

Tickets-of-Leave are small self-contained additions to the [Convicts & Cthulhu](#) setting for Lovecraftian roleplaying in the early penal colonies of Australia. Each includes a selection of game elements which can either be used collectively as a thumbnail sketch of a mini-scenario, or can be used in isolation to provide pieces that enhance a scenario of your own invention.



Convicts & CTHULHU

TICKET of LEAVE #7

Seams of Peril

CREDITS

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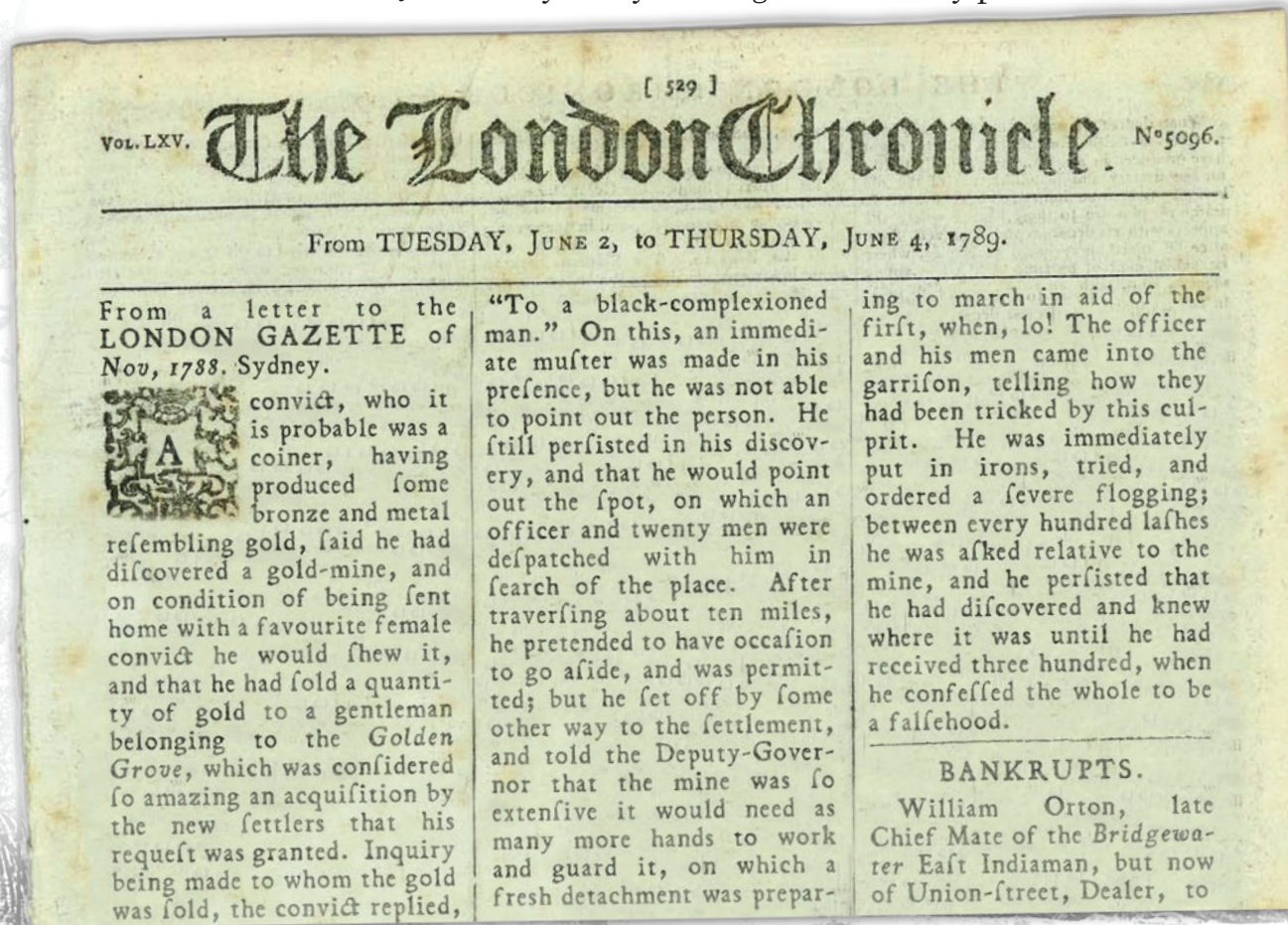
Introduction

It is a fairly well-known fact that the early colonial history of Australia was greatly influenced by several significant "gold rushes" which brought great numbers of people to the new colonies, and ultimately led to the end of convict transportation. In the era of [Convicts & Cthulhu](#), all those great discoveries are still four or five decades in the future. However, that is not to say that the penal colonies were entirely immune to a little "gold fever" – real or imagined.


In fact, the first "discovery" of gold in New South Wales dates to the very earliest period after white settlement. A convict named James Daley boldly

claimed to have discovered a rich vein of gold at a location known only to him. Daley – a professional forger by trade – actively shopped his story around, creating more than a little buzz. Everyone, it seemed was excited by the idea that the newly settled land of New South Wales might yield valuable treasures. The only problem was that the story was a complete fabrication, apparently aimed at swindling the authorities long enough to earn Daley (and his favourite mistress) a ticket home to England.

This curious piece of scurrilous real-world convict history could, with minor tweaking, serve as an intriguing jumping-off point for a dark tale of Lovecraftian horror. After all, who's to say that the strange ore that Daley produced as evidence of his



Replica of the London Chronicle, 1789



find wasn't really something far stranger than plain gold? And who's to say that his motivations for such brazen hoaxing weren't something far more sinister and occult; or that his 'confession' that the whole affair had been a hoax wasn't itself a deception to cover a deeper mystery?

Included below are notes describing the strange case of James Daley's gold, including a period account of the matter reproduced in replica. Also included is a scenario sketch "Seams of Peril" which takes inspiration from Daley's audacious swindling, providing *Convicts & Cthulhu* investigators with a weird mystery with several possible Mythos connections. It can be set in any period covered in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* timeline with only minor adjustments; its account of an inland exploratory expedition is based on French NSW Corps Officer Francis Barralier's initial journeys into the hinterland west of Sydney around 1802.

The First (Fake) Gold Rush

The scurrilous scheming of James Daley is adequately summarised by a story published in the *London Chronicle* of June 4th, 1789. See the replica nearby. The *Chronicle* was a family evening newspaper issued three times a week. [As an aside, it's also notable for being the first newspaper in Europe to publish the American Declaration of Independence.]

This *London Chronicle* account reprints a letter originally written in November, 1788 – a mere ten months after the colony was first established – and sent from Sydney to the newspaper in London. The fact that this news was deemed significant enough to report half a world away provides some hint of the persuasiveness of the hoax, and the keenness of the colonial authorities to be whipped into a frenzy – ready to send off two expeditions, no less. The account also provides an enlightening look at convict desperation, and the harshness of the punishments dealt to the duplicitous Daley (interrogations per hundred lashes is very severe).

As described in the article, the audacious plan to manufacture a fake gold rush ultimately did not quite pay off. After leading the first expedition a merry dance and slipping away, Daley had almost managed to convince Government House to send yet more men off on a wild goose chase. Presumably such

distractions would have given him an opportunity to slip onto a departing ship, or otherwise escape. But instead, the convict's web of lies came suddenly unravelled when members of his first befuddled expedition made it back to the garrison.

