

The Lions Faction Pack-up
July 2003

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Acknowledgements

This pack-up is 49% glucose-free. Yet, somehow, the remaining 51% doesn't contain any glucose either. How about that?

Thanks also to Rebbly, Kirsten Williams, Steve Mather, Iain McNeil, Paul Baker, Fozzie, Allen Stroud, Fergal O'Brien, Charley, Dave Rimmer, Sam Clayton and Ron the Electric-Crab-Monkey.

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July 2003

Dear all,

“Be Careful What You Wish For...”

This is the most contributed to pack up for a while. It seemed that every time I was about to finish it, I'd get another submission. Well, surely that can't be a bad thing?

I mean, it may have delayed the July packup to early August but it means that there's plenty to find in here.

As is normal, the August Packup will be an introductory booklet to the faction (for all those new to the faction who don't know their Epimania from their Delalaria).

For 'tis Gathering time, and we go to Albion to be attacked by Grollach Demons whilst Holy Isle, the central island of Lantia and capital of Lion Lands, lies in the hands of the enemy.

Hmm. Will anything be done about that?

As always, that lies in the hands of the Faction's players...

Regards,

Daniel Williams
(Pack-Up Editor and Opponent of the Rule of Double)

To His Grace The Prince Bishop, The Prince Bishops Men,
Lions Of Lantia and all Allies of Light,

Those who attended the first Moot may have heard of, seen or purchased a copy of A Map of Lantia, maintained by my assistant Brother Alawitious and I and reproduced by myself and others of the Order Faithful.

New and updated versions of these maps will be available for a very reasonable price at the Gathering from various outlets.

Persons who bought maps at the moot will receive free replacements with the return of the old version to any official vendor.

The new version includes:

- New parchment paper (OOC parchment EFFECT, no-one is THAT rich!)
- The inclusion of various missing islands INCLUDING the Sunset Shipyards
- Amended mistakes (HOW may Islands of service?)
- Other tweaks
- Bulk discounts for orders of 10 or more maps

Brother Drum - Prince Bishops Men
Aide To His Grace The Prince Bishop

Incident Report – Events of 29th June
Ian Cryer (Sgt Circle Guard)

So there I am just brewing a nice cuppa in the ritual circle guard hut on Tamarus on Sunday afternoon, last Sunday in June... I think it was, yes that's it, definitely the last Sunday in June... when this whacking great group of nobles, crowns and the like turns up fresh out of the blue, not a word of warning or anything. Well I'll tell you I damned near spilt my tea straight down the front of my tabard in surprise I did.

Anyway, seems as herself the Queen is in charge, she points at Rob and Phil and says something like "You two stay there, the rest can follow me." So I tries to get most of my tea drunk sharpish so as to follow the order, you know, smart like. Off we trot at the back of the column... well if you can call it a column, you know these important types, too busy learning court-craft and the like to learn how to march and all that, and I don't mind telling you that me an the lads are a bit foxed as to what is going on.

So when alls said and done we end up at Master Jari and Sister Bethanie's place, if I remember it right Master Jari hadn't been back in the place much over a week, he'd been off on another island, or whatever it is he does.

There we all are standing in a bunch outside the place, wondering why we're there, so Sister Bethanie and what's his

name, erm, Xavin I think goes into the house, which strikes me a bit peculiar like, since half the dignitaries of the faction are now hanging around outside. Then it gets worse, much much worse... it starts to drizzle.

I really hate polishing drizzle out of the armour.

About 20 minutes later an almighty commotion erupts from inside the house, shouting and the sounds of smashing furniture and the like, so me and a couple of the lads dash in, you know, all heroic like, and there's Jari going absolutely crazy with what appears to be the remains of a chair in one hand and a sword or something in the other.

So my mate hits him with a sleep spell, good job too or I'd have had to hit him with something a bit more solid than a spell I ca tell you. At this point me an the lads do our best to get out of the way, it seems Bethanie is a bit upset, so we just sort of mull around in the room next door out of the way. A few minutes later that's it, all over and we're off back to the circle, just leaving a couple of the lads behind to keep an eye on things.

