

Ontologist@aol.com

Call of Cthulhu

There he saw a terdble figure-something in ragged black-with whitish patches breaking out of it: the head, perched on a long thin neck, half hidden by a shapeless sort of blackened sun-bonnet.

- "Wailing Well", by M.R. James

Legal Information

This adventure is copyright 1999 by Dr. Michael C. LaBossiere. It may be freely distributed for personal use provided that it is not modified and no fee above the normal cost of distribution is charged for it. Visit my web site at www.opifex.cnhost.com.

Call of Cthulhu is Chaosium Inc's registered trademark for their game of horror and wonder in the worlds of HP Lovecraft. For more information, contact Chaosium Inc., 950-A 56th St, Oakland, CA 94608 -- or call us at 510-595-2440. Visit Chaosium's web page at www.chaosium.com/cthulhu/.

Introduction

This adventure is set near Worbarrow Bay in England and was inspired by M.R. James's story "Wailing Well." The original story says nothing about the origin or nature of the well or its denizens, but the Keeper will find reading it worthwhile.

In this adventure, the investigators will journey to England to aid an old friend who has discovered that his inheritance includes a plot of land stained with a terrible evil. This adventure is challenging, but requires more planning and intelligent action than firepower. The adventure is set in the 1990s, but can be placed in another time period. Keepers running a 1920s campaign might wish to acquire a copy of the story and involve the investigators in the original action.

Keeper's Background

In the 18th century Edith Rheinharnst, a sorceress from Germany, came to England to conduct research on ancient stone structures, such as the various henges. She learned some terrible and dark secrets, including magicks which would allow her to create a well of immortality. This well, which was to be made of stones carved from ancient monoliths and filled with blood, would confer lasting life on those who drank from it. Unfortunately for Rheinharnst, her associate Victoria Wilson, an English Witch, betrayed her. Rheinharnst had lived in her house and they had worked together preparing the well. Wilson betrayed Rheinharnst, murdered her and used her blood to complete the well. Unfortunately for Wilson, Rheinharnst had suspected treachery (but not so soon) and had prepared for it. After her death, she rose from the blood filled well as a Well Skeleton. She then slew Wilson and her followers (Elaine Roth and Gunther Rohm) and then raised them up as Well Skeletons. Since then, the well has been a cursed place and shunned by almost everyone.

In 1927 a group of Boy Scouts from the Eton College Troop were camping in the area. One of the scouts, Stanley Judkins, was a rather poorly behaved young man. Despite being warned by a local shepherd and despite the fact that the area was marked as off limits on the scout maps, Judkins went to the well to take water from it. Unfortunately for Judkins, the Well Skeletons killed him, took his blood and raised him up as a Well Skeleton. A scout leader, Mr. Hope Jones, had attempted to

for his troubles. Since then, the well has claimed no new victims and has been studiously avoided by all of the locals.

The land the well is on eventually was claimed by the state, although it was never developed. In 1974 the land was purchased cheaply by an American, Russel Kendell, who wanted to own land in England as part of one of his money making scams. Russel Kendell made a great deal of money, enough to purchase a degree of respectability and retire from the "business."

Getting the Players Involved

Shortly before the start of the adventure, Russel Kendell will die from natural causes. His nephew, David Kendell, inherits the land in England and decides to have a small house built there using the proceeds from his latest book. Kendell had always wanted to have summer house in England, so only a few months after inheriting the land and taking care of all the associated legal machinations, he flew to England and took up residence in a boarding house only a few miles from his property. He was surprised to learn that all the local people shunned the area and almost everyone he talked to warned him to stay away from the area. No one could give him a specific explanation, but they were all sincere in warning him away.

Not wanting to abandon his land, Kendell went to his property to see what all the fuss was about. He suspected that it was all a bunch of nonsense or that the locals were having a bit of fun at his expense, but he nonetheless decided to approach the area cautiously. This caution probably saved his life as he caught a glimpse of the well skeletons and fled before getting a good look (or giving them a chance to kill him).

After that incident, Kendell will decide to seek help in dealing with the situation. At first he will go to the police and report trespassers on his land. He will learn that the police have no desire to get involved in the area, but they will send two officers during the day to make a pretense of looking around. Seeing that the local authorities will be of no help, Kendell will decide to take matters into his own hand.

