

Barrows of the Ferine Magi

Deep in the heart of the vast Feralwood Forest of northeastern Alarius, around 47 degrees North latitude, is a huge, barren region, about as little-known and ill-explored as any obscure part of Nibirum, for all a few old texts refer to it as containing the Barrows of the Ferine Magi. No one seems to know much more than this about the place, as no major rivers flow from it, no trails pass anywhere near it, and the closer main settlements, Huntsman's Green to the west, Oakshire to the northeast and Lakeholde to the east, lie between 130 to nearly 200 miles away (200 to 320 kilometres) from the Barrows. The region remains a dangerously wild one in places, as the Forest's name suggests. The climate is a cool to cold temperate one, with the icy tundra beginning barely 400 miles northwest of the Barrows (650 km).

The mapped Barrows region shows an area roughly 90 miles by 70 (145 by 115 km), most of which has been divided into 6-mile (north-south; almost 10 km) hexagons. The zone within the outlined heavier hexagonal border is that described in more detail here, the zone where specific features have been set within their own number-labelled, highlighted hexagons. A series of numbers used to define each hex location has been added outside the hexagonal border, within the outermost rectangular one, along the upper and left edges of the hex-mapped section, indicating the vertical column, and place within that column, respectively.

Few major geographical features are apparent on the map, as the area comprises mostly rolling lowlands covered by dense deciduous woodland, mixed in places with substantial stands of conifers. There are some areas of more exposed rock and low hills towards the eastern extent of the central barren region, with quite a number of unnamed small streams shown flowing away from the central region towards the southwest, east and northeast. There are many more smaller watercourses not shown too.

Dominating the central portion of the map is the huge barren zone surrounding the three gigantic, eponymous Barrows, a region where the vibrant, living woodlands give way to bare earth, dusty dunes, long-dead trees and dead undergrowth. In places, this is dense enough to form barriers to surface movement (shown by the dead tree markers), although sometimes, such barriers will crumble to dust at the lightest touch, including entire trees.

There are two primary parts to this central zone. The outer ring, illustrated by dot-shading, is a variable-width **Wild Magic Zone**, a place where all kinds of magic prove highly unpredictable, often more powerful than normal, or producing unexpected effects and side-effects. Mishaps can be especially deadly. Odd visions occur here, odd creatures, odd effects and odd weather. It is not a safe place to linger. The ring ranges from approximately three to more than ten miles wide in places (5 to 15+ km), with its outer edge extending some 70 miles northwest-southeast and 50 miles northeast-southwest at most (110 by 80 km). It reaches up from the surface, and, could it be discerned, also below it, for about a mile (1.5 km). The inner edge of this ring is rarely clearly marked, although the remains of creatures and plants that live only through the presence of magic (such as magical constructions) can be seen lying along the border occasionally, always on the Wild Magic Zone side, unless they could once fly. Those creatures whose magical abilities derive from a deity will find themselves warned by some appropriate (GM-decided) means, assuming they are in-favour with said deity, when they are close to the inner edge, that their magic and deity-contact will cease beyond the Zone's inner limit.

Within that inner limit is a broader region in which no magic functions at all. This **No Magic Zone** is roughly 60 miles northwest-southeast by 40 miles northeast-southwest (100 by 60 km). It again extends around a mile above and below ground level throughout. While the vegetation here is as dead and liable to crumble as that in the Wild Magic Zone, it is often sparse to completely absent much away from the dead tree markers on the map. One of the most barren places is the region surrounding the Obelisk of the Revenant Queen (Hex 1208), as the soil cover here is of a fine, black sand, that the wind has moulded into dunes for many miles around. There is no vegetation at all among these dunes, nor any surface water, and the whole is essentially a sandy desert.

The most major features of this inner Zone are the three great round **Barrows**. They each have the form of a low, gently-domed hill, surrounded, and apparently supported, by a 20-foot high (6-metre), circular outer wall of large, white quartzite stone blocks. Each Barrow is around ten miles in diameter (15 km), almost 1,000 ft above the general level of the ground hereabouts at its centre (300 m), and of a curiously near-perfect circular shape. In an identical southwest-facing direction, a broad avenue has been cut into each Barrow, leading towards the centre, which is also lined with white quartzite blocks, a slot about four miles long (6 km) and around a mile wide (1.5 km). At the rounded inner end is a closed, grey sandstone doorway. In each case, a path, difficult to make out in places, and sometimes covered by dead undergrowth, leads towards and right along this avenue, beginning around three or four miles outside the Barrow's outer wall (5 to 7 km). The Barrows are clearly of ancient origin, as while their white stone walls stand-out against the barren landscape, and the Barrow-domes are visible from many miles away in the bleak plains, the variably-sized stone blocks have fallen in places, or slumped a little in their former alignments, while close-to, the walls are obviously weather-worn, despite the natural resistance of the quartzite. Even the smallest of the quartzite blocks are far larger than builders would use to construct such things ordinarily, as if they were built by enormous giants, or magical forces well beyond the everyday. Whether the Barrows are really burial mounds, perhaps ones

gigantically enlarged by the magical event that blasted the woodlands around them, the squashed remnants of once-soaring mage towers, or something else entirely, no one seems to know. Nor do any records tell as to what happened to so drastically alter the character of the forest here, changing a large part of it to wasteland. Perhaps the Ferine Magi were involved, or perhaps they have been invoked merely to indicate some long-past event beyond mortal comprehension occurred in this place.

