

# TRILOGY OF TERROR

Three Cases for Call of Cthulhu • By Keeper Graeme Davis

## The Book

### Players' Information

Gregory Hawthorne, the gossip columnist for a popular daily paper, contacts the investigators by telephone, clearly excited and wishing to show them something that has come into his possession. If one of the investigators is a journalist, he or she will be contacted as a colleague. If not, the investigators may be contacted as known authorities on occult matters. Hawthorne will say only that he is on the verge of 'something big', and will ask the investigators to visit him at his home, and to tell no-one that he has contacted them.

### Keeper's Information

Hawthorne will not answer his door when the investigators call. If they look in at the windows, they will see that the house seems to have been quite thoroughly ransacked, and a *Spot Hidden* roll will reveal that an entry has been forced through the back door. Hawthorne's body lies severely mutilated in an upstairs room.

Two days later, the investigators will receive a letter from Messrs Jameson, Hall, Sykes and Jameson, Hawthorne's solicitors. The letter will invite the investigators to call at the firm's premises, where they might learn something to their advantage. At the solicitors' offices, they will be given a sealed package containing a handwritten book and a letter. The letter reads as follows:

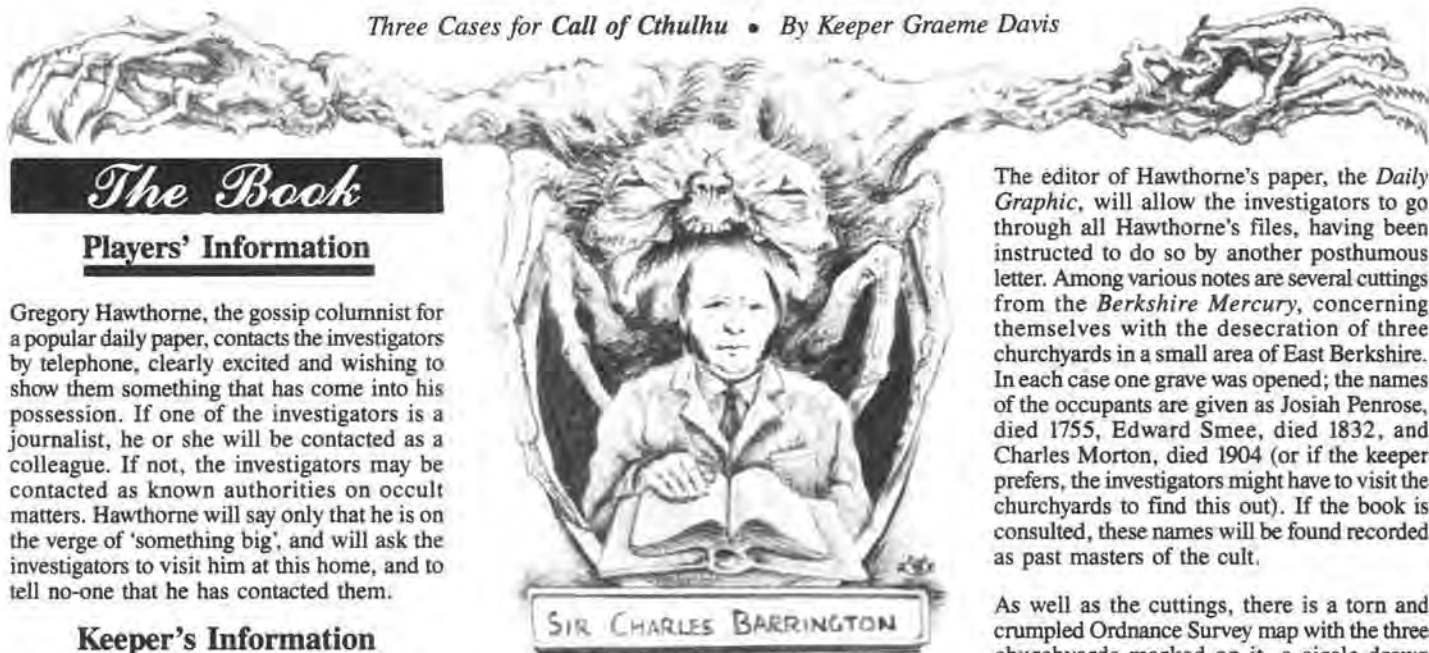
*I have instructed my solicitors to see that you get this book if I should die before our meeting. It came into my possession - I cannot say how - when I was working on a story about Sir Charles Barrington and some rather peculiar associates he keeps. I expected low life, possibly crime, but never this. My intention was to verify the manuscript with you before going ahead with the story, but now you must decide how best to proceed. Good luck, and be careful.'*