To get the investigators into the action, the Keeper can arrange so that Kendell either knows an investigator or investigators or knows someone who does. In any case, one or more investigators will receive a message from Kendell to come to England to help him. He is financially well off (three of his books have been made into movies and the fourth is on the way) so he will be able to help the investigators make the trip and offer them some form of payment. Investigators might also be brought in as reporters eager for a story about Kendell or perhaps an investigator or two might be involved with the police in some capacity, or an investigator might be an occultist researching monoliths and associated legends. In any case, the investigators need to end up in England and need to meet Kendell.

Investigation

George Smith

George Smith owns the farm near the Kendell property. He has a small farm with some sheep, a couple cows and a bunch of chickens. He is retired and likes to sit on his porch and watch the world go by. He will have met Kendell a couple times prior to the start of the adventure and will be willing to talk to the investigators. He will tell them about Montogane (see below) and can suggest a couple books on the area (see below).

witness the events leading to Stanley Judkin's awful fate, but he was in the area and heard the story from the Scouts who were involved.

Anthony is 79 years old and lives in the area. He served with distinction in WWII as a pilot. After the war, he worked as a commercial pilot until he retired. Anthony is a friend of George Smith, who he has told his story too. If the investigators speak to George Smith, he will suggest that they talk to Anthony (assuming that George Smith thinks the investigators are normal).

Anthony lives in a modest house which is kept up by his daughter. He is happy to receive guests and is still quite lucid, although his memories are getting a bit fuzzy. Because of his age, he will be unable to physically aid them. However, he will tell them his story.

The Story

"In 1927, we were camping near Worbarrow Bay as part of a Scout event. Some of the boys, including Stanley Judkins, a trouble maker, went to an area they were supposed to stay away from. There was supposed to be a well in the area. This well was haunted, according to a local shepherd. I didn't see the events in question, but a scout named Wilcox, who was there, told me what happened. According to his story, Stanley was attacked by three women and a man, but these people were dead... just dried up skin and bones. He said that Mr. Hope Jones tried to rescue him, but was somehow prevented from saving him. Mr. Hope Jones came out of the trees with Judkin's body and the doctors said his body had been drained of blood. The next day, Mr. Hope Jones returned to woods and tried to destroy the trees. He came back with a broken axe and several injuries. That is all I know and I'm not sure if it is true...but I'll never go into those woods."

Books

George Smith will be able to suggest to books that are relevant to the area and further investigation by the investigators might be able to turn up more. The nearest large library is a few hours away, so library research will not be too difficult.

-The following is from *Legends of Old Britain* (1974) by Dr. Gerald Kynes. The work is a very accurate, well researched "coffee table" book with excellent photographs.

Britain is known for its legends, ghosts and strange stories. A fairly minor, but nonetheless interesting, ghost story tells of a well in England which is haunted by the restless spirits of three women and a man. The exact origin of these spirits is not known, but the area is scrupulously avoided by the local inhabitants.

-The following is from *Witches* (1983) by Heather Wells. The work is rather strange and is very pro- witch, but has some surprisingly lucid and accurate sections. It is not exceptionally easy to find, but there are many copies around. The author was found ripped apart by wild animals in 1984. The police found this very suspicious since she lived in an apartment in New York city. Her murder is still officially under investigation.

One of the more powerful witches of 18th century England was a woman named Rheinarnst. She is supposed to have come to England to research the ancient monoliths. According to the writings of several covens, Rheinarnst was betrayed and killed by her own followers and her body was dumped into a well.

even stranger than the commercially published *Witches* and contains information that could prove useful to the investigators. This book is mentioned in *Witches* and can be acquired via interlibrary loan.

The myth of the Cauldron of Blood is a common one in many cultures and it seems that the cauldron also has a connection to the monoliths of England. It has been written that there are magicks to transform stones cut from the hoary monoliths into a cauldron or a well. The well would be flooded with the blood of victims to match the blood spilled on the mouldy and blood splattered stones. Once prepared, the cauldron would confer long life on its owner. The life came with a price as the owner would have to pour the fresh blood of lively victims into the cauldron to preserve its magick.

...One enchantment was ripped forth from the realms outside the human realms and in this spell a special stone would form the heart of the well...with the stone, the well may not be harmed. ..without the stone the well may fall...

Maps

The following detail the maps for the adventure.

Area Map

This map details the area around the well.

Old Stone Wall: This is the stone wall that marks the boundary of the property. There is nothing special about the wall.

Old Fence: This is a sturdy old wooden fence which marks the boundary between the Kendell property and George Smith's land.