A Letter from Holy Isle
(An arrival by carrier pigeon)

I hope this letter gets free of here and out to the rest of Lantia - don't know how, don't care how, its in the Ancestors hands now. Might help you to know whats happening - might help us, too, as we need friends now more than ever. Don't look for a name - only a fool would write that with things as they are here. Lets start with how it all happened.

So, me and the usual watch were at the Lion Gate - you know, the main one, leads out to the road to the ritual circle. Quiet night, no trouble, no reason to expect any. All of a sudden a figure comes haring in from down the road and hes screaming to close the gates and he gets closer and we see he's from the outer picket. And we hear this sound tramp tramp tramp like an army marching, only there is no army on Holy Isle at the minute, far as we know. So, we're all straining our eyes out into the dark to see whats there and suddenly the signal arrows start raining from the parapets, the alarm bells are ringing, officers are shouting orders. We heft to closing the gates as the sergeant yells and through the closing gap you can see this great horde marching down the road in perfect order. And well ahead of them is this lone figure walking like its an everyday occurrence, like half a mile away.

Well, we're standing to behind the gates and wondering what the hells going on. I overhear the runner talking to the sarge and he's saying about the burial mounds down by the circle and how the dead

had begun erupting out. He'd gone to relieve the Circle Guard but they were nowhere to be seen and the place was swarming with corpses. Down in the square, you can hear the garrison mustering and all up the walls men are moving into place and officers are yelling orders and I'm wondering how they think they can take Camelot - no siege engines, the gates are two paces through and we have food for a year.

Then Darkendale steps straight through the gates like they aren't there. We're all gobsmacked and three of us are on the floor before we can draw weapons and then we're slashing at him and Bills running for the square to get help and we suddenly realise we're not scratching him and the swords and hammers are whistling through him like thin air and he's tearing us to pieces - suddenly it all seemed so hopeless. I can't say who broke first but we were all legging it for the Square and the shields we could see advancing from there.

He didn't follow us - he just wandered up and down in front of the gate waving his arms like he was sowing seed out of this big bag hes produced. Theres arrows whistling down round and through him and he just ignores it like it was an spring shower. So, he wanders over to the dead and dying of the guards on the gate and there are a few screams and then it all goes quiet. The boys we're following clatter to a halt and form a shield wall and the officers are all looking and you can see them weighing up their options. Then Darkendale says something and motions, and suddenly the guards are standing back up and unbolting the gates and removing the blocks. We're waiting for the portcullis to drop and cut them off when this figure comes

out the portal leading to the winch room - he's all in black and wiping a knife as he walks over to Darkendale and bows real low. I twig whats happening, so do the officers and the wall surges up the road to stop them. We're all wary bout the things you can see on the floor - little metal things, glinting in the moonlight where Darkendale sowed them, but the officers screams theres no time and we plunge on regardless. Nothing happens and we figure its a bluff and then were right in the middle of them and suddenly the place is thick with others - spirits or ghosts or something, right in the middle of the formation, screaming and wailing and hacking and we beat at them but they won't die - they blur, they twist, they recoil, then they come back strong as before, cleaving through armour like its not there but slashing the man beneath. I fought may way clear with a couple of the lads, as we were at the back, and we could see the gates tops swinging open. We fell back there and then to the next line but it was no good - must have been legions of the dead, all told - they just pounded forwards, crushing one line of defence after another. We couldn't form flanks - Darkendales damned just came out the walls and cut us to ribbons.