For all this mystery, somehow, the names for the three Barrows can be found still in certain obscure documents, and for those approaching the entrances, the names are carved in ancient characters above the stone doorways too (albeit without the use of magic in this inner Zone, that may be difficult to tell). Again, however, no explanation exists in the records as to what the names may mean. The westernmost is the Barrow of the Emerald Guardians. That to its northeast, and the more northerly of the trio, is the Barrow of the Noble Jewels, with that rising very close to its southeastern edge, the Barrow of the Forgotten Wardens.

The nature of the contents for each labelled hex was determined using, or adapted from, tables and random processes in "Into the Wild - Omnibus Edition" (Third Kingdom Games, 2023), drawing on some creatures from the Old-School Essentials RPG by Necrotic Gnome (OSE), and other sources noted in Into the Wild. Aspects have also been added from tables in the Shadowdark RPG rules, with the general map appearance based on the style adopted for the Cursed Scroll periodicals, supplementary to Shadowdark, both published by The Arcane Library. Parenthesized comments beginning "SD" below, sometimes with page numbers, indicate aspects of the description pertaining specifically to the Shadowdark rules, especially for creatures adapted from other sources, where differences to the usual ones apply, or where other clarification was felt useful. Sources for creatures not in the main Shadowdark book, adapted for reuse here, are cited. These are available either freely online, or for purchase from DriveThru RPG.

Labelled Hex Locations

001 - Wereboar Camp: In the forested northwestern map corner, near a stream flowing north to south, is a crudely-constructed small settlement camp of red-haired, unusually hairy, humanoids, who rather resemble, and seem to live in oddly close proximity to, a herd of wild boars. The wild boars are ordinary animals, but the humanoids are actually Wereboars. (The Wereboar is adapted from the OSE version. SD: Boars, p. 199.)

Wereboar. *A bulky, tusked, boar-faced humanoid covered in bristly, red-brown fur.* **AC 13, HP 21, ATK 2** tusk +4 (1d8), **MV** near, **S +4, D +0, C +3, I -1, W +1, Ch -2, AL N, LV 4.** **Impervious.** Only damaged by silver & magical sources. **Lycanthropy.** If 12 or more damage from same wereboar, contract lycanthropy.)

009 - Leaden Grove: Amidst a larger area of pine woods in the map's southwest is this curious place. Its soil is of an unusual colouring, silvery-grey with hints of rainbow hues when the light catches it, very different to that even quite nearby. The trees and bushes are all stunted and sickly, and there are substantial patches of bare earth in between. Those familiar may suspect, or fear, this to be an outlying portion of either the Wild or No Magic Zones. However, it exists because the soil has a natural, though unusually strong, concentration of lead in it. The stream passing through carries the lead pollution away with it, and is not safe to drink for some distance downstream. The bankside vegetation indicates the extent of this.

110 - Poison-Plant Glade: Hidden in the southwestern woodlands, this modestly-sized area has fewer trees, allowing many more low-growing plants to thrive than elsewhere. Quite a number are of edible varieties. Unfortunately, all are poisonous. Ingesting any will cause paralysis for up to a day. (SD: Treat the plant poison as that of a Giant Centipede, p. 201, but lasting 4d6 hours.)

201 - Torlin Nomads: A forest clearing by a stream in the map's northwest corner contains a camp of the druid-led Torlin Nomads, one of a number of wandering small tribes of Humans occasionally found in the Feralwood Forest. They are here as the clearing contains a large number of Deadly Nightshade plants, also called Belladonna. While the plant's berries are a virulent poison if ingested (SD: DC15 CON or go to 0 HP), when processed and made into liquid eye-drops, they dilate the pupils, and are a key element used in the tribe's magical vision-quests, and in magical love-salves. (SD: Treat normal tribe members as Bandits, p. 197, but with AL N, and the leaders as Druids, p. 213.)

207 - Rowanforest Lodge: Near a stream by the edge of a large clearing that extends some miles to the south and northeast from here, running into the Wild Magic Zone to the northeast beyond Greyrock Cavern (Hex 306), is this large wooden building, set inside a substantial wooden fence that seems designed to keep out inimical forest creatures. A family of four, corpulent, Human-looking folk dwell here, who will seem initially welcoming to small groups of strangers. However, the Lodge is in a poorer state of repair on closer inspection than it may seem at first, and the fence works just as well to keep captives in the surrounding yard, as the

Rowanforest folk are really lycanthropic cannibals, able to shapechange at night into equally corpulent swine, which is when they feed, often on magically-charmed humanoid held captive here. There are currently four such "guests", apparently enjoying the hospitality of the Rowanforest folk inside the Lodge. (The lycanthropic creatures are Devil Swine Lycanthropes from OSE. SD: **Cannibal Swine**. *A corpulent, human cannibal, able to change at night to a huge swine.* **AC** Day 12, Night 14, **HP** 44, **ATK** Day 2 club +4 (1d6) or 2 spell +3, Night 2 gore +4 (2d6) , **MV** near, **S** +4, **D** +0, **C** +3, **I** +2, **W** +1, **Ch** -1, **AL** C, **LV** 9. **Charm (INT spell)**. DC 11. One humanoid of LV 4 or less in near regards the cannibal swine as a friend for 1d8 days. **Impervious**. Only damaged by silver & magical sources. **Lycanthropy**. If 12 or more damage from same cannibal swine, contract lycanthropy. **Shapechange**. Only at night, allowing alternate stats to be used.)