Clumps of Trees: These trees are fir trees and look sturdy and healthy. Due to the magic of the well, the trees are virtually indestructible. The enchantment yields ten points of armor for the trees, making them difficult to destroy. Trying to chop them up with an axe might result in some injuries as the axe will probably rebound from the tree. Other than this, the trees are normal. The Well Skeletons dwell in the clumps, laying amidst the roots, brambles and such.

Trails: These are trails that have been worn by the Well Skeletons as they walk to the well for their rituals.

Well: The well appears to be normal, but was made from monolith stones. These stones were stained with centuries of human blood, charging them with evil energy. These stones were cut and made into a well by Rheinarnst and her minions. Close inspection of the well will reveal that some of the stones have various engravings on them. The well is the center of the enchantment and serves as the focus for the energy that preserves the Well Skeletons. Other than serving as a focus, the well has no special powers. The well will be difficult to destroy. An investigator will have to enter the well and dive down to the bottom to find the key stone of the well. This stone is heavily engraved and will be recognizable as different from the others. This stone can be removed after the symbols are damaged. Doing this will require inflicting twenty points of damage using a suitable instrument. While the investigator is in the well, the investigator will faintly see skeletal shapes clawing at

the stone is on the very bottom. Once the stone is detached, the well can be drained (otherwise the water will seem to be endless) and the stones can then be pulled apart. Naturally, the Well Skeletons will do their best to protect the well. Once the well is torn asunder, the enchantment will be broken and the well skeletons will dissolve into puddles of blood.

Kendell Property Map

This is a map for the players and does not detail the important (secret) features of the area. It covers the same area as the Keeper's area map.

Stone Wall: This is the stone wall separating Kendell's property from another landowner's.

Fence: This is the fence that separates George Smith's land from the Kendell property.

Action

Approaching the Well

The action will begin when the investigators attempt to enter the area in which the well is located. They will have no problems approaching the trees, but will probably run into difficulties once they enter the woods. The investigators will notice that the area has not been tended in untold years and is overrun with brambles. The land appears healthy and rich, and there are plenty of small animals and birds outside of the trees.

Once the investigators pass within the trees, the Well Skeletons will be aware of their presence and Rheinharnst might chose to take action against them, or she might chose to observe the investigators to

see what they might do. If the investigators attempt to harm the well, the Well Skeletons will certainly attack. Rheinharnst prefers to attack single individuals rather than groups and they will almost certainly attack a single investigator should he be so foolish as to enter the area without due care.

Once combat begins, the Well Skeletons will attempt to kill the intruders and drag their bodies to the well so as to raise them up as Well Skeletons. Anyone who is killed within the tree area and brought to the well will raise the next night as a Well Skeleton and join in with the rest of them. In combat, the Well Skeletons will work together to isolate a victim and overpower him. Rheinharnst will use her spell to keep any other people in the area from taking action against the Well Skeletons. The Well Skeletons can drain a body of blood in less than three minutes, so once they get control over a victim, it is almost certainly the end of him.

A More Prudent Approach

If the investigators prudently decide to check out the situation before blindly rushing in, they can easily watch the area from a nearby property. The land behind the old stone wall is owned by wealthy foreign businessman and the people watching his house will not allow people on the land without an extremely good reason. If they are threatened, they will bring in the authorities. The investigators best bet is to stay on George Smith's land. Provided they are polite, he will allow them to watch the area from the fence area.

If the investigators watch the area with binoculars or such, they will be able to see

to see from a distance, because of their nature and they do not photograph well. This is because some of their appearance is psychic in nature and this cannot be photographed. Once the Well Skeletons get to the well, they can no longer be seen (nor can the well) from outside of the trees. The Well Skeletons will spend about ten minutes conducting their rituals and then they will return. This ritual is not essential and interfering with it will have no effect on the well or the Well Skeletons.

The Reporter

Harold Wentworth Jones, a tabloid reporter, will be hanging out in the area, looking to dig up some dirt on Kendell. He will be shadowing the investigators in order to see what is going on. If he learns that the investigators are looking into the ghastly happenings at the well, Jones will have a field day writing up articles about Kendell's "obsession" with the occult and the supernatural.

Jones should be used to annoy the investigators and to get in the way of their activities. At some point, he should also provide the investigators with a demonstration of how the Well Skeletons operate. For example, if the investigators are watching the area, they might see Jones sneaking about the woods looking for something to write about. Jones will then fall prey to the Well Skeletons in sight of the investigators. Despite his annoying manner, his death will cause the investigators a Sanity point loss (as described below) unless they can save him. If the investigators rescue him, he will be grateful enough to leave them and Kendell alone (after all, he is not a total wretch).

