjo-Daro** diamond, **The White Fire** discovered in India in 1862. The necklace bears the Indian inscription "**It is more pleasing in the sight of Shiva to give this gift than to receive it.**" Legend has it that the stone has a strange curse on it. Despite that, it is very valuable, which is why Sir Charles has left it with his bank in Ipswich.

At some time during the morning, the maid Emily will start a conversation with one of the party and will try to make friends with him. She is naive and a little simple, but quite attractive. The player should feel that she is just 'looking for a friend'.

Lady Russell arrives by taxi just before lunch with six large cases of luggage and three hat boxes. She is outspoken and asks awkward questions. If the party haven't found out about Simon by supper she will probably enquire what he is doing with himself these days, and will then wonder why there is an embarrassed silence.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

The police investigating the break-in leave at 12.30 pm unless a murder was committed in which case they will stay all day. By this time, each member of the party should have been questioned by the police, who are taking the whole matter very seriously.

Lunch is served at 1.00pm and afterwards Sir Charles asks if anyone would like to walk around the grounds with him whilst he walks the dogs. Volunteer a party member or two to accompany him and Capt. Crane. The walk allows the players to examine the pyramid; the Shiva link with the necklace may excite them, but there is no dramatic significance. Sir Charles and the Captain will discuss the events of the preceding night as they walk. Captain Crane makes a passing reference to the bad luck that seems to follow the Ashleys (referring of course to Simon's disappearance). As the walkers approach the small wood, the dogs begin to whine and seem reluctant to enter the area. Near the centre of the wood is a shallow dip in the ground (Spot Hidden to find) which emits an unpleasant smell. Nearby is an empty cigarette packet and the remains of a pigeon. Sir Charles suspects a poacher and makes a joke about the unwashed masses. The dogs, however, are very disturbed by the scent, and do not want to approach the area. This is where the intruder waited last night before raiding the house. If the players want to investigate, they are repulsed by the smell of death and decay. The rest of the walk is uneventful, lasting until 3.45pm.

A conversation between Percy and Mary (our young lovers!) will be overheard at some time during the afternoon; Percy expresses a desire to get away from Bealings and live somewhere in luxury. Mary agrees, saying "The time may not be too far off." She is actually referring to the fact that they will shortly declare their love to the world and get engaged, but the party may misinterpret her statement.

Hugh Pode arrives at 4pm. He should strike the party as foppish and aggravating. He will be no help in any action the players take during the rest of the adventure.

Sir Charles' bank manager visits at 5.00, just as the tent workmen are leaving, and gives Sir Charles a small ebony box. This contains the necklace, which is then hidden in **room 8**, inside the locked gun cabinet (a familiar family hiding place for valuables).

A delivery of food and champagne arrives at 6pm from Fortnum & Mason.

SATURDAY EVENING

Dinner is served at 8pm again, and guests include Stephen Brooke-Cannon's parents and the vicar who is to perform the marriage ceremony the next day. While the whole household and two of the servants are in the dining room, the bells in the kitchen begin to ring! First one, then three or four until finally they are all clanging raucously - with

the exception of the front door bell which stays silent. Sir Charles proceeds to investigate, followed by his family and several of the guests. No hoax can be found, the Bealings bells are again ringing of their own accord. Sir Charles relates the ghost story (see the description of the book in room 6). Sir Charles insists that the tale is a woeful legend of little consequence. Mrs. Bilner, pale and nervous, interrupts him. According to her, the bells will ring if there is to be a death in the household: "This is the tale told in the village, which has been here longer than Sir Charles has been in Suffolk!" Susan shrieks and runs to her room and Mrs. Andrews faints. The bells continue to ring until 10.30 when they stop one by one. The household, shaken, retires to bed at 11pm. **BY THIS TIME THE PARTY SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SIMON ASHLEY'S DISAPPEARANCE FOUR YEARS AGO.**

At 12.30, a loud knocking is heard on the front door. A minute later, the knock comes again and the dogs start howling. Sir Charles will rouse at least one of the party to escort him downstairs. He arms himself with golf club (a 5 iron), yet when the door is opened a tall, handsome man stands there, smiling. Sir Charles, nearly dropping his 5-iron, shouts "Simon!" and embraces his son. The household is roused and an impromptu celebration is held. Many comments are made on the irony of the bells predicting a death when they should have predicted a return to life family life, at least. Simon will not explain his disappearance, or how he got to Bealings, saying only that he couldn't let his sister get married without him as best man. If questioned further, he will become irritated, apologise for this and explain that he is very tired. He excuses himself and retires to sleep in the morning room.

Harry Crane, the former best man, is not upset but seems uneasy. If questioned, he will only say that Simon has "changed, and not for the better." The party ends around 1am and everyone returns to bed.