Scenario Seed: Seams of Peril

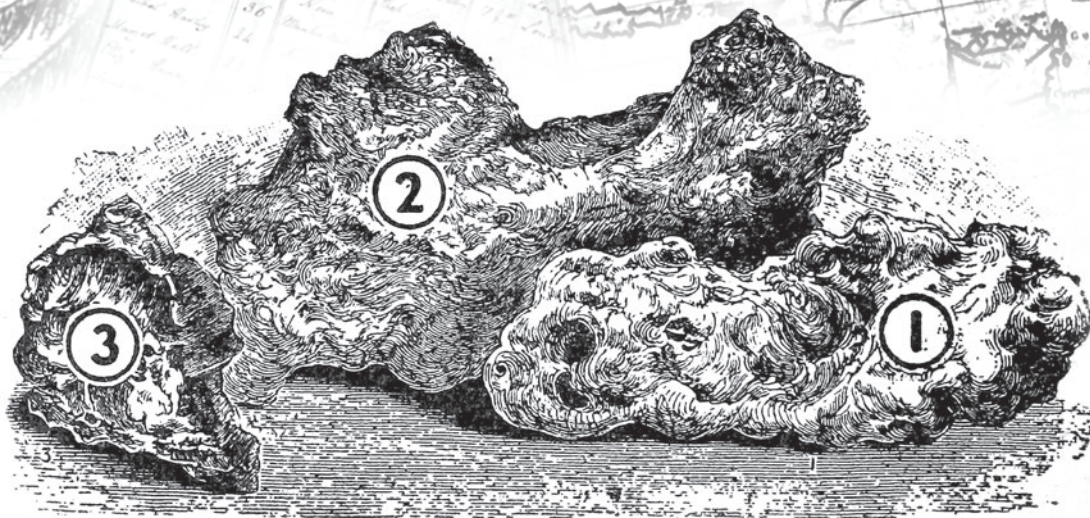
The following scenario seed is inspired by the historical fake gold rush, but posits a number of curious and otherworldly origins for the ore at the centre of the mania. The scenario can be run any time in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era – the Keeper is provided three separate options for the Mythos threat behind the unexpected "discoveries."

Keeper's Introduction

Convict Cornelius Faddin was a forger in London, and has been recently transported to NSW. He is very unhappy, and his natural insolence has led to many floggings and being sent out on bush work gangs which he believes is destroying his health. To escape his fate, he has concocted a plan. He has used some old coins and belt buckles and a ladies' brooch to forge three 'nuggets' of gold. He then plans to put it about this has come from a mine he discovered in the hinterland.

Faddin has worked hard to develop an elaborate story behind his discovery. According to this tale the origin of his discovery was an overheard account told by a sailor, Francis Cosker, who had passed through the area some weeks ago. Cosker had – according to Faddin – spied something in a remote hillside which he was certain must be a rich vein of gold ore. Armed with the secret location revealed by the sailor, Faddin claims that he volunteered to work in a quarry gang stationed in a locality close to that place, sneaking away each night to search remote places for the secret ore seam.

The tale is, of course, a complete fabrication. There is no such sailor named Francis Cosker: the convict merely hopes that the fake sailor's existence will both reinforce his flimsy story and validate the source of his "discovery." Faddin hopes that he can convince the authorities to let him go home in exchange for the (fake) mine's location. His alternate plan is to use the chance of going into the



wilderness to escape into the mountains, where it is believed by the convicts a road to China lies. (This is a genuine convict era delusion that took a long time to dispel among the uneducated).

However, there is more to this situation than meets the eye ... exactly how much depends on which option the Keeper chooses for the underlying Mythos involvement.

LIES BEGET LIES

Ever since Faddin first approached the colonial authorities with his claim, rumours have started circulating through the barracks and public bars of Sydney. Certainly, those in positions of authority have tried to keep the possibility of a gold strike under wraps but Faddin and his convict friends have had no problems with spreading gossip to whomsoever will listen. Indeed, they rather enjoy the attention that has been generated. Overall this has generated a growing and evolving set of stories, some of which remain close to Faddin's original lie while others have grown to incorporate a number of much weirder elements – some describing peculiar aspects of the convict's nuggets, some describing strange people he has been seen to consort with.

One version of the bar-room yarn suggests that there is something not-quite-right with Faddin's "gold nuggets" themselves: some people claim to have seen them glow with a strange lustre "like nothing on God's earth." Other people claim that the things are cursed, pointing to a succession of those who have touched the rocks either becoming mysteriously ill, or going suddenly mad. One version of the tale even claims that several junior soldiers from the NSW Corps, charged with keeping the nuggets secure, mysteriously absconded overnight taking none of their possessions with them.

A second series of divergent tales have elaborated on the identity of the mysterious sailor, "Francis Cosker", whom Faddin claims to have originally supplied the location of the gold-mine. Some storytellers claim to have it on good authority that the man who Faddin overheard was actually a French military captain called Cosquin, possibly sent to infiltrate the colony ahead of a possible invasion. Other people conflate the sailor "Cosker" with a dark-complexioned man who has occasionally been seen to frequent the same establishments as Faddin and who seems at times "uncommonly familiar" with the convict.

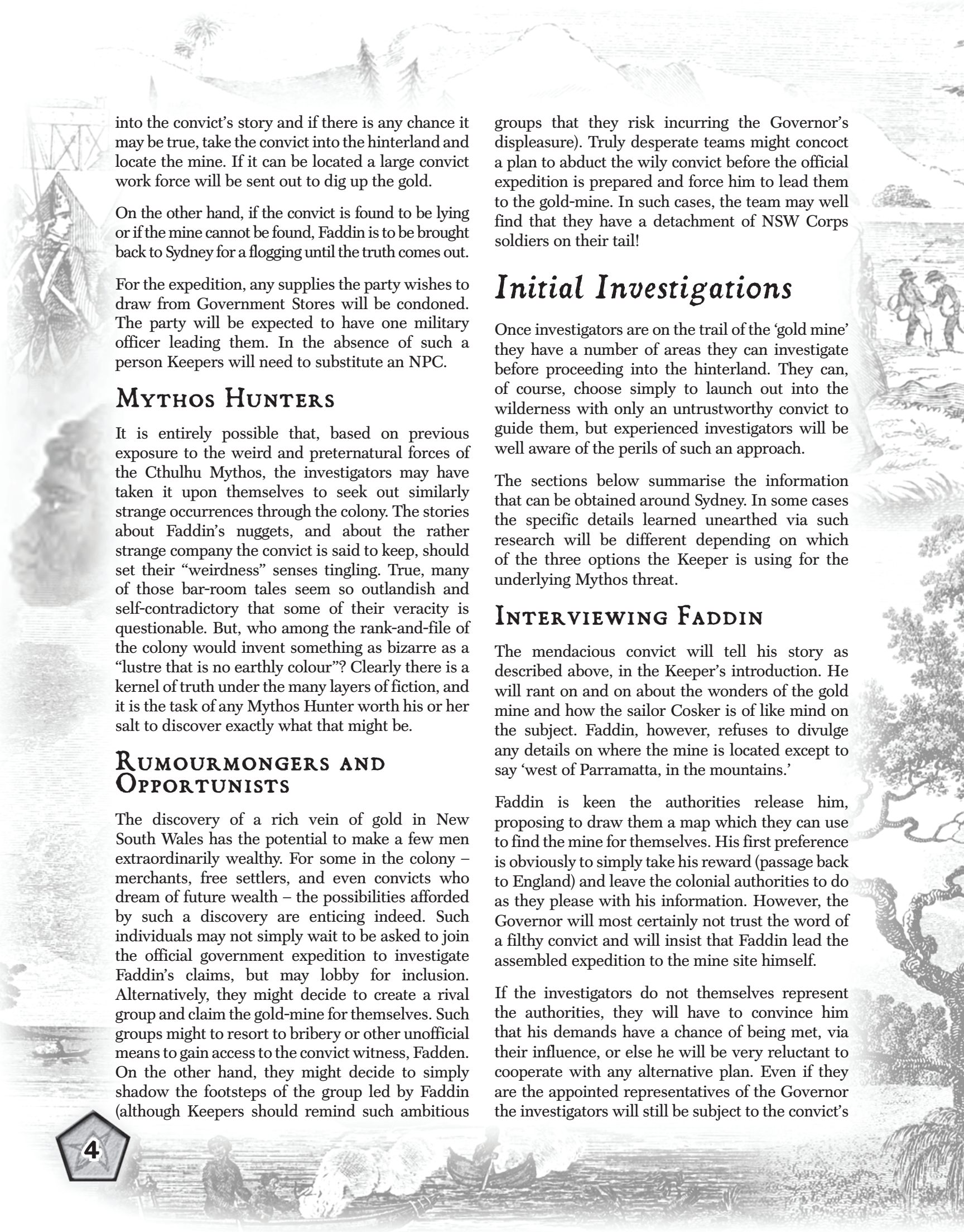
Involving the Investigators

There are three principal ways in which the Keeper can inveigle the investigators into the sordid hoax of Cornelius Faddin – via curiosity piqued about supernatural aspects of overheard tavern tales, via a sense of greed raised from the possibility of vast golden riches, or via direct orders from the colonial government to investigate Faddin's claims.