211 - Castanet Pool: The stream here running from Hex 310 and beyond to the east, and then off-map to the southwest, flows through this substantial Pool, around 100 ft across (30 m), if not especially deep (no more than roughly 3 ft in places, 1 m), which is closely surrounded by the forest, except for a few small bankside clearings. Somewhere in the Pool are two matching, finely-wrought, silvered, Dwarven shields, lost long before (SD: collectively worth 20 gp). In one of the clearings south of the Pool is a ramshackle dwelling made from local forest materials, which a careful inspection shows to be held together largely by spiderwebs. This is the home of the Castanet Sisters, a trio of Forest Hags, sinister Faerie crones full of dark magic, who can transform themselves into giant black widow spiders, each with a slightly different blood-scarlet hourglass pattern on the back of their abdomens. The Sisters possess a magical cauldron in which they can brew any potion, using the cut-up remains of their humanoid victims. Within their home is a great, round, lightweight shield made of mithral and polished to a mirror-sheen that they use as a mirror (SD: 45 gp). They can also use it to magically scry upon distant places. (The Forest Hags are based on the Forest Crone from Nicholas Dessaux's "Creatures from Unknown Lands", a supplement to the Labyrinth Lord old-school-style RPG. SD: Treat them as Weald Hags (p. 225), except that their Shapechange ability has an additional option allowing them to transform into either any humanoid, as usual, or a giant black widow spider. In this spider form, consider them to be Giant Spiders (p. 254) but with a Poison ability whose power is such to require DC 15 CON or go to 0 HP. They have one further new ability - **Keen Senses**. Can't be surprised. The Hags should be taken as LV 8 creatures for further treasure determination.)

306 - Greyrock Cavern: In an extensive clearing by the forest's edge, a little southwest of the outer side of the Wild Magic Zone, are a few small, rocky hills, mostly composed of grey, sandy limestone. A stream flows from a cave mouth in one of these, that proceeds southwest towards Rowanforest Lodge (Hex 207). This entrance leads to a series of three main caves inside, each separated by a winding tunnel around 700-800 ft long (250-300 m). Other than the stream flowing along their floors, the first two caverns and both tunnels are dry, but the innermost cavern is wetter, where water drips and trickles constantly down the walls and from the ceiling into a large pool on the floor, the source of the stream. Partly embedded among the water-deposited features of this innermost cave is a huge, double-handled mug of horn and ivory, carved with merrymaking, drinking Dwarves (SD: 35 gp, if it can be removed intact). However in the central cave, often sitting on a bed made from a loosely-coiled, life-sized, jointed, giant python made of polished gold (SD: 80 gp), is a Spiny Basilisk, a telepathic creature able to fling its flint-sharp tail spikes at intruders, aside from its normal abilities. (SD: Spiny Basilisk - as the normal Basilisk, p. 198, except that its bite attacks do 3d6 damage instead of the normal 2d6, it can use its tail spikes instead of the usual bite attacks, 2 spikes (far) +3 (1d8), and it is **Telepathic**. Read the thoughts of all creatures within far. Treat it as a LV 7 creature for any additional treasure determination.)

309 - Petrified Glade: What seems to be a thinning of the forest in this place is actually a large area of fallen, petrified trees, where all the vegetation has turned to stone and collapsed, even down to the blades of grass (albeit most of those have crumbled to dust). The event that caused it must have happened long ago, judging by the state of wear on the surviving remains. In among the fallen, stony trunks is a trio of Rust Monsters (SD, p. 249), feasting on some stray metal objects they have found. One is a crimson-painted, iron holy symbol, with a small ruby as its central design focus, dedicated to a chaotic, barbaric deity, commonly followed by the more brutish Orcs, which is currently untouched by the creatures (SD: The deity is Ramlaat, and the symbol is worth 55 gp). The other two are partial suits of armour, one of Human-size and made of mail, the other a Dwarven set of plate armour. However, only about half of each is still intact enough to be worth saving (SD - the mail half is worth 50 gp, the plate 65 gp).

310 - The Deepwood Delving: The stream running east-west through here is in the Deepwood Valley, continuing west to Castanet Pool (Hex 211), and the low hills close-by it have been cut through as cliffs. In one of the northern-side's cliff faces is the entrance to the Deepwood Delving, an old Dwarven subterranean

retreat, quite small, with just five main chambers, which is now home to a group of around 20 Deepwood Goblins. The toughest one is, naturally, the leader, and another has stronger-than-normal shamanic magical powers. They are similar to the typical inimical Goblins found elsewhere, except that they each have an extra arm, which allows them to make more frequent physical attacks, and they heal abnormally quickly. In addition, the leader has a somewhat battered, but still useful, shield, and a magical, gem-studded, mace, able to deflect one attack against him per day. (SD: Use the normal Goblin stats, including those for the Boss and Shaman, from p. 221, but all have two physical attacks thanks to their extra arm. The Boss has AC 16 thanks to his scuffed, heavy shield (10 gp) and a +1 mace studded with gemstones (200 gp) that has the additional boon that it automatically deflects one melee attack that would otherwise have hit the wielder once a day, along with his usual spear. The Shaman has a spellcasting ability of +4 thanks to her extra arm. Treat the Deepwood Goblins as two levels higher than normal for further treasure determination, and note that each also has the following extra ability: **Rapid Healing**. Take half damage (round down, minimum zero) from all wounds.)