It was all over in three days - the whole city was bottled up and there was no way out - they rebarred the gates and garrisoned them too strong to retake. Proclamations appear on every corner day after day declaring Martial Law with Darkendale in charge and feeding 'news' to the populace. The Sherriffs and the Praetorians were all rounded up - word has it they were slain by Darkendale himself and their corpses left to rot on the walls. No one else was killed - those who offered no resistance stayed unharmed, guess as he wanted us alive

after all. There are patrols of the dead all over the place - blackened skeletons, plague ridden zombies and the damned - they're the reason his grip remain, those things. They can think and its hard to plot when they stride through buildings looking for 'Sedition' or when Watchers and informants seem to lurk in every corner. Things have taken a turn for the worse, though - the dead have begun taking the children, tearing them from their parents arms if they have to and dragging them away screaming. No one knows why but word is spreading that the faction has made a deal - Holy Isle and our patterns for the young, and Darkendale intend to honour it. I can't believe its true, but despair is spreading here - life goes on but its full of despair. No one can act - meetings are broken up and those found 'Guilty' are dead and their walking corpses left to watch over their family as a reminder. Darkendale also controls the food supply - few living are let through the gates and the dead control the food stores with an iron grip.

Can't say as theres much more to tell - we're still alive after a fashion, but its getting worse. And the dead don't stay dead for long in these parts. Reckon as theres nothing more to say - the damned only wounded this pigeon when they culled the birds at the coop, but I nursed it well and I think it'll fly. Don't know where it will head, but my luck has held this far - think as its a lucky bird. Better be.

Lions,

Benedict has accepted my offer to release the children from Holy Isle in exchange for holding myself as hostage. As I write this the first lot of children are arriving on Tamarus. The agreement is that I wait till half the children are here and then for me to go to Camelot then the second half will follow.

Hopefully this will give you the time needed to think on what to do next. The threat against the children may have caused you to take rash risks that would have put you and the children in too much danger.

This is not self-sacrifice, I expect to see you all again, to drink with you again, laugh with you again, to smile with you again and to cry with you again.

May goodness and light guide your steps,

Sister Bethanie

Coming to you at the Gathering.

Open to all Lions, the event of the year! See Lemurman defend his title against Sebastian Du Pont, presuming they both get as far as the final! Remember the winner wins all proceeds of the event, plus we may have another special prize...

Test your skill against your comrades, prove your talent in the arena. Nothing to prove? Then come and have fun anyway.

Standard Entrance Fee 1 silver piece.

All other entrants negotiable.

Draw & Contests begin at 12am Sunday.

Interested? Speak to Mirririth Flanelath

All Contests are of skill, not of war!

Report on the 'Pod People' of Lantia

(Many thanks go to Robin, Xavin, Ivory, Rath and John Tapper for their hard work in discovering most of what we currently know of the Pod People.)

As most of you know, at our Moot we were attacked several times by Pod People. We kind of expected it, but one thing stood out as very odd - we were in Babylon at the time; Jackals land, thousands of miles from Lantia. Now, we all know that the Pod people aren't going to win any prizes for their intellect. They've never been able to use the circles before, or sling spells. They're simply too dumb for that. So this begs the question - how did they get to Babylon?

When they attacked on Friday evening, there were a lot of the usual green-veined Pod People there. However, there was an unusual addition in the form of one who had red veins. Several times during the fight, I heard it bellowing orders to the others, and acting with some semblance of intelligence. Its blows caused horrific wounds that no healer could fix (the healers guild refer to these as 'Bane' wounds, and can only be healed with herbs, bandages or incantation) and it seemed a lot harder to take down. It may be that these ones are capable of using transport circles, in which case we have a problem.

When we later talked with one of Sengool's researchers - one Erystophalese - he said that roughly one in every hundred pods washing up on Orlagnon was a red pod. These seemed different to the others, but he hadn't done much research on it. So I asked that if any other red-veined Pod People turned up I wanted it alive to check.

On Saturday (completely by chance) myself and Quin ran into two peasants trying to get to the Lions camp. One had been unfortunate enough to be near an exploding red pod, and was infected in a very advanced state. My attempts to surgically remove the infection met with little success, and he got up (still with the huge gaping wound from surgery in his neck) and attacked us, doing the same 'Bane' damage as mentioned above (with my own scalpel, the cheeky bugger!). I did manage to get some information from it though, and all is listed below, together with the information gathered by Xavin, Robin, Ivory, Rath and Tap.