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT PARTY

An obvious way to involve the adventure is for the investigators to be an official party assembled by the Governor to investigate the veracity of the story. After all, in the original historical account two detachments were sent after the 'gold mine' so clearly the Sydney authorities were not untouched by gold fever.

In this instance the Governor has been approached by Faddin and will in turn call forward the investigators to hear Faddin's story and mount an expedition into the wilderness to find the mine. The Governor will not entertain merely freeing the man in exchange for the information (Bligh especially has some choice words about this outlandish suggestion) but insists the investigators must look



into the convict's story and if there is any chance it may be true, take the convict into the hinterland and locate the mine. If it can be located a large convict work force will be sent out to dig up the gold.

On the other hand, if the convict is found to be lying or if the mine cannot be found, Faddin is to be brought back to Sydney for a flogging until the truth comes out.

For the expedition, any supplies the party wishes to draw from Government Stores will be condoned. The party will be expected to have one military officer leading them. In the absence of such a person Keepers will need to substitute an NPC.

MYTHOS HUNTERS

It is entirely possible that, based on previous exposure to the weird and preternatural forces of the Cthulhu Mythos, the investigators may have taken it upon themselves to seek out similarly strange occurrences through the colony. The stories about Faddin's nuggets, and about the rather strange company the convict is said to keep, should set their "weirdness" senses tingling. True, many of those bar-room tales seem so outlandish and self-contradictory that some of their veracity is questionable. But, who among the rank-and-file of the colony would invent something as bizarre as a "lustre that is no earthly colour"? Clearly there is a kernel of truth under the many layers of fiction, and it is the task of any Mythos Hunter worth his or her salt to discover exactly what that might be.

RUMOURMONGERS AND OPPORTUNISTS

The discovery of a rich vein of gold in New South Wales has the potential to make a few men extraordinarily wealthy. For some in the colony – merchants, free settlers, and even convicts who dream of future wealth – the possibilities afforded by such a discovery are enticing indeed. Such individuals may not simply wait to be asked to join the official government expedition to investigate Faddin's claims, but may lobby for inclusion. Alternatively, they might decide to create a rival group and claim the gold-mine for themselves. Such groups might resort to bribery or other unofficial means to gain access to the convict witness, Fadden. On the other hand, they might decide to simply shadow the footsteps of the group led by Faddin (although Keepers should remind such ambitious

groups that they risk incurring the Governor's displeasure). Truly desperate teams might concoct a plan to abduct the wily convict before the official expedition is prepared and force him to lead them to the gold-mine. In such cases, the team may well find that they have a detachment of NSW Corps soldiers on their tail!

Initial Investigations

Once investigators are on the trail of the 'gold mine' they have a number of areas they can investigate before proceeding into the hinterland. They can, of course, choose simply to launch out into the wilderness with only an untrustworthy convict to guide them, but experienced investigators will be well aware of the perils of such an approach.

The sections below summarise the information that can be obtained around Sydney. In some cases the specific details learned unearthed via such research will be different depending on which of the three options the Keeper is using for the underlying Mythos threat.

INTERVIEWING FADDIN

The mendacious convict will tell his story as described above, in the Keeper's introduction. He will rant on and on about the wonders of the gold mine and how the sailor Cosker is of like mind on the subject. Faddin, however, refuses to divulge any details on where the mine is located except to say 'west of Parramatta, in the mountains.'

Faddin is keen the authorities release him, proposing to draw them a map which they can use to find the mine for themselves. His first preference is obviously to simply take his reward (passage back to England) and leave the colonial authorities to do as they please with his information. However, the Governor will most certainly not trust the word of a filthy convict and will insist that Faddin lead the assembled expedition to the mine site himself.

If the investigators do not themselves represent the authorities, they will have to convince him that his demands have a chance of being met, via their influence, or else he will be very reluctant to cooperate with any alternative plan. Even if they are the appointed representatives of the Governor the investigators will still be subject to the convict's



bile-soaked ravings about how unnecessary it is for him to personally accompany the expedition.

Faddin is a professional confidence-man and an expert liar, so no amount of skill on the investigators' behalf will definitively show him to be peddling untruths. Even a small amount of time spent in the man's company, however, will convince anyone that he is not trustworthy (no rolls required).

INSPECTING THE GOLD NUGGETS

The gold nuggets produced by Faddin as evidence of his find are currently being kept in a personal strongbox owned by one of the senior NSW Corps from the Sydney barracks. This is considered to be one of the most secure places in the colony to store valuables, but virtue of the heavy box construction, the strong lock, and the constant presence of NSW Corps soldiers mere feet away.

Investigators who are on the Governor's official business will have no problems in getting permission to inspect the nuggets. Anyone else will need to either exercise some influence with Government House or pay a hefty bribe to entice one of the NSW Corps guards to "look the other way" for a few minutes.

Faddin's nuggets are lumpy things and not particularly impressive. Investigators who have some experience with mineralogy or geology can attempt to use their scientific skills to evaluate the putative ore, as can anyone who has experience in handling precious metals for commerce. Any successful skill roll will confirm that the ore is most certainly gold, rather than some other mineral. It is not possible to tell whether or not it has been dug out of the ground.

Particularly sharp-eyed investigators may spot features in the nuggets' strange shape that seem to suggest they may have once been several smaller pieces, mashed together by some process.

THE "UNEARTHLY LUSTRE"

If the Keeper is using one of the other Mythos Options, the investigators will likely be disappointed when their inspection of the nuggets fails to reveal any unusual glow. If they go back and quiz whoever originally told them the original tavern tale about an "unearthly glowing stone", they may receive some vague caveated response aimed at brushing them off.

RUMOURS OF DISAPPEARANCES

Some of the bar-room tales told about Faddin's nuggets include mention of a group of NSW Corps soldiers who mysteriously disappeared after having been given the task of guarding the gold. Investigators can follow up on such suggestions either by asking around Sydney or by making inquiries at the barracks of the NSW Corps.

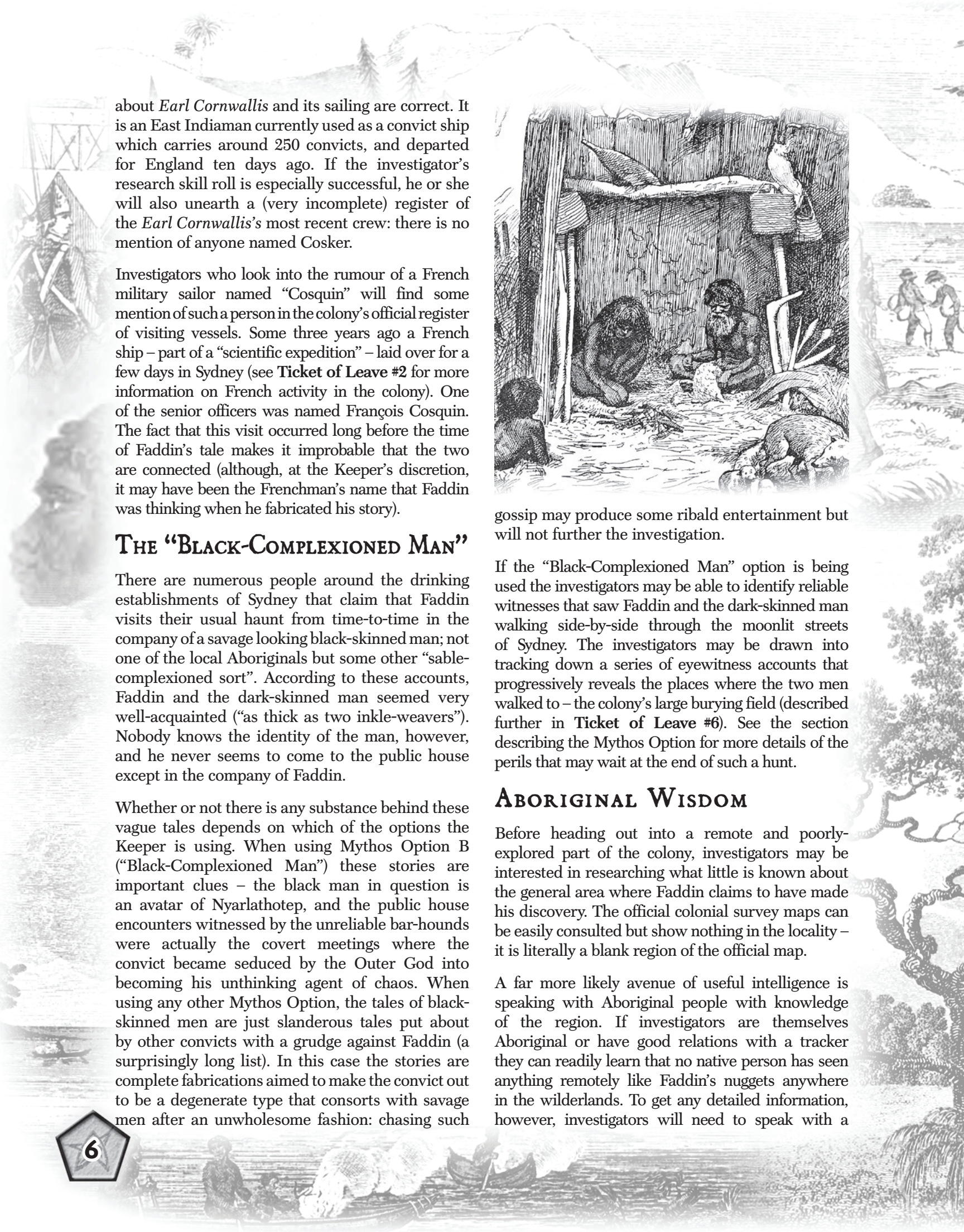
If the Keeper is using Mythos Option A ("Gold is Alive") then there is some truth to the lurid and exaggerated tales (see below). If other options are being used then all rumoured disappearances prove to be pure fabrication that does not hold up to any degree of scrutiny.