402 - Purple Palace of Quorun: Deep in the woods north of the Barrow of the Emerald Guardians, not far from a small west-east-flowing stream, and safely outside the No and Wild Magic Zones, stands this ancient, quite modest, stone structure, built entirely of purple marble, stone of a kind unknown in this half of Alarius at least. It is around 1,000 years old, and is showing its age in places, for all it remains unusually sound for a place that has been long-abandoned. Fancy sculpted decoration can be found throughout, albeit again of an unrecognisable culture, showing creatures, humanoids and vegetation from the distant past. It has four larger, main rooms, a number of smaller ancillary ones, and various corridors connecting these. Who or what Quorun was, nobody seems now to know. It has become used as an occasional lair by a group of Giant Weasels that roam the nearby woods. Up to three or four of these may be here at any given time. (Based on the Giant Weasel from OSE, converted here for SD: **Giant Weasel**. *A lithe, vicious, low-slung mammal as long as a horse, including a long tail.* **AC** 11, **HP** 10, **ATK** 1 bite +2 (1d4 + blood drain), **MV** near (climb), **S** +1, **D** +3, **C** +1, **I** -1, **W** +1, **Ch** +0, **AL** N, **LV** 2. **Blood drain**. Attach to bitten target; auto-hit next round. DC 12 STR to remove.)

408 - Ziraak House: Set in the midst of the Wild Magic Zone, near one of the tributary streams that eventually runs into Deepwood Valley (Hex 310), is this century-old dwelling constructed from a variety of unusual, magical materials. This makes it look rather ramshackle, and can give the impression it is crumbling to falling apart in places, yet it is still perfectly sound. For example, missing roof tiles may leave a hole there, yet still let no rain through into the interior. A similarly constructed high wall surrounds the whole, forming a compound with a few more small sheds, which again seem quite tumbledown wooden buildings that prove perfectly sound on close inspection. Equally, the stream's bed sometime shifts from one side of the property to another without warning, occasionally repeatedly during, say, even a brief conversation. Wild magic in action. The main building has six larger rooms on two levels, plus passages, cupboards and suchlike. Four Feralwood Hobgoblins live here, magical Hobgoblin variants that have the power of paralysis by touch, and the ability to recover quickly from damage. They, or their ancestors, claim to have built the House originally, albeit they are rather vague as to when this was in the past. (The inhabitants are based on the OSE Thoul. SD: **Feralwood Hobgoblin**. *A magical hobgoblin-like humanoid that has some powers akin to ghouls and trolls.* **AC** 12, **HP** 16, **ATK** 2 claw +3 (1d6 + paralyze) or 1 longsword +3 (1d8) or 1 longbow (far) +1 (1d8), **MV** near, **S** +3, **D** +1, **C** +2, **I** +1, **W** +0, **Ch** +0, **AL** C, **LV** 3. **Paralyze**. DC 12 CON or paralyzed 1d4 rounds. **Regenerate**. Regains 1d6 HP on its turn unless its wounds are cauterized with fire or acid.)

505 - Entrance to the Barrow of the Emerald Guardians: An old, sometimes dead-brushwood-overgrown trail leads towards the start of the quartzite-walled avenue leading to the entrance to the Barrow from the southwest, starting out in the Wild Magic Zone (Hex 406). The whole Barrow is fully in the No Magic Zone. A separate Atlas map covers its interior chambers. Near the start of the avenue, though not quite on the line of the trail, is a concealed sinkhole that will open-up suddenly if the weight of at least one normal adult Human is placed on it. The sinkhole is about 30 ft across (9 m) and around 40 ft deep (12 m), with irregular sides. At its base is a dry, rounded cave roughly 50 ft in diameter, with a nearly 10 ft high ceiling (15 m by 3 m). There are no exits from it, other than the sinkhole shaft. Partly hidden by the fallen dust and debris from the sinkhole cover's collapse is a matched pair of bastard swords with griffon pommels. They are in good condition once freed from the dust (SD: 25 gp the pair).

703 - Unicorn Grove: In the northern part of the No Magic Zone, beginning a little way inside it from the inner edge of the Wild Magic Zone, is what seems a continuation of the extensive dead forest landscape nearby. Indeed, from within the Wild Magic Zone, it appears identical. Once in the No Magic Zone however, it becomes apparent that the dead woodland here is composed of petrified, giant-sized - so of typical tree

height, not their usual much smaller size - Violet Fungi (SD, p. 261). Towards the middle of this fungal-shell Grove is a pair of crumbling, petrified unicorns.

705 - Salted Ruins: Southwest of the entrance-avenue to the Barrow of the Noble Jewels (Hex 805) are the remains of a ruined small settlement, probably originally a village in extent. This is difficult to confirm because the ruins, and the entire area for almost half a mile (nearly a kilometre) irregularly all around it, is encrusted with a thick layer of white salt crystals. From a distance, this may seem like frosted snow, as it sparkles in the light in much the same way. Four Lizardfolk Centaurs lurk around the area (they have the head of a crocodile set on the upper torso of a lizardfolk humanoid, with the four-legged body of a crocodile as their legs). They seem to thrive here, for all there is no open water nearby. The trail leading to the Barrow's entrance begins in the salted settlement, so far as can be told. It shows as a depressed line in the salt in places, leading away to the northeast. (The current inhabitants were devised using the Abominations template in "The Tome of Horrors" by Necromancer Games. SD: **Lizardfolk Centaur.** *A vicious, intelligent, crocodilian creature, with a lizardfolk humanoid torso and arms set between a crocodile's head and body.* **AC 14, HP 20, ATK 2** bite +3 (1d8) or 2 spear (close/near) +3 (1d6), **MV** near (swim), **S +3, D +1, C +2, I -1, W +1, Ch -2, AL C, LV 4.**