Other Victims

If the investigators are slow in dealing with the situation, other people might fall prey to the well. Because of Kendell's presence, the curious and fans might show up in the area. Such people might end up blundering around on Kendell's land, looking for the author and might instead find a terrible end.

Conclusion

Bringing the adventure to an end requires the defeat of the investigators or the Well Skeletons (or the cowardly fleeing of the investigators). If the investigators are defeated, any survivors will suffer the Sanity point loss(es) described below. The well will continue to exist as a festering point of evil in the world and will probably claim more victims as the area is developed.

Achieving victory over the evil of the well requires destroying the well. The process for destroying the well is described above. Destroying the well garners the investigators the Sanity point reward described below. The local inhabitants will be quite happy that the well is gone. Kendell will also be very grateful that his land will now be usable. He will be willing to aid the investigators in the future, within the limits of his resources.

Sanity Award

If the investigators fail to defeat the Well Skeletons and leave the area, they should each lose 1 D6 Sanity points for allowing a dangerous evil to flourish.

If the investigators destroy the Well Skeletons and uproot the evil, they should each receive a 1 D10 Sanity Point award.

Investigators should lose one Sanity Point for each person they allow to die, and 1 D4 for each person they allow to be drawn into the curse of the well. These penalties

investigation.

NPCs

David Kendell, Writer

STR: 12 Con: 12 SIZ: 1 2 INT: 1 3 POW: 12 DEX: 12 APP: 1 3 EDU: 1 5 SAN: 70 HP: 12 DB:0 Skills: Accounting 22%, Art 1 6%, Bargain 23%, Credit Rating: 45%, History 45%, Library User ~7%, Natural History 37%, French 22%, Persuade 24%, Pilot (Small Plane): 45%, Psychology 24% Description: David Kendell is 5 feet 10 inches tall and has brown hair. He is 41 years old and slightly overweight. He prefers jeans and baggy sweaters. Kendell has written a series of extremely successful children's books about a magical land in which humans live with magical talking animals. Despite writing fantasy books, Kendell is fairly pragmatic and does not believe in magic and such. However, after his experience at the well he will come to believe. Kendell is a decent person, is fairly generous, and quite likable. He loves to fly, which has strengthened his nerves quite a bit. He won't be thrilled about going up against evil horrors, but will try to do his best.

David Kendell inherited the plot of land on which the well is on. He is not greedy, but never walks away from capital. Once he learns about the well, he will want to have it destroyed in order to get rid of the evil.

Harold Wentworth Jones, Tabloid Journalist

STR: 11 Con: 1 3 SIZ: 1 2 INT: 1 2 POW: 11 DEX: 1 3 APP: 11 EDU: 13 SAN: 55 HP: 1 3 DB:0 Skills: Bargain 21%, Fast Talk 53%, Law 15%, Listen 32%, Persuade 24%, Sneak 34%, Spot Hidden 36%

Description: Harold stands a little under six feet tall and is a bit out of shape. He smokes heavily and drinks a bit too much. He dresses in wrnpled suits and carries around at least two cameras and a tape- recorder. He is always after dirt and really doesn't care too much about the consequences of his stories. He has been beaten up a few times, but still loves the thrill (and the money) of getting a really juicy story for the rags. He will be drawn to the area in the hopes of getting some sort of dirt on Kendell, but will be interested in the well as ghost stories sell well in England.

George Smith, Farmer

STR: 13 Con: 13 SIZ: 14 INT: 12 POW: 13 DEX: 12 APP: 10 EDU: 12 SAN: 65 HP: 14 DB:+1D4 Skills: Accounting: 24%, Bargain 37%, Biology 1 2%, Electrical Repair 35%, Locksmith 1 3%, Natural History 55%, Mechanical Repair 56%, Operate Heavy Machine 35%, Ride 25%, Track 24%, Handgun 35%, Rifle 41%, Shotgun 55% Weapon: 1 2 Gauge Double Barrel Shotgun Shots/Rd: 1 Range: 10/20/50 Damage :4D6/2D6/1 D6 Description: George Smith is a middle aged man who stands about six feet tall. He is thin and weathered looking. George Smith served in the British army and fought during the Korean war. After the war, he returned to the family farm. George Smith's farm is located near the well. He knows parts of Montogane's story and has suspicions about the well. He did a bit of reading about the well years ago, and will be able to tell the investigators about a couple sources. If the investigators convince him the well is a real threat, he will help them. He was involved in some bitter and brutal fighting in Korea and will be up to the challenge.