In the version of the scenario sketch where there is something alive in the gold nuggets, then questions around the NSW Corps barracks will eventually locate the commanding officer of the five men who went missing several nights back. He can confirm that they were given the assignment of guarding the nuggets and were supposed to have spent the night in the room adjacent to where the strongbox is kept. The last sighting anyone had of the men was in this room sometime around midnight – they were in the midst of a rowdy game of cards. Sometime between then and the next change of watch (at dawn) the five apparently decided to abandon their post. The commanding officer seems certain that the "cowardly curs" must have decided to take off for the bush, unable to cope with the "real man's life" in the NSW Corps. Nobody saw the men leave, however, and none of them took any of their personal belongings (which are still in their barracks berths; they can be searched but reveal nothing of note).

If investigators inspect the room where the soldiers were stationed they may find the filthy pack of cards the men were using: these are remarkable because many of the cards seem to be coated in a coarse kind of gritty material. Brushing some of this off or shining a light on it reveals that the grit is actually small particles of gold-ore-bearing rock.

ON THE TRAIL OF "FRANCIS COSKER" (OR "COSQUIN")

According to Faddin's account, the sailor "Cosker" was a hand on the convict ship *Earl Cornwallis*, but that ship has now sailed for Bengal. If the investigators check the records, the information



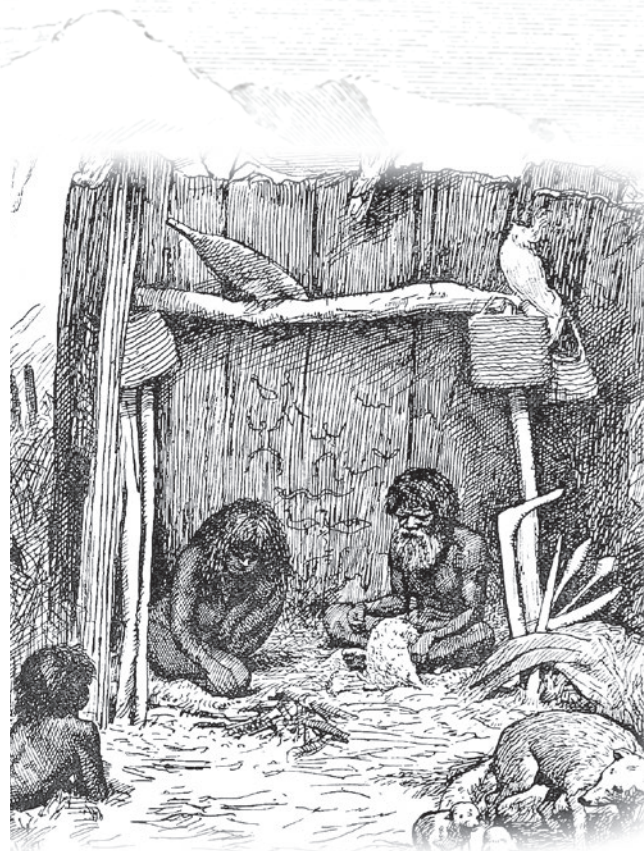
about *Earl Cornwallis* and its sailing are correct. It is an East Indiaman currently used as a convict ship which carries around 250 convicts, and departed for England ten days ago. If the investigator's research skill roll is especially successful, he or she will also unearth a (very incomplete) register of the *Earl Cornwallis's* most recent crew: there is no mention of anyone named Cosker.

Investigators who look into the rumour of a French military sailor named "Cosquin" will find some mention of such a person in the colony's official register of visiting vessels. Some three years ago a French ship – part of a "scientific expedition" – laid over for a few days in Sydney (see **Ticket of Leave #2** for more information on French activity in the colony). One of the senior officers was named François Cosquin. The fact that this visit occurred long before the time of Faddin's tale makes it improbable that the two are connected (although, at the Keeper's discretion, it may have been the Frenchman's name that Faddin was thinking when he fabricated his story).

THE "BLACK-COMPLEXIONED MAN"

There are numerous people around the drinking establishments of Sydney that claim that Faddin visits their usual haunt from time-to-time in the company of a savage looking black-skinned man; not one of the local Aboriginals but some other "sable-complexioned sort". According to these accounts, Faddin and the dark-skinned man seemed very well-acquainted ("as thick as two inkle-weavers"). Nobody knows the identity of the man, however, and he never seems to come to the public house except in the company of Faddin.

Whether or not there is any substance behind these vague tales depends on which of the options the Keeper is using. When using Mythos Option B ("Black-Complexioned Man") these stories are important clues – the black man in question is an avatar of Nyarlathotep, and the public house encounters witnessed by the unreliable bar-hounds were actually the covert meetings where the convict became seduced by the Outer God into becoming his unthinking agent of chaos. When using any other Mythos Option, the tales of black-skinned men are just slanderous tales put about by other convicts with a grudge against Faddin (a surprisingly long list). In this case the stories are complete fabrications aimed to make the convict out to be a degenerate type that consorts with savage men after an unwholesome fashion: chasing such



gossip may produce some ribald entertainment but will not further the investigation.

If the "Black-Complexioned Man" option is being used the investigators may be able to identify reliable witnesses that saw Faddin and the dark-skinned man walking side-by-side through the moonlit streets of Sydney. The investigators may be drawn into tracking down a series of eyewitness accounts that progressively reveals the places where the two men walked to – the colony's large burying field (described further in **Ticket of Leave #6**). See the section describing the Mythos Option for more details of the perils that may wait at the end of such a hunt.

ABORIGINAL WISDOM

Before heading out into a remote and poorly-explored part of the colony, investigators may be interested in researching what little is known about the general area where Faddin claims to have made his discovery. The official colonial survey maps can be easily consulted but show nothing in the locality – it is literally a blank region of the official map.

A far more likely avenue of useful intelligence is speaking with Aboriginal people with knowledge of the region. If investigators are themselves Aboriginal or have good relations with a tracker they can readily learn that no native person has seen anything remotely like Faddin's nuggets anywhere in the wilderlands. To get any detailed information, however, investigators will need to speak with a



First Peoples of the Blue Mountains

The vast Blue Mountains region covers the traditional lands of two groups of Aboriginal peoples, the Darug and the Gundungurra. Roughly speaking, Darug people inhabit the Cumberland plain while the Gundungurra reside in the mountainous areas and to the south into the Wollondilly region. The Gundungurra are the people Barralier's expedition (see below) encountered. Both peoples have a long and custodial relationship to the land, flora and fauna of the region, and have a diverse range of established sites in the area, one art site dating back 22,000 years. After their encounter with Barralier, the Gundungurra people successfully petitioned Governor King to maintain protected access to their yam beds in the rivers of their land; this promise was rescinded by the Government once King departed for England.