709 - Well of the Hydra: Close to the forest edge near the outer southern limit of the Wild Magic Zone is a modestly-sized, tile-roofed, brick building. A small stream runs northeast-southwest not far away to the southeast. The structure is more than 500 years old, and inside it is a brick-lined well-shaft, roughly 10 ft wide (3 m) and at least 200 ft deep (60 m), attached to which is a mechanical pump and bladder device, allowing water to be pumped up from the well with relative ease through a spout set some distance above a clay-lined brick basin, whose outflow channel, of similar design, runs outside towards the stream. The channel and basin are quite dry, although the pump, perhaps surprisingly, remains in good order. Water pumped from the well in the building is perfectly safe to drink, and indeed will help either heal someone injured who partakes of it, or permanently improve one of their abilities (the latter a one-off event). Water collected and kept in a glass vessel (only) retains its healing power for several days. If the water is stored in any other container however, it becomes a similarly potent poison. Hydra motifs decorate the building inside and out, along with the well-head, and there are some brief explanatory texts about the water and its uses inside the building too. By the well-head is an oak lockbox with a coin-slit in its lid containing 80 gold coins. The area around the well building is guarded by a Four-Headed Hydra. (SD: The water will heal 1d6+1 HP of damage, or permanently increase one random stat by one point, once per person only, if the person requires no healing, while in the building. Carried outside and used as a healing potion, the water restores 1d6 HP, or does 1d6 damage as an ingested poison if not stored in a glass container. The Hydra, p. 227, is LV 8 with 38 HP.)

804 - Iroshnent the Exiled: Located some miles up the northwestern outer domed surface of the Barrow of the Noble Jewels in the northern part of the No Magic Zone, not far southeast of Unicorn Grove (Hex 703), is a small, one-room, roughly-built dwelling, made mostly from local dead wood. In it dwells an old Human hermit, Iroshnent, a former mage who lost his magic and retreated here long ago. For reasons he will not explain, he visits and tends the shrine by the entrance to the Barrow in Hex 805 about every quarter of a year. He is very adept at moving quietly and hiding, and keeps close watch on all that happens hereabouts. It seems likely he is hoping one day to regain his magical powers through his diligence regarding the shrine. (SD: Use the Mage details, p. 231, for Iroshnent, except he has no spells or spellcasting abilities. He does have S +0, ATK 1 flint spear (close/near) +0 (1d6), AL N, and this new ability - **Stealthy**. Has advantage on all DEX checks to sneak and hide.)

805 - Entrance to the Barrow of the Noble Jewels: The old, sometimes hidden by dead brushwood trail leading northeast to the Barrow entrance here along its white quartzite-walled avenue, begins in the Salted Ruins (Hex 705) some miles away to the southwest. As with all three Barrows, this one lies completely within the No Magic Zone, and its interior is described in a separate Atlas map. On the southeastern side of the trail by the opening into the avenue is a small stone shrine building, inside which is a statue to the deity of magic. It is in reasonable repair, and seems to be tended occasionally. This is because the hermit and former mage Iroshnent (Hex 804) comes here, usually four times a year or so, and keeps an eye on it at other times. (SD: The statue is of Ord, god of magic.)

807 - Quicksilver Plain: Southwest of the Barrow of the Forgotten Wardens, in the direction of one of the most extensive areas of dead woodland within the No Magic Zone, lies this large, barren region in which are numerous scattered reddish rock outcrops, and occasional, small, silvery pools. The rocks are cinnabar, which could be quarried or mined and processed as a source of mercury, while the pools are of liquid mercury, which appears to be surprisingly stable, remaining as pools without evaporating, or filtering away through

surface pores and fissures. Mercury elsewhere would have, or be considered to possess, magical properties, beyond its natural ones. The mercury here though is simply the standard liquid metal. Removing it through the Wild Magic Zone from here may have interesting effects, however. Perhaps aware of that possibility, a trio of Cloud Hobgoblins (similar to normal Hobgoblins, these ones wear specially-made leather armour, have large, leathery wings, and can fly) are gathering some of the looser cinnabar rocks to take away in pouches. (SD: For Cloud Hobgoblins, use the usual Hobgoblin details from p. 227, substituting AC 11 and MV near (fly).)

905 - Barrow Dust Baths: Scattered over the northern and northwestern slopes of the dome of the Barrow of the Forgotten Wardens, are around 15 to 20 roughly 10 ft diameter by 2 ft deep (3 by 0.6 m) rounded depressions. They look rather like the dew-ponds that might be found in drier, more populated agricultural regions, to collect water for domesticated animals, although they seem out of place here, especially on top of what seems an obvious gigantic burial mound. Their interiors have a lot of loose, fine-grained, dust in them, and some worn-looking feathers in a few spots. From time to time, Harpies fly in here to dust-bathe in the hollows, just like some birds (SD, p. 226). Typically, at least three or four will be found here, if any are present at all.

906 - Entrance to the Barrow of the Forgotten Wardens: A worn, ancient trail, hard to define and in places hidden by dead brushwood, leads from the south in Hex 907 towards the opening of the quartzite-lined avenue leading to this Barrow's entrance. The Barrow's internal chambers are detailed by a separate Atlas map. There is a lot of very fine-grained dust scattered all about the opening to the avenue, on the quartzite wall surrounding the Barrow, and on the Barrow top nearby, much of it perhaps blown-in from the Dust Baths in Hex 905, or perhaps from elsewhere, as the land is very open and largely devoid of significant amounts of dead vegetation nearby. It is very easily stirred up by even slight disturbances of the surface (such as someone walking over it). When this happens, it creates the non-magical vision or mirage of a Human village of magic-using folk, in which the people can be seen moving about and acting normally. The vision lasts only a short time. Quite why or how it happens at all remains mysterious, and it is very difficult to recreate deliberately, so it may only occur once, when visitors first approach this spot. Other details, such as whether it resembles a known place (perhaps the Salted Ruins in Hex 705 before it became a ruin) are left for GMs.