The book is entitled *Liber Tenebrae*, and the first entry is dated 1666. The greater part of the book is in archaic English and requires a *Read English* roll to understand it perfectly. It chronicles the history of a cult worshipping Shub-Niggurath, and sets out various rituals and forms of worship.

Dated 1919 is an entry recording the induction of Charles Barrington, and the last few pages are written in his hand (this will be confirmed if a handwriting expert is consulted). The book is a minor Cthulhu Mythos source, as detailed below:

*Liber Tenebrae*: Cthulhu Mythos +4%, SAN - 1D6, spell mult x2  
Spells: Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath

Sir Charles Barrington is a prominent member of Parliament, and there is potential here for a story that will ruin his political career.



The editor of Hawthorne's paper, the *Daily Graphic*, will allow the investigators to go through all Hawthorne's files, having been instructed to do so by another posthumous letter. Among various notes are several cuttings from the *Berkshire Mercury*, concerning themselves with the desecration of three churchyards in a small area of East Berkshire. In each case one grave was opened; the names of the occupants are given as Josiah Penrose, died 1755, Edward Smeed, died 1832, and Charles Morton, died 1904 (or if the keeper prefers, the investigators might have to visit the churchyards to find this out). If the book is consulted, these names will be found recorded as past masters of the cult.

As well as the cuttings, there is a torn and crumpled Ordnance Survey map with the three churchyards marked on it, a circle drawn around them and a place-name underlined roughly in the centre of the circle. The name

is Wanfield, and an *Idea* roll will recall the fact Barrington has a house near the village and is a prominent member of the golf club at nearby Sandy Hills.

There is also a scrap of paper bearing the scribbled note 'JS Sunn/dale Stn 8:15 Thurs'. If the *Berkshire Mercury* is consulted for the previous week, a successful *Library Use* roll will turn up a notice of the death of one John Smedley, of Wanfield, who was burned to death in his house on the previous Friday night. Smedley's name will be found in the book as a member of the cult.

Barrington and his followers are desperate to recover the book; they were responsible for the deaths of Smedley and Hawthorne, and they will be aware that Hawthorne's solicitors have contacted the investigators. Investigations in Wanfield may meet with some difficulties; the present members of the cult are listed in the book, but not their occupations. They include the village postmaster and the landlord of the Royal Oak, the local public house, and several other prominent members of the local population. The keeper should feel free to fill in the details, perhaps allowing a 25% chance that any adult questioned will be a cult member. The cultists will do everything in their power to recover the book and destroy any incriminating evidence.

### Sir Charles Barrington

Barrington has been the head of the cult for almost two years, and besides the *Liber Tenebrae* he has several other minor Mythos sources at his home. The desecrations which attracted Hawthorne's attention were attempts to exhume the past masters for Resurrection. Barrington had found the spell in one of the books and wanted to learn from them. Of the three attempts so far, however, none has been successful.

STR 13 CON 10 SIZ 15 INT 14 POW 16  
DEX 8 APP 11 SAN 0 EDU 16 Hit Pts 13

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Occult 60%  
Weapons: 12-bore shotgun 60%, knife 30%  
Spells: Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Resurrection, Shriving

# The Seance

## Players' Information

Hermione Elsenham is something of a celebrity in the psychic world of the Home Counties, writing for popular magazines as well as a number of specialist publications, and even making occasional wireless broadcasts. She is in great demand for seances and psychic readings in well-to-do circles, reputedly charging up to £50 for an engagement.