Creatures

STR	306	10-11	9	12	11	13	8
CON	3D6	10-11	11	13	14	12	14
517	2D6+6	12	10	11	9	13	7
INT	2D6+6	12	16	15	12	12	11
POW	3D6	10-11	17	16	12	11	12
DEX	3D6	10-11	13	11	12	14	14
HP		13-14	11	12	12	13	11
<u>DamageBonus</u>		0	0	0	0	+1D4	-104

Move: 8

Weapons: Hands 25%, Damage 1 D3+db

Armor: None, but see below.

Spells: See below.

Sanity Loss: 0/1 D6 Sanity points to see a WellSkeleton.

Description: Well Skeletons are horrid beings and are sort of a pseudo-undead. Well Skeletons are only found in one part of the world, and that is near the well in this adventure. Well Skeletons are created when a human being is killed by another well skeleton by hanging the victim from a tree near the well. The victim is drained of blood, which is poured into the well. The next night, the victim's blood magically forms into a corpse-like manifestation. The "corpse" rots and dries quickly, leaving a "skeleton" with dried "flesh" clinging to it. Tatters of the victim's "clothes" and personal effects will remain on the "corpse."

Because the Well Skeleton lacks flesh and organs, they are damaged differently than human beings. First, since they have no vital organs, they cannot be impaled. Second, because the Well Skeleton is only "bones", impaling weapons have half the normal chance of hitting. Third, since Well Skeletons have no vitals, they sustain only half damage from normal weapons. Fourth, because of the nature of the enchantment preserving them, Well Skeletons are much more robust than "normal" animated skeletons. Hence, they have Hit Points instead of having a chance of shattering when struck. Finally, if a Well Skeleton is "killed" it will fall into a puddle of blood which will be absorbed into the ground. The next night the Well Skeleton will reform in the well and return to its activities.

In combat, the Well Skeletons fight with their hands, clawing and pummeling at their victims. They will bring anyone they kill near the well and drain him of blood. Once they kill their victim, they can drain the blood magically in a matter of seconds. Once they kill, they will return to their resting places at the end of their trails.

Well Skeletons retain their original human intelligence and memories. However, their horrid state makes them into monsters and forces them to try to kill almost anyone who comes into the area near the well. Aside from the killing, they conduct hideous rituals around the well once each month and visit each day to conduct lesser activities.

Well Skeletons generally do not communicate, as they cannot talk. With some effort, they could communicate by writing, but it is unlikely that they would have any reason to do so.

Well Skeleton #1: This Well Skeleton was Edith Rheinarnst, was a sorceress from Germany. In the 18th century she came to England to conduct research on the ancient stone structures. She learned some terrible and dark secrets and was the one who created the well out of stones taken from nearby monoliths. She was murdered by her rival and underlings and became the first

Well Skeleton #2: This Well Skeleton was Victoria Wilson, an English Witch. Rheinarnst lived in her house and they worked together preparing the well. Wilson betrayed Rheinarnst, murdered her and used her blood to complete the well. Unfortunately for Wilson, Rheinarnst had suspected treachery (but not so soon) and had prepared for it. After her death, she returned as a Well Skeleton through the enchantment, slew Wilson and her followers and then raised them up as Well Skeletons. Wilson knows a variety of spells, but none that she uses offensively as a Well Skeleton.

Well Skeleton #3: This Well Skeleton was Elaine Roth, who was a minor witch. She was one of Wilson's servants. She helped kill Rheinarnst and paid for it dearly. She knows no useful spells.

Well Skeleton #4: This Well Skeleton was Gunther Rohrn. He was Rheinarnst's hired bodyguard and a dabbler in the evils of the occult. He betrayed Rheinarnst for Wilson, but ended up meeting a fate worse than death.

Well Skeleton #5: This Well Skeleton was Stanley Judkins, a Boy Scout of the Eton College troop. He was a rather bad scout and not a particularly nice person, but he did not really deserve his fate. In 1927 he went to the well to do some mischief and was taken by the Well Skeletons. He is the weakest of the Well Skeletons, but is forced to act with the rest of them.