1001 - Lost Road: In the forest towards the map's north edge, is an old plank road running northeast-southwest along a narrow clearing among the trees. Of single-file width, it runs thus for several miles, beginning and ending among the undergrowth, with no obvious continuation at either end. For all it seems long disused, and to have no obvious purpose, it has not become overgrown, for all some of the vegetation alongside it forms dense, thorny hedges, preventing easy passage into the surrounding woods in places. Every now and then among these thorn hedges may be seen small patches of white roses, or occasionally red ones. Each such patch is really a Rosebriar Golem, which, despite its name is not a magical construct. Instead it is a living, mobile, Human-shaped tangle of thorny rose vines, whose flowers change from white to red after it has fed on fresh blood. It can strike suddenly from its concealment with a thorny, tendril-like vine, latching onto a victim, and draining their blood. (These Golems are variant creatures, combining selected aspects of the Heartbriar in Erin Bisson's "A Hamsterish Hoard of Monsters" and the Blood Rose in "Creatures from Unknown Lands". SD: **Rosebriar Golem.** *A living, mobile, human-sized tangle of thorny rose vines, always hungry for blood.* **AC** 12, **HP** 19, **ATK** 2 thorn tendril (close/near) +2 (1d8 + blood drain), **MV** near, **S** +2, **D** +1, **C** +1, **I** +0, **W** +1, **Ch** -2, **AL** N, **LV** 4. **Blood drain.** Once a tendril strikes, auto-hit for 1d6 per round until severed, or victim is dead.)

1002 - Grove of the Immortal Sentinels: In the forest a few miles north of the outer edge of the Wild Magic Zone in the north of the map, a substantial Grove, around five miles across (8 km), is under the protection of a group of Tree Shepherds and Awakened Oaks (SD: Treants and their Animated Trees, p. 259). In the heart of this area are several especially large, magical, sentient and telepathic trees. Two are Trees of Enlightenment, who have absorbed vast stores of strange and arcane knowledge about the world, said to be carried to them by the winds and the rain. Another pair are great, ancient oaks, sacred to the deity of magic, and with direct access that others may be granted rarely too, if the trees here agree (SD: sacred to Ord). One is a Tree of Fate, which will agree to assist querents seeking help at the Grove, providing they first complete a quest the Tree sets. A huge apple tree has many large, shimmering, golden apples, that light up the area around it by day or night, with dappled, warm light. If given freely by the tree to a deserving person, eating such an apple heals all physical harm for one person. The Tree of Knowledge has tasty, pear-like fruits, which if similarly gifted to someone deserving, permanently grants or improves one ability (SD: one free roll on the character's Talents table immediately). Specially sequestered by protective thorn hedges that can be passed only at a Tree Shepherd's command, is a Tree of the Universe, whose rare fruiting pods each contain a living creature,

perhaps one well-known already in the world, or perhaps something quite new to it. Lastly, a second impassably thorny hedge surrounds a great Jewel Tree, which, again rarely, fruits large, flawless gemstones.

1011 - Denocdene Shrine: Some miles south of the southern limit of the Wild Magic Zone, on the southern map edge, a stream passes by an area of apparently near-impassable, ancient, tangled, thorny wild roses, closely surrounding an ancient stone Shrine, with the name “Denocdene” carved above its entrance. It is further carved inside and out with low-relief roses and thorny stems. Rose hips taken from the outside of the hedge can be made into mild healing draughts by those with the skill (SD: restores 1d4 HP). Passing within to enter the Shrine, without cutting a passage through the thorns, will grant those the Shrine favours further healing (SD: AL L & N creatures achieving this regain 1d6 HP; AL C creatures are not so favoured, however).

1102 - Red Water: In the woods approaching the northern outer limit of the Wild Magic Zone, a spring rises in a rocky pool surrounded by daisies. From it, a brook flows west, then south into a larger pond, known as Red Water, for the banksides around it, and along the brook, are lined with blossoming crimson roses. A further rose-edged stream then runs south from Red Water to the very edge of the Wild Magic Zone, and there it plunges in a waterfall into the vertical sinkhole entrance to the unexplored Bragg Cavern, far below. The whole watercourse contains many, remarkably tuneful, singing fish.

1208 - Obelisk of the Revenant Queen: Towards the southeastern extent of the No Magic Zone rises this very ancient, massive, 1,000 ft tall (300 m), pale stone Obelisk. Its four sides are carved with once-magical glyphs that no longer have any magical properties, and the entire area for many miles around (extending into Hexes 1107, 1207, 1307 and 1308) is completely covered in fine, black sand, wind-sculpted into tall dunes in many places, and covering much of the Obelisk’s base. The region of the dunes is essentially a desert, as the air is very dry and there are no streams or ponds anywhere in it. The black sand gets everywhere, and will take days to be free from after leaving the area. Quite who the Revenant Queen was, or what the significance of the Obelisk may once have been, are lost in the mists of time. Towards its top, a flock of about 40 Stingbats have made their roosts among cracks and crevices in the stonework (SD, p. 254; essentially D&D’s Stirges).