Sources: The Aboriginal Blue Mountains site has an historical and cultural overview as well as information on the current communities. <http://www.aboriginalbluemountains.com.au/home>

member of Gundungurra – the Aboriginal peoples who live in the Blue Mountains. Asking around, the investigators can learn that some of these Aboriginal peoples are friendly, some not, including some bands who live deep in the mountains and have never met white people. If investigators invest a considerable amount of time in learning about the Aboriginal people they may encounter on their expedition, the Keeper should reward a bonus to any social encounters that they later have with Gundungurra people.

None of the Gundungurra ever have reason to come to Sydney, but some have been known to come into Parramatta from time-to-time. Any knowledgeable Aboriginal tracker or investigator will know that the best chance of learning the secrets of the bushland will be to track down one of these visitors in Parramatta.

The Keeper can make it either easy or difficult to track down one of the Gundungurra people in Parramatta, depending on the tempo and desired length of the scenario. Ultimately, however, such a search will prove successful. Exactly what the investigators learn from speaking with their local Aboriginal contact will depend on which Mythos Option the Keeper is using.

If using Mythos Option A or B, then the information they uncover mostly relates to dangerous animals and capricious rock ledges, both of which may be hazardous to unprepared travellers. This information proves helpful to planning and running the expedition (and time spent in learning the local wisdom from the Gundungurra should directly yield die bonuses to rolls made when dangers arise on the journey, see below).

If Mythos Option C (“Gurangatch’s Waterhole”) is being used, the interview with the Gundungurra contact will yield all of the above intelligence but something more specific also. When the Aboriginal man or woman hears the general description of where Faddin proposes to lead the investigators, his or her face darkens in a scowl – “this is not a good place to go.” If investigators ask further, their contact will tell them that the area in question is a Dreaming place where Gurangatch – a great waterhole spirit – sleeps, and where other spirits (or Burringilling) may also often be found. The Aboriginal peoples of the Blue Mountains know to avoid these places, for at certain times they can be very dangerous. If the investigators gain the trust of their contact, he or she may tell more of the Dreaming songlines: see Mythos Option C for details.

The Journey to the ‘Mine’

Eventually the investigators will have gathered whatever information they are able in the time available (remember the Governor is waiting on their advice, probably impatiently). The task then becomes trekking out into the furthest mapped parts of the colony, led by a mendacious convict ... and then further into the great unknown.

THE JOURNEY TO CIVILIZATION’S EDGE

The journey takes around 10 days to get deep enough into the mountains to find either the fake gold mine site (assuming it is an actual location) or for Faddin to decide to escape and make for China. The days are broken up into two blocks of about five days. The first five cover mostly swamp and river country, while the second five go into the mountains. By the tenth day it will become obvious the mountains are unpassable and the group must turn back.

(If Keepers wish to turn this into a full exploration into the mountains this is beyond the scope of a short adventure. They may turn to the historical record

Expedition Encounters

Day	Geography	Encounters
1	Town (Parramatta)/Grasslands	Town encounters. Kangaroos on grasslands.
2	Swamp/Mangroves/ Nepean River	Swamps make for difficult travel Crossing difficulties – will need to unyoke animals to get them across
3	Rising hills	Kangaroos – party may wish to hunt
4	Many creeks/hills rising into mountains	Creek crossings slow party down Way into mountains will need to be decided – many options. Investigator use of any Navigation or Survival skills will show the right way
5	Thick bushland/mountainous rocky terrain/granite rocks	Unfamiliar territory. Aboriginal people. A friendly group. They know about white people and known to them as the Nattai; amongst themselves they are called the Gundungurra people. They will trade and help guide.
6	Chain of mountains. Many creeks.	Way into mountains is along creek beds. Encounter area with much slate. Eventually stopped by a precipice and must go back.
7	More mountains. Very inaccessible country. A single creek.	Ducks at the creek which may be hunted if food is short. 50% chance of rain storm. 75% chance if summer. Bullocks or other animals will have to remain here or be taken back; either way at least a soldier and two convicts will have to attend to this duty.
8	Cataract. Single mountain peak, the first not part of the earlier chain.	Three quarters up mountain can be reached but then stopped by overhanging rocks.
9	Mountains and caves. A wide creek bed where natives are camped.	Unfriendly natives. These are another band of Gundungurra but do not know white people and do not trust them. If the party has chosen a guide with diplomatic skills they may be able to make friends. Otherwise, the band will disperse and come back with allies and continue to harass the party, picking them off with spears and making night attacks until they leave the area by at least a day's journey.
10	Mountains and creeks.	Any attempt to find a way through fails unless an investigator can make use of their Navigation or Survival skills. Convict Faddin either makes his escape now, or states that the site of his 'gold-mine' has now been reached.
11+	Return journey	Retrace steps out.

for examples of such a trip, including Barrallier's second expedition in the link in Bibliography. For others see Evans' journey <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1300271h.html#pic-01> or Scott's account of Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson's successful crossing of the Blue Mountains <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks12/1203971h.html#ch-03>. Both these journeys are from 1813).

EXPEDITION/HEADING WEST

The investigators will need to decide how many people they are taking. Barrallier's expedition took 4 soldiers, 5 convicts and 1 native tracker. They

also took pack animals: because of their sturdiness, bullocks are seen as suitable for hauling material into the deep country. Successful use of any survival skills possessed by the investigators will most definitely help them to better determine what they will need.

Other equipment can be foodstuffs and shelter, although for food, kangaroos were often hunted on the trips into the hinterland (assuming the party includes those with hunting skills and bush lore). The launching point of any western expedition is Parramatta. Supplies can be purchased here or brought from Sydney by cart or river boat (see the core *Convicts & Cthulhu* book for details).

ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE WAY

The table nearby provides some suggested encounters that the expedition may have as it makes its way out into the wilderness. It assumes that the group maintains a regular pace of around 4 miles a day in flatter country, 1–2 in the mountains. Keepers should note this countryside is very hot in summer and very cold in winter, depending on when the journey is undertaken by the party.

Mythos Options

Three alternative Mythos-related mysteries are offered. Keepers can decide which they will employ. Each will have some effect on the way the early parts of the adventure – as well as its grand finale – play out.

Option A: Gold is Alive, Magic is Afoot

If using this option, the true power underlying the weird phenomena surrounding Faddin's discovery is actually a strange kind of Mythos creature that is trapped within the nuggets themselves (at least, most of the time). The stories about a black-complexioned associate, and those about the sailor Cosker are all fabrications or exaggerations with no basis in reality. But the stories about men going missing after being left alone with the nuggets; and the ones about their uncanny lustre ... those have basis in truth.

The genesis of the current situation came when Faddin was gathering the ingredients that he mashed together to create his nuggets. The majority of the pieces of gold that the convict softened over the open fire to melt into his conglomerate balls were nothing more than coins, belt buckles or pieces of jewellery that the light-fingered Faddin acquired. But the pieces at the heart of each nugget came from somewhere much less prosaic. One day, some weeks ago, while out quarrying rocks far beyond Parramatta the convict chanced upon a strange coloured rock exposed by his pick-axe, split into three parts. The peculiar stones each had a surface subtly alive with coruscating lights, which resembled no shade he had ever seen before. Recognising this find as something of worth, Faddin picked up the faintly glowing rock fragments – and that was the moment when his mind became enthralled by the entity within them.