The investigators are contacted by her agent, a Mr Edwin Robey. Some kind of mishap took place at a seance she held in the exclusive St George's Hill area of Weybridge, Surrey, a week ago. Miss Elsenham was subsequently admitted to St Peter's hospital in Chertsey before being transferred to the Holloway Sanatorium in nearby Virginia Water. Mr Robey has not been allowed to see her, and is worried about what might have happened; he has been able to find out nothing about the night of the seance.

## Keeper's Information

Robey knows a little of occult matters (07%) through his association with Miss Elsenham, but can offer little real information. The client for whom the seance was held was a Mr Arthur Ferneyhaugh, a wealthy dilettante.

Investigators will be politely but firmly turned away from the Ferneyhaugh residence by the butler; Mr Ferneyhaugh has gone to the south of France, and is not expected back for some time. If the other servants can be interviewed, they might reluctantly reveal that the room in which the seance was held has been shut up. A clandestine reconnaissance from the shrubbery will show that a set of french windows on the ground floor has been boarded up, and on closer investigation a *Spot Hidden* roll will reveal that they were forced violently outwards. The servants were all given the evening off on the night of the seance, and cannot offer further information.

A list of the guests might be obtained with some difficulty from one of the servants; this will read like a short directory of the local social scene, but most of the guests will have suddenly gone away or will refuse to talk to the investigators. Successful use of both *Credit Rating* (to get past defensive butlers) and *Fast Talk* (to persuade the guests to open up) may yield some results, but it is clear that everyone is badly frightened and does not understand what happened. It seems that a short time after the seance started, Miss Elsenham screamed, 'No! Never! Get away!' There was a violent but noiseless explosion, which blew out the french windows and threw objects about the room like shrapnel. The guests fled, and returned a few moments later to find Miss Elsenham unconscious beneath a heavy oak table.

It may be possible to see Miss Elsenham, if one or more of the investigators has medical credentials. However, the Sanatorium do not welcome visitors, and will be most displeased if their patient is unnecessarily upset.

She is suffering from Catatonia, and has only occasional lucid moments. Any investigator attempting to talk to her must make a *Psychoanalysis* roll or half a *Luck* roll for every hour he or she spends; success indicates a fairly lucid interval of 1D10 minutes. Even while lucid, Miss Elsenham will appear confused and incoherent; she will talk of a strong presence and a voice which promised her marvellous and obscene things, and claim that a thing has been sent to torment her, feeding off her very soul. There is also a 10% chance that in her ramblings she will mention 'an Egyptian name... the Approved One'; a character familiar with Egyptology (*Archaeology* or *Read/Write Egyptian Hieroglyph* roll required) may realise that 'the Approved One' is a common suffix to Egyptian royal names, taking the form '...hotep' and generally preceded by the name of a god, such as Amon.

Miss Elsenham's seance resulted in accidental contact with Nyarlathotep. She refused his offer of knowledge and power in return for service, and he has sent a Hunting Horror to torment her. It only appears at night, when she is alone. As well as sapping her SAN with its appearance, it is draining her using the Power Drain spell (*Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*, p21, or *Fragments of Fear*, p16). If the investigators deduce the involvement of Nyarlathotep and/or attempt to interfere, there is a good chance that the Hunting Horror will turn on them; otherwise, it will continue to torment Miss Elsenham until she is dead or permanently insane. Needless to say, if the investigators decide to take any kind of action, they will find the Sanatorium authorities most obstructive.

## Hermione Elsenham

STR 9 CON 8 SIZ 10 INT 13 POW 17 (currently 9)  
DEX 10 APP 13 SAN 19 EDU 15 Hit Pts 9

Skills: Occult 85%, plus various others, not usable while insanity lasts.