1305 - Flameland: Much of the eastern edge of the No Magic Zone, and the Wild Magic Zone beyond it, extending into the forested land there too, is quite rocky in places, with many low hills. Flameland is one such area on the forest’s edge, surrounded from the southeast clockwise to the northwest by the outer edge of the Wild Magic Zone. The hills here extend across that Zone and into the No Magic one, including at least parts of Hexes 1105, 1106, 1205, 1206, 1304, 1306, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, 1504, 1505, 1605 and 1606. The rock outcrops among these are of good, building-quality, red sandstone, whose colouring reaches its brightest, fiery-red peak in this area. This is not the only reason for the place-name, as a Phoenix has its nest here as well (SD, p. 243).

1401 - Forest Explorers’ Camp: On the southeastern bank of a stream in the northeastern woods on the map is an area of especially fine giant redwood trees, very tall, straight and aromatic. On the western side of the trees, towards the stream, is a campsite, where a group of five folk calling themselves The Forest Explorers are based. All are robed in heavy, dark green, hooded cloaks, wear mail armour, and bear bastard swords. Four of the five are of typical Human stature, and one is of Dwarven build. Roxara, the leader, bears a great shield of lightweight, yet very strong, silvery metal, etched with soaring dragons (SD: mithral, 40 gp). The probable Dwarf is Zorli, who, perhaps unsurprisingly, has a well-forged Dwarven shield (20 gp). Of the remaining three, Yao’s mail is painted jet black, Corina’s sword has a wavy edge, and Kiara has a silver fang embroidered on her cloak, with a silver fang pendant around her neck (SD, 1 gp). Oddly, none seem to realise they are actually undead Wights (SD, p. 263; thanks to their shields, Roxara and Zorli both have AC 16).

1405 - Redwood Glade: Among the low, red sandstone hills northeast from Flameland (Hex 1305), the forest here has again produced a very fine, extensive stand of giant redwoods. Concealed among their foliage is an unusual predator, an Arboreal Decapus. This is a large, roughly spherical creature, with warty, dark green skin and ten long, flexible tentacles. It uses these to hang and swing from branches in tall trees, and to attack with. It is able to mimic convincingly any sounds it has heard before, although it does not understand them, and can emit a terrifying shriek, including when identifying its own territory. It is not a native creature to Nibirum, and seems likely to have been spawned or summoned from the nearby Wild Magic Zone, possibly spontaneously. (The creature is based on the Decapod in “Creatures from Unknown Lands”. SD: **Arboreal Decapus**. A dark green, warty, barrel-sized, omnivorous sphere, with ten long, strong tentacles. AC 13, HP 14, ATK 3 tentacle (near) +3 (1d6 + grab) or 1 screech, MV near (climb), S +3, D +3, C +1, I -2, W +0, Ch -3, AL C, LV 3. Grab. DC 15 STR or immobilized. Tentacle auto-hits each round. DC 15 STR on turn to break free. Mimicry. Instead

of attacking, may mimic any sound it has heard. All creatures who can hear within far, DC 15 WIS to disbelieve and not react only to the mimicked sound. **Screech.** Enemies within double near DC 15 WIS or have disadvantage on all actions and checks for 1d4 rounds.)

1408 - Dragon Stones: Among the low hills in the eastern extent of the No Magic Zone, east of the Obelisk of the Revenant Queen (Hex 1208) and the black sandy desert surrounding it, is an area of unusually rocky terrain, where flattish outcrops of a dark grey, fine-grained siltstone are common. Scattered over this surface, in an area roughly 120 ft across (35 m) are twelve large boulders of green marble, not native to this region. Each is separated from the next by a variable distance, between about 10 to 50 ft (3 to 15 m), and all are approximately 12 ft in diameter (3.5 m). Ten of the twelve have carved writings on them, which, if they can be read (possibly problematic, considering they are in the No Magic Zone), provide a detailed prophecy of events still to come (GM's choice as to what and how detailed, although the prophecy should prove accurate eventually). The two others are completely free from any deliberate markings. A Dragonne lairs in a small cave, hidden among this scatter of boulders. (The Dragonne is based on that from OSE. SD: **Dragonne.** A horse-sized, brass-scaled, small-winged, lion-like dragon, with very sharp claws and a frightening roar. **AC** 15, **HP** 32, **ATK** 2 rend +5 (2d6) or 1 roar, **MV** near (fly), **S** +4, **D** +3, **C** +2, **I** +0, **W** +1, **Ch** +1, **AL** N, **LV** 8. **Roar.** All creatures who can hear within far, DC 15 WIS or paralyzed 1d4 rounds.)

1409 - Silver Plateau: South of the Dragon Stones (Hex 1408), this is another rocky area of low hills, with substantial numbers of dead and petrified trees, in the southeastern part of the map's Wild Magic Zone. The rocky outcrops are similarly dark grey and fine-grained as by those Stones, but this time they are shales, not siltstones. Some of the rocks here have a silvery sheen, and are rich in galena, a source of lead and sometimes silver, once processed. The amounts visible are sufficient to make quarrying and mining a distinct possibility. Lurking among the trees around here (both dead and living ones) are variable numbers of Arboreal Tangles, large, dark-coloured, flying jellyfish, with barbed tentacles, probably drawn here by the wild magic. Aside from the obvious dangers such creatures pose when hunting, they have acidic blood, whose spilling can be as much a danger to their attackers as the loss is to themselves. (The Arboreal Tangles are based on the Belabra in "The Tome of Horrors". SD: **Arboreal Tangles.** A barrel-sized, forest-dwelling, grey to black, carnivorous, aerial jellyfish, with long, wickedly barbed, tentacles. **AC** 14, **HP** 19, **ATK** 1 slam +2 (1d8) or 3 tentacle (near) +2 (1d4 + grab), **MV** near (fly), **S** +2, **D** +2, **C** +1, **I** -2, **W** +1, **Ch** -3, **AL** N, **LV** 4. **Acid Blood.** When injured by a sharp weapon, all in close, DC 12 DEX or 1d6 damage. **Grab.** DC 15 STR or immobilized. Tentacle auto-hits subsequently. DC 15 STR to break free on turn.)