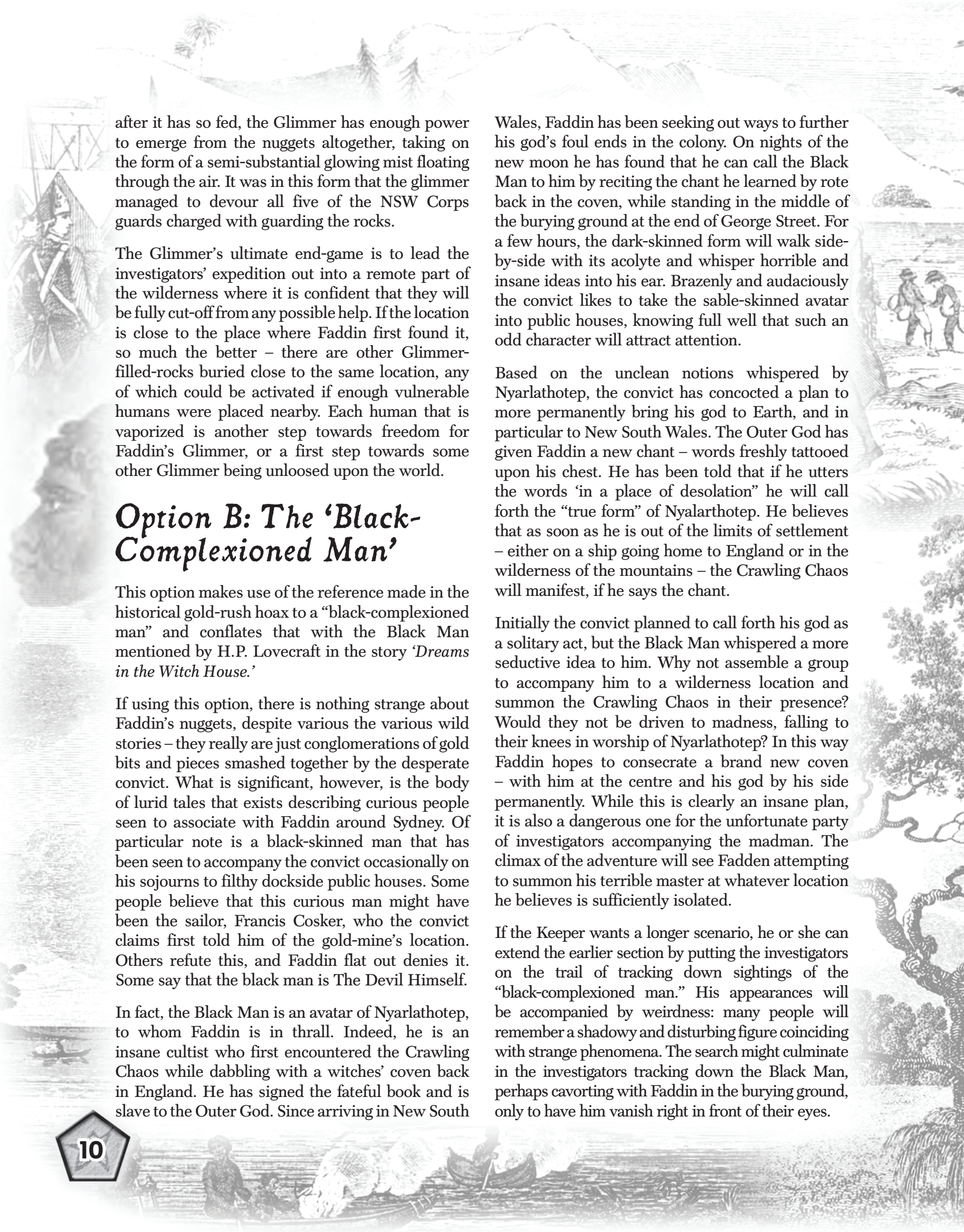
Possible Complication: A Rival Party?

If the Keeper wishes to add an additional twist to challenge the investigators, it is possible that theirs is not the only party which is hunting for Faddin's gold-mine. Just as it is possible for the investigators to be a rogue party, rival to the official one, so a party of NPCs could assemble to be rivals to the investigators. They may have their own way of having learned about the location to which Faddin plans to lead the expedition.

If developing this option, the Keeper will need to decide how the level of provisioning and capability of the rival group – they may be greedy amateur explorers who will quickly run into difficulties, or they may be professional types that have hired Aboriginal trackers to help navigate the landscape. The Keeper will also need to decide what motivates the rival group, and how they will react when inevitably the two teams cross paths.

Shortly after this portentous discovery, the convict concocted his plan. The notion of hoaxing the colonial authorities to get a ticket home was once genuine enough, but now that desire has been suborned by the eldritch power that controls him. Without knowing why, Faddin is certain that it is important that he lead a group of people on a journey into the bush – preferably to some region which is very remote and isolated. This idea is actually the Mythos creature's grand plan to create the perfect environment for it to consume a dozen or more humans to give it the energy it needs to permanently escape its captivity inside the stone fragments.

The exact nature of the creature inside the nuggets – which the voice in Faddin's head knows only as "the glimmer within" – is not clear. Perhaps it is a 'colour' like the one in *Colour out of Space* but only part of a greater whole; or perhaps it is a fledgling semi-substantial form of a Shoggoth. Most of the time it remains dormant inside the nuggets, but when it senses a vulnerable individual nearby (e.g., a lone or weak individual, with little chance of defending itself) the Glimmer comes to the surface. It is then that the nuggets take on their "unearthly lustre" as they did when Faddin first made his discovery. However, while the entity was content then to merely dominate the will of its first human victim, now all it hungers for is the energy obtained by fully vaporising a human body. For several hours



after it has so fed, the Glimmer has enough power to emerge from the nuggets altogether, taking on the form of a semi-substantial glowing mist floating through the air. It was in this form that the glimmer managed to devour all five of the NSW Corps guards charged with guarding the rocks.

The Glimmer's ultimate end-game is to lead the investigators' expedition out into a remote part of the wilderness where it is confident that they will be fully cut-off from any possible help. If the location is close to the place where Faddin first found it, so much the better – there are other Glimmer-filled-rocks buried close to the same location, any of which could be activated if enough vulnerable humans were placed nearby. Each human that is vaporized is another step towards freedom for Faddin's Glimmer, or a first step towards some other Glimmer being unloosed upon the world.

Option B: The 'Black-Complexioned Man'

This option makes use of the reference made in the historical gold-rush hoax to a "black-complexioned man" and conflates that with the Black Man mentioned by H.P. Lovecraft in the story *'Dreams in the Witch House.'*

If using this option, there is nothing strange about Faddin's nuggets, despite various the various wild stories – they really are just conglomerations of gold bits and pieces smashed together by the desperate convict. What is significant, however, is the body of lurid tales that exists describing curious people seen to associate with Faddin around Sydney. Of particular note is a black-skinned man that has been seen to accompany the convict occasionally on his sojourns to filthy dockside public houses. Some people believe that this curious man might have been the sailor, Francis Cosker, who the convict claims first told him of the gold-mine's location. Others refute this, and Faddin flat out denies it. Some say that the black man is The Devil Himself.

In fact, the Black Man is an avatar of Nyarlathotep, to whom Faddin is in thrall. Indeed, he is an insane cultist who first encountered the Crawling Chaos while dabbling with a witches' coven back in England. He has signed the fateful book and is slave to the Outer God. Since arriving in New South

Wales, Faddin has been seeking out ways to further his god's foul ends in the colony. On nights of the new moon he has found that he can call the Black Man to him by reciting the chant he learned by rote back in the coven, while standing in the middle of the burying ground at the end of George Street. For a few hours, the dark-skinned form will walk side-by-side with its acolyte and whisper horrible and insane ideas into his ear. Brazenly and audaciously the convict likes to take the sable-skinned avatar into public houses, knowing full well that such an odd character will attract attention.

Based on the unclean notions whispered by Nyarlathotep, the convict has concocted a plan to more permanently bring his god to Earth, and in particular to New South Wales. The Outer God has given Faddin a new chant – words freshly tattooed upon his chest. He has been told that if he utters the words "in a place of desolation" he will call forth the "true form" of Nyarlathotep. He believes that as soon as he is out of the limits of settlement – either on a ship going home to England or in the wilderness of the mountains – the Crawling Chaos will manifest, if he says the chant.