Spells

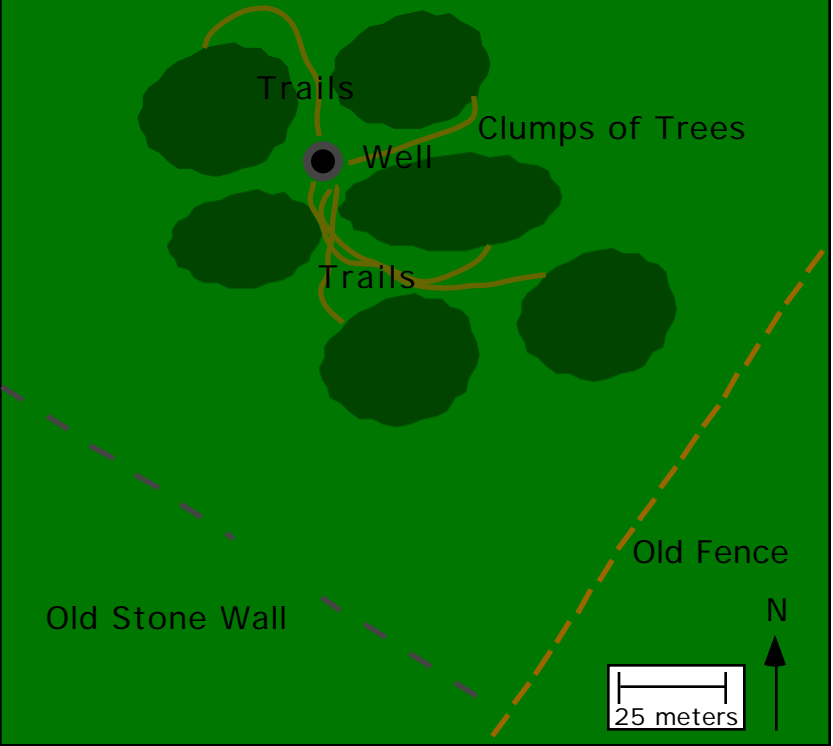
The creature was waving thin arms in the direction of the rescuer who was approaching, as if to ward him off: and between the two figures the air seemed to shake and shimmer as he had never seen it: and as he looked, he began himself to feel something of a waviness and confusion in his brain, which made him guess what might be the effect on someone within closer range of the influence.

-*"Wailing Well"*, by M.R. James

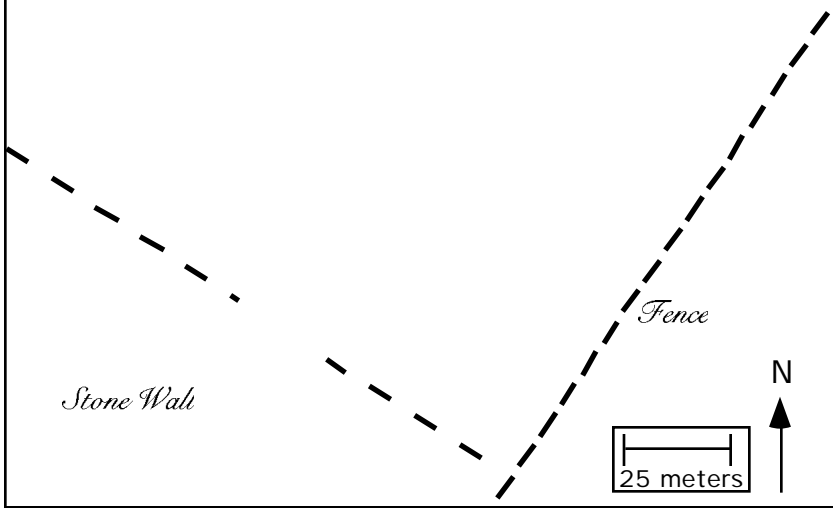
Cerebral Confusion

When casting the spell, the caster waves his arms and quietly intones the spell. Casting this spell costs 1 D4 Sanity points and 1 Magic point for every minute the spell lasts. The spell creates a shimmering area around the caster, somewhat like the effect produced by heat. The spell's effect varies with the distance from the caster. Those within ten feet of the caster match their POW against the caster. Anyone who fails will be unable to see (or effectively attack) the caster and will become confused and wander around within the area of effect, unable to go in the direction they wish. The Keeper should roll 1 D4 to see which direction the investigator goes: 1-straight ahead, 2-left, 3-right, 4-backwards. Affected victims will be able to defend themselves if directly attacked, but their skills will be at -10% due to the effects of the spell. At eleven to thirty feet, the victims resist against half of the caster's POW, but the effects are the same if the victims' fail their resistance check. At thirty one to fifty feet, people in the area will feel vaguely confused and disoriented, but not enough to affect their actions. The effects of the spell last until the caster stops expending magic points or the victim(s) resist. The caster is occupied while casting the spell and will not be able to attack.

Area Map



Kendell Property



Stone Wall

Fence

25 meters

N