1502 - Ghostlight Rocks: A clearing in the forest in the northeastern corner of the map has numerous rocky outcrops of quartz-rich sandy rocks, forming low hills. These are surrounded, and partly overgrown, by many extensive tangles of thorny brambles. While these often have blackberries that the careful can pick for food, they also conceal the presence of a Bramble Cat, a magically-sentient bramble patch that can become a mobile, muscular feline in the dark, and which can change its appearance to that of an ordinary house cat. It can drain the life from its victims with uncomfortable ease, and can be struck only by magic. It is sometimes kept at bay by the randomly appearing Ghostlights, pale yellow-white, tiny, moving balls of radiance, that shed light like a torch. They also disappear randomly, unfortunately. The lights are a natural electrical phenomenon produced by quartz placed under physical stress, which are here perhaps enhanced by the relative proximity of the Wild Magic Zone, for all that is approaching 20 miles away at its nearest (30 km). (The Bramble Cat has been adapted from the Blackberry Cat in "A Hamsterish Hoard of Monsters". SD: **Bramble Cat.** A magical, sentient bramble patch. In the dark, it becomes a mobile, muscular feline with green-glowing eyes. **AC** 14, **HP** 13, **ATK** 2 claw +2 (1d4 + life drain), **MV** near (climb), **S** +1, **D** +3, **C** +1, **I** +0, **W** +1, **Ch** -2, **AL** C, **LV** 2. **Cat Illusion.** When not visible to any sentient creature, may change its appearance from its normal bramble-thorn cat-like tangle to an ordinary house cat. Lasts until the Bramble Cat ends the effect, or it takes damage. In this form, it has Ch +2. Those suspicious may DC 15 INT to see through the illusion. **Impervious.** Only damaged by magical sources. **Life Drain.** 1d4 CON damage. Death if reduced to 0 CON.

1507 - Blue Hills: Among the low hills at the eastern end of the No Magic Zone, where they pass into the Wild Magic Zone, a stream cuts a small valley, along whose southern side is an unusual area of blue-green rock outcrops around 60 ft across (18 m). These rocks are of gem-quality aquamarine, and some outcrops continue as smaller features eastwards along, and south from, the stream's course. Eastwards from these, in a particularly sheltered and hidden stretch of the valley, deep in the Wild Magic Zone, is a small settlement of humanoids, the Blue Hills Folk. These are intelligent humanoids whose forms have been created, or magically warped, to consist of numerous mismatched, non-humanoid body parts, so no two are alike. Some were born or created here. Others have gravitated in as outcasts from elsewhere. All have especially keen senses, and a

strong dislike of being seen by outsiders. The settlement too is hard to find, as the buildings blend-in well, or are largely contained within, the hillsides, the surface ones constructed from native dead wood and brush to look as much like the local dead vegetation as possible. One of the subterranean places is a meeting-house, where the group's prized possession of a golden bowl with a chipped emerald set in it, resides in a place of honour (SD, 75 gp). Newcomers accepted into the community are welcomed at a celebration where all drink from this bowl, reinforcing the community and confirming their solidarity with one another, as well as symbolising the "damaged" nature that others often perceive the Blue Hills Folk as possessing. Currently, the community has around 30 members, including a leader who owns a magical, though again chipped, greataxe. (The Blue Hills Folk are an adaptation of the OSE Mutoids. SD: **Blue Hills Person**. *A magically-changed humanoid with various mismatched non-humanoid features and body parts.* **AC** 11, **HP** 5, **ATK** 1 club +1 (1d4), **MV** near, **S** +1, **D** +1, **C** +1, **I** +0, **W** +1, **Ch** -2, **AL** N, **LV** 1. **Keen Senses**. Can't be surprised. **Stealthy**. ADV on checks to sneak and hide. **Variant Forms**. No two alike. 1 on 1d10 have AC 13, 1 on 1d20 have AC 15. 1 on 1d10 replace ATK with either 1 bite +1 (1d6), 2 claw +1 (1d4), or 1 rend +1 (1d8). 1 on 1d10 have MV as fly, swim or climb. 1 on 1d10 add +2 to one stat, or +1 to two. 1 on 1d20 have magical or priestly abilities, including spells instead of physical attacks. The community's leader has HP 10, ATK 1 magical greataxe +2 (1d8/1d10), and is LV 2.)

1609 - Koghome: On the northern bank of a stream through the forest in the map's southeastern corner, is a large clearing with this crudely-built wooden lodge in it, home to a family of five Hill Giants (SD, p. 219). In the clearing, and scattered through the surrounding forest in a roughly three-mile-diameter area (5 km), are large numbers of silvery, metallic boulders, each between two and three feet across (0.6 to 1 m). Many shown signs of having arrived from the air, including damage to trees and the ground nearby, as while they occur naturally in this area on the surface anyway, the Giants use them in boulder-flinging contests from time to time. The boulders are surprisingly lightweight, as they are composed entirely of mithral.