Initially the convict planned to call forth his god as a solitary act, but the Black Man whispered a more seductive idea to him. Why not assemble a group to accompany him to a wilderness location and summon the Crawling Chaos in their presence? Would they not be driven to madness, falling to their knees in worship of Nyarlathotep? In this way Faddin hopes to consecrate a brand new coven – with him at the centre and his god by his side permanently. While this is clearly an insane plan, it is also a dangerous one for the unfortunate party of investigators accompanying the madman. The climax of the adventure will see Fadden attempting to summon his terrible master at whatever location he believes is sufficiently isolated.

If the Keeper wants a longer scenario, he or she can extend the earlier section by putting the investigators on the trail of tracking down sightings of the "black-complexioned man." His appearances will be accompanied by weirdness: many people will remember a shadowy and disturbing figure coinciding with strange phenomena. The search might culminate in the investigators tracking down the Black Man, perhaps cavorting with Faddin in the burying ground, only to have him vanish right in front of their eyes.



Option C: Gurangatch's Waterhole

If using this option, there is nothing strange about either the gold “nuggets” or Faddin’s dubious network of associates. All of the stories that have been circulated are ridiculous lies and fantasies. What is real, however, is the convict’s duplicitous plan to escape the colony in exchange for the location of his phoney gold-mine.

To execute this plan, he will lead the investigator’s expedition out into a remote area of the Blue Mountains foothills, a place chosen by him for its isolation (since he believes it will be easier to abscond once the expedition is effectively lost). Unfortunately, the area selected by Faddin is home to ancient horrors of its own, as the expedition will discover to its peril.

Among the Gundungurra (Blue Mountains) Aboriginal people, the area towards which the expedition is headed is notorious as being dangerous. It is the sleeping place of Gurangatch, a powerful spirit (or “Burringilling”) from their traditional Dreaming stories. Gurangatch was said to be a half-fish, half-reptile with shimmering scales of green, purple and gold and powerful shining eyes whose light could pierce through deep water. The local people are taught from an early age not to stray too close to a certain waterhole, unless they have brought an offering to appease Gurangatch. To do so invites ruin: the spirit might lash forth with

his mighty tongue, even as he once did to create some of the local rivers.

Aboriginal investigators will likely place considerable weight upon the song-line legends of the Gundungurra peoples, even as most white investigators will dismiss them. Discounting these tales altogether is, however, perilous since the waterhole in question is in fact the home of a horrible aquatic cryptid creature – a huge dark-furred thing, sporting wickedly sharp teeth and claws. In future decades, repeated sightings of similar monstrosities in and around waterholes and rivers will result in colonists giving a name to such elusive but deadly horrors – the bunyip. However, at this point in history the creatures have no name; but all who hear their baleful howling on the wind shudder at the thought of running into such an unknown predator.

Whether there is any connection between the bunyip and the tale of Gurangatch is left for the Keeper to decide; conceivably the tales of vicious attacks at the waterhole over many hundreds (thousands?) of years may have crystallised into a story. Alternatively, the Spirit of Gurangatch is an altogether different entity and the bunyip is but a recent interloper who has taken up residence in the waterhole (perhaps to the irritation of the Dreaming spirit).

The only thing that is certain is that the path chosen by the dishonest convict Faddin will bring the expedition to the waterhole in question. Kind keepers may wish to give some warning to the investigators, perhaps allowing them to hear a

bellowing wail on the wind coming from across the next rise. Once they are at the shores of the bunyip's waterhole, their fate is sealed – the horror will wait for an opportune moment (perhaps while one of the expedition is separated from the rest) – and then silently strike. Bunyips are fearsome opponents, presenting the investigators with a deadly combat.

Of course, true to form, Faddin will almost certainly use the attack of the bunyip as a handy distraction to mask his escape from the investigator group. Those caught up in fighting the thrashing whirlwind or teeth, claws, and malevolent flesh will need to achieve extraordinary results on their skill tests to notice the degenerate convict slipping away. Some may wonder whether perhaps the man is somehow in league with the beast ...?

Statistics

Game statistics for *Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition* are shown below.

Cornelius Faddin

MENDACIOUS HOAXER AND SCRUFFY CONVICT, AGED 37

STR 55 CON 35 SIZ 75 DEX 80 INT 70
APP 40 POW 70 EDU 55 SAN 30 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 Magic Points: 14

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Chiv 50% (25/10), damage 1D4 + Damage Bonus
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills: Credit Rating 3%, Insight 65%, Fast Talk 70%, Listen 40%, Persuade 45%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 45%.

The Glimmer Within (MYTHOS OPTION A)

The Glimmer Within is a strange otherworldly entity, something which partially exists in our world and partially elsewhere. It may be related to other, better documented, creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos or it may be something unique.

Composed of a semi-material intelligent mass of weird light, the Glimmer Within greatly fears bright illumination (which can harm it, see below).

Francis Barrallier, NSW Corps Ensign, Governor's Aid and Explorer

Barrallier's family were refugees from Revolutionary France. At age 20 he worked for the British allies of French Royalists at the capture of his home city of Toulon in 1793. Barrallier came to the attention of a relative of the Duke of Portland who became his patron. He achieved a post with the new Governor of NSW, Philip Gidley King and arrived in Sydney in 1800. An engineer by training, he worked as an architect for King, a commissioned officer in the NSW Corps and as King's aide-de-camp. By 1802 he was active as an explorer. In October, striking out from the Hawkesbury, he went west into the Blue Mountains seeking a way into the interior.

There is a suggestion some of Baudin's French party visiting Sydney might have accompanied Barrallier and that he did not disclose this to King, as Lt Governor William Paterson didn't trust him. Certainly, few records of this earlier exploration survive. In November, Barrallier embarked on a second expedition, managing to penetrate around 100 miles into the Blue Mountains before being able to find a way further west. This was the first European expedition to get so far. Barrallier was noted for his deep interest in and capacity to get along with the Aboriginal peoples he encountered, including the Gundungurra (Blue Mountains) peoples. It's been argued this was in part because of the explorer's cosmopolitan upbringing in the port city of Toulon.

In 1803 he fell out with King and left Sydney. He wished to return to New South Wales but never managed to. Barrallier continued to rise as an engineer and military officer, his service including drawing a military map of Barbados. Barrallier was appointed surveyor-general of Guadelope and retired in London, a Brevet Lieutenant Colonel in 1846; he died aged 80 in London.

Sources: Vivienne Parsons, 'Barrallier, Francis Louis (1773–1853)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barrallier-francis-louis-1745> and Valerie Lhuede, Francis Barrallier in NSW, *Journal of the Institute for the Study of French Australian Relations*, 35, December 2003. <https://www.isfar.org.au/category/explorations/no-35/>

To protect itself it typically takes refuge inside other matter – in the case of this scenario, a piece of rock whose fragments were used by Faddin’s in his ‘gold nuggets.’

Even while the Glimmer Within is hidden deep within another object it is intimately aware of its surroundings and can innately sense weak creatures – potential prey – nearby.

The Glimmer Within’s level of activity depends on its current Magic Point total. It is able to rest deep within an inanimate object indefinitely, but to draw close to the surface of the object – or to emerge from it altogether – requires spending Magic Points. Coming to the surface (where it manifests an alien and unnervingly pale fire) costs 1 Magic Point per round, while achieving separate existence (as an animated glowing mist) costs the Glimmer Within 3 Magic Points per round. If the creature runs out of Magic Points altogether it retreats quickly to the core of its host object; if prevented from returning, it soon dissipates. Unless killed, the creature refreshes Magic Points at the normal rate.

The Glimmer Within has one goal: to consume the essence of living things in order to steal their energy. By doing so it not only replenishes its scarce resource of Magic Points, but also grows its permanent POW. If a Glimmer ever raises its POW above 200 it has achieved sufficient energy to escape from the Earth and return to its home dimension.

STR N/A CON N/A SIZ 05 DEX 85 INT 80
 POW 85 Hit Points: N/A
 Damage Bonus: N/A Build: - Move: 4 Magic Points: 16

Feed By Touch 85% (42/17), damage 1D6 + vaporising power drain (see below)

Dodge 45% (22/9)

Armour: None, but invulnerable to physical attack.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 to see a Glimmer Within.