SUNDAY MORNING

Emily the maid is overjoyed to see Simon again, and they spend some time talking. Breakfast is at 9am and Mrs. Bilner has been up since 6am preparing the food for the reception. The wedding starts at 12.00pm: Involve the party in the organised chaos; a good idea is to get them to act as ushers at the church (which is half a mile away). The ceremony goes without a hitch and everyone (there are over 250 guests) returns to Bealings House. The reception lasts from 1pm to 6pm; the players feel a little 'out of place.' If any player makes a successful "Spot Hidden" roll, he will notice Sir Charles' rival bidder amongst the guests. Those who encountered him during the break-in should react accordingly if they recognised him. However, if they try to speak with him, he will disappear into the crowd in the marquee, lost to sight. Any direct conflict may upset the occasion, so the players must act with extreme caution.

If Captain Crane is encountered, he will exclaim: "Isn't it odd, the old faces you see at these functions?" He is referring to the stranger, an old Oxford friend. The Captain has been unable to talk with him. As the guests begin to leave towards the end of the afternoon, Simon takes the opportunity to disappear again.

SUNDAY EVENING

At 6.30pm, with only a few guests remaining, Sir Charles goes to fetch his daughter's wedding present. He returns, ashen faced, saying that his cabinet is unlocked, and the necklace has gone!

Should the party remember Mary's statement from the day before and choose to investigate, Mrs. Bilner will explain how she hasn't seen Mary for a while... On investigation, the door to Mary's room is locked. Strange noises coming from within her room indicate that there is a struggle of some kind going on. Should the door be forced open, our young lovers, Percy and Mary, find that they cannot hide their love from the world any longer. Mary, hiding her embarrassment behind a

bedsheet, proclaims her innocence (regarding the theft of the jewel). Percy, dressing himself rather quickly, defends Mary and asks if Emily has been seen lately, as her clothes cabinet is open and appears to be empty.

Emily is nowhere to be seen, and her belongings seem to have vanished. The players should be trying to assess who else has disappeared; obviously, Simon is nowhere in sight. Captain Crane will suggest giving chase in an available car to try and catch 'the imposter,' believing that somebody has disguised himself as Simon in order to infiltrate the proceedings, and then steal the diamond.

After drinking since 1.00pm, the driver of the vehicle must make several driving skill rolls to avoid an automobile accident. Having done so, Emily is easily captured; she is 1 mile along the road to Woodbridge, with the necklace around her neck and a few clothes in a suitcase. She is reduced to tears when approached, and if handled with 'kid gloves' will reveal that she stole the necklace at Simon's request. He promised to meet her in Paris so that they could marry. If asked for further details of their elopement, she will only cry again and insist that Simon was making all the arrangements.

The players should return to Bealings House, with Emily, passing a car coming from the direction of the House. As they enter the grounds, Sir Charles is found unconscious, and Lady Ashley in hysterics. Between sobs, she gasps that Simon and someone else started ripping the house apart, and have just drove off in Colonel Andrews' car, clutching a book.

The car in question is the one the players have just passed on the road. It can easily be caught, as the Colonel's car is not designed to be raced. A fast chase along country lanes should follow, requiring several successful driving skill rolls. After a chase of 5 miles, the Colonel's car suddenly veers off the road and overturns. It strikes a tree and explodes into flames. Simon and his companion, now recognisable as the intruder, Sir Charles' rival bidder, are trapped within the flame-engulfed car. As the flames spread, the stranger snarls, and with a rending of metal rips the side of the car away. He stands 7 feet tall, towering over the wreckage. His skin is flaccid and deathly white, his eyes red with flame-reflected heat. He clasps a blazing object in his massive hands. Captain Crane gasps a whispered name in astonishment. The creature snarls, shakes the burning book at the group and howls. With an agonised cry, it leaps towards the car, just as the petrol tank blows. The wreck burns with a strange blue flame and a stench you will never forget.

THE AFTERMATH

With the assistance of the Ashleys and Captain Crane, the players will be able to piece together the following story:

Joshua Aster was a brilliant student of anthropology and mythology. He studied at Oxford at the same time as Harry Crane and Simon Ashley. Having left Oxford prematurely to continue his own "private studies," he journeyed to far-off exotic places. He began to supplement his occult theory with practical experiences. Among his many encounters with the supernatural, he encountered a family of Ghouls living in the black mountains of America. He lived with them for two years, protected by spells and magical symbols, until he had learned enough of their ways. He returned to London to continue his academic studies of the occult. To his horror, he discovered a macabre transformation had occurred. His body had gradually become deformed, metamorphosed into a gangling, awkward-looking creature. His senses, too, were effected. He was developing an acute sense of smell, particularly for uncooked meat. He began to crave after uncooked meats and forbidden foods, until eventually, a slave to his own lust and hunger, he found himself digging at graves, as though half in a dream, searching for food to fulfil his unnatural desire. The realisation that he was becoming a ghoul was terrifying! Desperate for a cure and at the edge of insanity, he read every relevant book that he knew of. He finally found a reference that might lead to his cure; it was to

be found in **De Vermis Mysteriis**. The only existing copy that he knew of was the one he tried to buy at the auction. Failing this, presuming Sir Charles wanted this book himself, he planned to steal it.