## Hunting Horror

STR 30 CON 12 SIZ 30 INT 16 POW 27 DEX 16  
Hit Pts 21

Weapons: Bite 65% 1D6+3D6 Tail 90% grapple  
Armour: 9 points hide, bullets cannot impale.  
Spells: Contact Nyarlathotep, Power Drain, Shriving,  
SAN: 0/1D10





# A Capital Offence

## Players' Information

*Daily Record, Sept 17th...*

### BLACK MASS KILLER TO HANG

#### Coven Leader Walks Free

After a sensational trial, Clive Manners has been found guilty of the ritual murder of at least five persons, whose identity has not been established, in the Braylea coven case. Manners, 32, stood impassively in the dock as Lord Justice Haybury sentenced him to death by hanging.

The sentence was the culmination of a fourteen-day trial which has revealed astonishing and horrifying details of a series of rituals involving both animal and human sacrifice, which took place in and around the small Home Counties village of Braylea over the last two years. The main prosecution witness was Miss Edwina Moon, a member of the coven. She and several other coven members were remanded on several lesser charges and sentenced to varying amounts of imprisonment, and Miss Moon is to be held indefinitely in a secure mental institution, at her own request.

Perhaps the most sensational turn in the proceedings was the acquittal of Bentley Cornforth, the alleged head of the coven, on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Miss Moon broke down in court when Cornforth was called to the dock, and was unable to give evidence against him. The judge described the case as 'the most revolting and disturbing that I have ever been called upon to hear'.

*Saturday Review, Sept 20th...*

### COVEN KILLER PREPARES TO DIE

Clive Manners, the Braylea coven murderer, waits impassively in the death cell at Brixton Prison, where he will be hanged at 7am on Monday. Sources within the prison report that he has refused to see a minister, but it is rumoured that he has been visited more than once by Bentley Cornforth, himself recently acquitted during the Braylea coven trial. It seems that Manners has named Cornforth as his next of kin, refusing to see his parents who are reported to be 'saddened but not surprised'. As the named next of kin, Cornforth cannot be denied the right to visit the condemned man. The prison authorities are said to have turned down a request by Manners to have Cornforth attend the hanging in the place of a minister.

*Evening Post, Sept 22nd...*

### COVEN MURDERER HANGS

#### Strange scenes at Execution.

At 7 o'clock this morning, Braylea coven murderer Clive Manners was hanged. The impassive mask he had worn since the trial began was broken when prison officers went to his cell shortly after dawn. Manners had to be dragged to the gallows, screaming and raving. At one point he broke free and attacked one of the warders, screaming that Cornforth had bewitched him and accusing the warder of being the true murderer.

*Daily Record, Sept 25th, Personal Columns*

### MISSING PERSON

Richard Briggs, a warder at Brixton prison. Last seen leaving the prison at about 11:30am, Monday September 22nd. Reward offered for any information. Mrs Elizabeth Briggs, Box 427.

## Keeper's Information

The 'Braylea Coven' was a small Cthulhu Mythos cult worshipping Shub-Niggurath. They had sacrificed various tramps and stolen farm animals in order to consecrate an altar, but had not completed the operation when Edwina Moon lost her nerve and went to the Police.

When Cornforth visited Manners in the condemned cell for the last time, he took various enchanted items and other materials with him. Despite the authorities' refusal to allow Cornforth to serve at the execution, Manners still had the right to receive any last rites pertaining to his religion, and the governor of the prison reluctantly allowed Cornforth to bring various materials for this purpose. However, Cornforth overpowered the single warder who remained in the cell with them, and helped Manners to cast a Mind Transfer spell (*The Fungi From Yuggoth, p28, or Fragments of Fear, p16*), exchanging minds with the helpless warder. Manners then left the prison in the warder's body, leaving the warder's mind, in his own body, to be executed.

The investigators will start with only the press cuttings above, but they should be able to discover that Briggs was the warder who was in the cell with Manners and Cornforth and deduce what is going on. Cornforth's first move will probably be to track down Edwina Moon and punish her, but if the investigators are quick off the mark they should be able to get to her first and ensure her safety. No details are given here of the two cultists' abilities; the keeper should design their powers and any allies, bearing in mind the strength of the investigators.

Graeme Davis