SPECIAL POWERS

Vaporising Power Drain: Any living creature whose flesh comes into direct contact with the Glimmer Within will be partially vaporised. This manifests as sublimation of flesh, typically resulting in part of the victim’s body simply boiling away. Each exposure costs the victim 1D6 × 5 points of characteristic from POW, STR, CON and DEX. If any characteristic reaches zero the victim

has been entirely converted to energy, leaving behind only the smell of ozone. Each five points of POW lost by a victim cause the Glimmer’s Magic Point total to increase by 1 and its permanent POW to increase by 4.

Vulnerability to Bright Light: will shun bright moonlight (which causes it 1 Magic Point of damage per round); direct sunlight is more damaging still (1D6 Magic Points of damage per round of exposure). Artificial illumination from a bright lantern will cause 1D3 MP damage/round.

The Black-Complexioned Man (MYTHOS OPTION B)

The ‘Black Man’ form of Nyarlathotep resembles a normal human, but one whose every feature – skin, hair, eyes and even teeth – is jet black. This striking figure doesn’t resemble any negroid or Aboriginal races.

STR 115 CON 165 SIZ 85 DEX 100 INT 430
 POW 250 Hit Points: 25
 Damage Bonus: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 9 Magic Points: 50

Fighting 90% (45/18), touch damage 1D6 + Damage Bonus or power drain (see below)

Dodge 75% (37/15)

Armour: None, but the avatar of Nyarlathotep can regenerate 1D6 Hit Points by spending a Magic Point. The Black Man can spend multiple Magic Points each round in this way, if he so desires.

Spells: Any that the Keeper wishes.

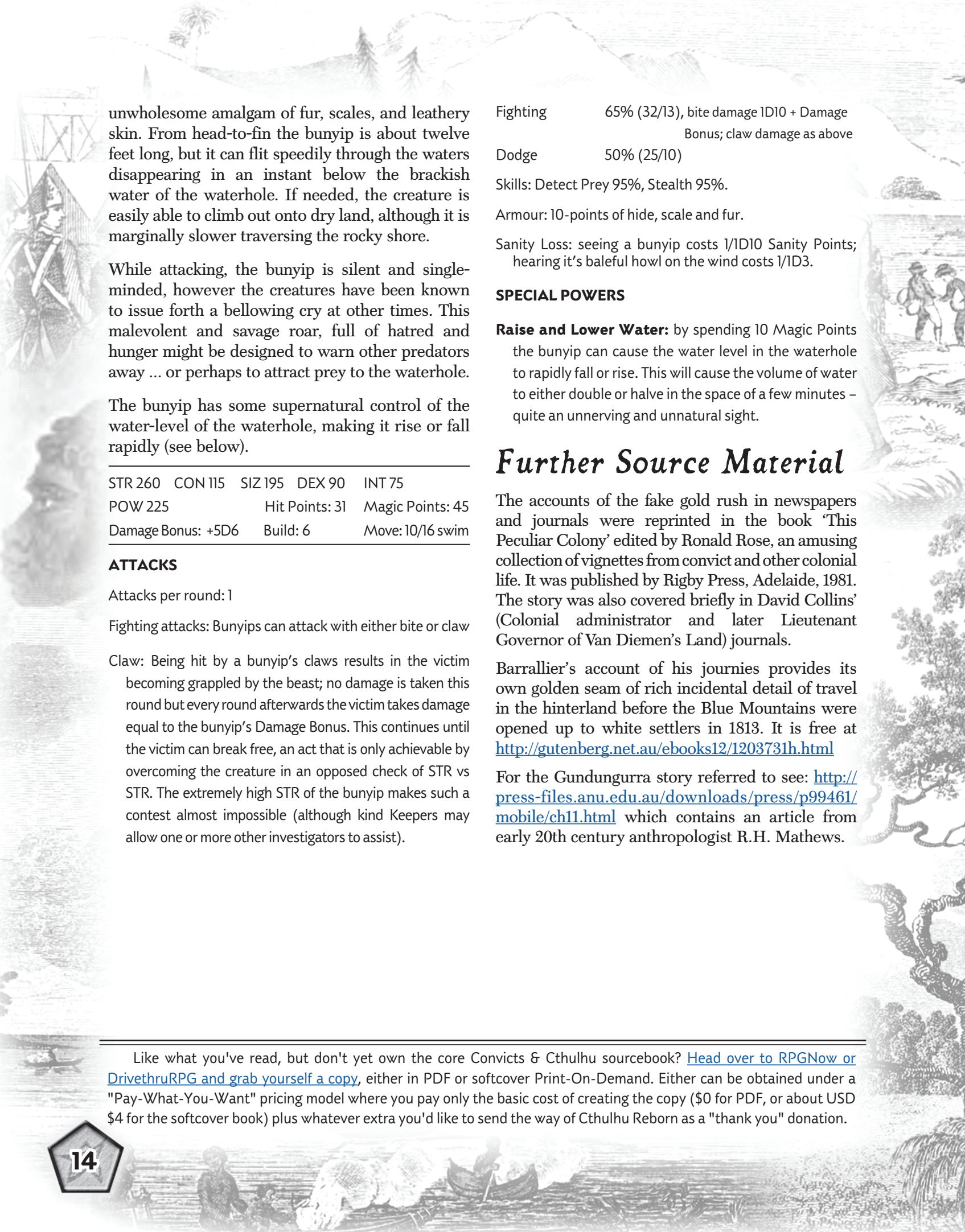
Sanity Loss: 0/1D2 Sanity Points.

SPECIAL POWERS

Power Drain: If the Black Man successfully touches a victim, he can choose to either inflict hit point damage OR to drain 1D6 × 5 points of the victim’s POW.

The Bunyip of Gurangatch’s waterhole (MYTHOS OPTION C)

The bunyip is a huge and terrifying aquatic cryptid creature that lives in a waterhole. It resembles an enormous seal, with a face that has vaguely canine features but which sports wickedly sharp and long teeth, more akin to a crocodile. Their hide is an



unwholesome amalgam of fur, scales, and leathery skin. From head-to-fin the bunyip is about twelve feet long, but it can flit speedily through the waters disappearing in an instant below the brackish water of the waterhole. If needed, the creature is easily able to climb out onto dry land, although it is marginally slower traversing the rocky shore.

While attacking, the bunyip is silent and single-minded, however the creatures have been known to issue forth a bellowing cry at other times. This malevolent and savage roar, full of hatred and hunger might be designed to warn other predators away ... or perhaps to attract prey to the waterhole.

The bunyip has some supernatural control of the water-level of the waterhole, making it rise or fall rapidly (see below).

STR 260	CON 115	SIZ 195	DEX 90	INT 75
POW 225		Hit Points: 31	Magic Points: 45	
Damage Bonus: +5D6	Build: 6	Move: 10/16 swim		

ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: Bunyips can attack with either bite or claw

Claw: Being hit by a bunyip's claws results in the victim becoming grappled by the beast; no damage is taken this round but every round afterwards the victim takes damage equal to the bunyip's Damage Bonus. This continues until the victim can break free, an act that is only achievable by overcoming the creature in an opposed check of STR vs STR. The extremely high STR of the bunyip makes such a contest almost impossible (although kind Keepers may allow one or more other investigators to assist).

Fighting 65% (32/13), bite damage 1D10 + Damage Bonus; claw damage as above

Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills: Detect Prey 95%, Stealth 95%.

Armour: 10-points of hide, scale and fur.

Sanity Loss: seeing a bunyip costs 1/1D10 Sanity Points; hearing it's baleful howl on the wind costs 1/1D3.

SPECIAL POWERS

Raise and Lower Water: by spending 10 Magic Points the bunyip can cause the water level in the waterhole to rapidly fall or rise. This will cause the volume of water to either double or halve in the space of a few minutes – quite an unnerving and unnatural sight.

Further Source Material

The accounts of the fake gold rush in newspapers and journals were reprinted in the book 'This Peculiar Colony' edited by Ronald Rose, an amusing collection of vignettes from convict and other colonial life. It was published by Rigby Press, Adelaide, 1981. The story was also covered briefly in David Collins' (Colonial administrator and later Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land) journals.

Barrallier's account of his journeys provides its own golden seam of rich incidental detail of travel in the hinterland before the Blue Mountains were opened up to white settlers in 1813. It is free at <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks12/1203731h.html>

For the Gundungurra story referred to see: <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p99461/mobile/ch11.html> which contains an article from early 20th century anthropologist R.H. Mathews.

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