He was unsuccessful on his first attempt, but the proximity of the arcane book seemed to precipitate his transformation. In desperation, he sought out Simon, who was hiding in London as a Marxist revolutionary, ashamed and embarrassed by his background. Aster cast a Glamour spell on Simon, a trick he had learned from ghouls searching for victims, and took Simon back to Suffolk as an accomplice. Simon persuaded Emily to act as a decoy by proposing to her. In the panic caused by the diversion over the theft, Simon and Aster were relatively free to search for the arcane volume. The hours that passed, and the close proximity of the book took its toll on Aster: His transformation into the creature he became took place during the car chase. Realising the book would be of no avail, he spent his last moments of sanity by crashing the car. Simon died outright.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The prophecy of the bells was fulfilled with the death of Simon in the car crash. Susan and Stephen Brookes-Cannon had a happy marriage, despite its traumatic start. Sir Charles sold the house, after disconnecting the bells, and it was later bought by Captain Crane, who lived in the house until recently. The bells haven't been heard in Bealings House since.

Although the events and characters are fictitious, the village of Bealings, Bealings House and the story of the Bells, do exist. Further information can be obtained from Major Moor's book described in Room 6; in "Poltergeist Over England" by Harry Price (published 1945); or in any authoritative text on British Ghosts.

NOTES ON PLAY

This scenario is intended to be run on a single storyline basis, ie. The players should be encouraged to follow the plot as outlined above. However, as with any role-playing game, a certain amount of flexibility should be allowed for. For example, should the players wish to steal the diamond necklace, several consequences may arise:

1. The players will be interrogated by the police. If found in possession of the diamond, they will be prosecuted and jailed.

2. Selling the diamond is quite difficult; firstly the players must find a buyer who is very rich, and not too scrupulous (The White Fire is famous amongst jewel dealers). Possibly the underworld or the communists might be interested, but this would endanger the players, leading to a separate adventure altogether.

3. The White Fire curse will befall anybody attempting to sell it. Giving it away is fine (see the inscription on the stone, **Saturday Morning**).

If the players decide to steal the book, they will probably succeed. However, Joshua Aster would then try to retrieve it from the players! Again, this could lead to several different adventures.

Several other events might cause the players to intervene in the plot. Aster could be shot as he escapes from the window during his first attempt. This shouldn't kill him, merely slow him down. If captured, he is represented as a half-mad, deformed wretch who should be institutionalised. The Keeper should have him escape at some time, and seek out his revenge on the players during the wedding.

To conclude, Bealings House, its inhabitants, folklore and legends, could be used as a base for the players, regardless of the outcome. Sir Charles occult/Cthulhu interests could be propagated by the preceding events. He may wish to explore further some of the myths surrounding his Indian paraphernalia, possibly allowing excavation of the pyramid. Alternatively, the house could be used by the players as a meeting house, a library, or a business address if they wish to become 'occult investigators,' with Lady Bealings as their secretary.

An intelligent discourse
by Ste. Dillon (B.Sc.!)

MOTIVATION -

The term 'motivation' is often confused with the term 'incentive', the difference being that an incentive is a quantity or quality possessed by a goal or objective. For example, if Griznav the chaotic was feeling rather peckish, the unfortunate Hobbit at the back of the party would have a high incentive value: Griznav wants him (no, Mrs. Whitehouse, not like that!). Griznav's motivation, however, is an internal quality such as hunger, greed, lust, or a need to kill. It is important to realise that incentive values may change depending upon the strength of the motivation, eg. if Griznav had eaten a couple of Hobbits and a goblin, the



PERSONALITY-

[illegible]

NPC's come to that). We can also estimate what type of activity he likes and dislikes. For example, a character who is an introvert may shy away from excitement, taking few risks and preferring a comfortable place in the middle of a dungeoneering party. An extrovert, however, would prefer to be right in the thick of things, up at the front kicking down doors and screaming 'one for the Shire!!' Your PC should normally behave according to whether he is extrovert or introvert, but under exceptional circumstances should be allowed to behave otherwise.

The main personality factors, extroversion/introversion are fairly stable throughout a character's life, despite these momentary personality changes, and by developing your character's personality, you get to know him better. You also discover that you can role-play him better, knowing what his reactions would be under most normal circumstances without relying on your own reactions. When beginning play, however, it is advisable to write down the character's personality as a set of statistics (see Fig. 1). When you need to decide how he should react to a particular situation, roll a D-100. If his sociability score is 9, for example (a very likeable guy who likes being with people), and we roll a 90 or above (ten times the personality score), then he is obviously in an unsociable mood and prefers his own company today. This can have remarkable consequences at critical moments during a game. Example: UGBERT the unshakeable with a CALM score of 9, is instructed to barter with OLGA the fiery breathing, goblin-eating, schizophrenic Red Dragon, for the release of PIPER the puny. Normally our hero would walk right up to Olga, look her in the eyes and demand the

Next issue, I will utter certain archaic mumblings concerning theories of learning, if you have the stomach for it.