1) Green Pod Infections

The Pods themselves appear to only burst in the presence of something it can infect, be it a man, woman, badger or squirrel. It might be the pattern, body heat, or movement that triggers this, we're not sure. They will not burst without this stimulus.

The infection itself comes in four stages:

1 - Spores. Quickly flushed from the system with Cure Disease.

2 - Growths and Spores. Some spores settle and put down tendrils. Others remain as spores in the system. The Growths can only be cut out with surgery but the Spores will just settle and restart the process unless flushed with Cure Disease.

3 - Growths. All the spores have settled and are putting down tendrils. No Cure Disease needed but only surgery cuts them out.

4 - *Death*. The growths do irreparable damage to the internal organs that it liquifies for sustenance. The host body dies and the growths take a rudimentary "puppet-like" control.

Incubation Period varies. Earlier strains took one hour per stage. More recent strains are faster at twenty minutes per stage. Indications suggest that the incubation could get faster still.

From my limited knowledge of herbs, I have discovered that certain plants may be toxic to the Green Pod infection (which appears to be plant-based). Can any Alchemists and Herb experts please contact me as soon as possible to discuss this matter and start researching?

Green Pod Creatures

There would appear to be 3 main types of Pod People:

Type 1 - Immune to Blunt weapons and Incantation. They need to be struck at least 10 times before they fall over. They will regenerate wounds until hit with any unusual weapon (magic, silver, artefact), after which they will not regenerate at all.

Type 2 - Immune to Sharp weapons and Spellcasting. ~10 strikes. Will regenerate wounds until hit with any unusual weapon.

Type 3 - Affected by all weapons and all magic (spells and incantations). ~10 strikes. Inflicts magically painful wounds, equivalent to the High Incantation 'Harm'. Will regenerate until hit with any unusual weapon.

2) Red Pod Infections

These appear to be much more virulent than the Green Pod infection. The advanced stages of infection are VERY hard to remove and require several special measures. As the spores are being cut out, they cause wounds to any skin in contact with them for more than about ten seconds. They eat through fur, I imagine the same would be true of gloves. As surgery usually takes at least a minute, anyone cutting them out will ideally need an incantor to instantly cure the wounds every ten seconds or so (less if the surgeon is physically tougher), and another Healer to supply power for the surgery so that the Surgeon can concentrate solely on dealing with the infection.

It may be that washing the hands frequently will stem the damage, this is something that has yet to be tried. It might also be that if we can find herbs that are toxic to the spores, crushing them onto the surgeon's hands will work. Again, this will need to be discussed with Alchemists.

If anyone else has done any research on the Pods, can they please contact me so that the knowledge can be pooled and distributed as necessary. I can be reached at: Sheyna@housedemetus.com.

Can all of the Faction's Surgeons please also contact me as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT:

Even if you have an immunity to the green pods, I am stating now in my authority as High Healer that

NO - ONE IS TO APPROACH OR HANDLE A RED POD.

If one is found, it is to be LEFT ALONE until a surgeon, at least two healers, and an Incantor are present.

I will be *suggesting* to the Sheriffs that anyone found in breach of this order be arrested for endangering the lives of all others present in the vicinity.

Through Eagle's Eyes
(A Variation On Fragments)

Orlagon – From above, the Isle of Peace justifies its title as the only things to be seen are the Unliving forces of the enemy. Far from circle or port, there stands a disturbed structure, a flame-haired woman and some small, very still, figures.

Pardulon – Whilst ghouls dart across the island's surface, hunting for prey long departed, the grip of enemy forces tightens on the captured island. Yet, nearby on Borealis, soldiers of the Lion military raise banners and make ready.

Holy Isle – Not a living soul stirs on the streets of the Holy Isle. Huddled in corners, those still remaining watch the silent patrols drift past their windows and offer benedictions to whatever ancestors are listening in the darkest hour. Meanwhile in the ritual circle a figure stands surrounded by the shades of the departed.

Gallathrix – The Prince Bishop's Men work feverishly to provide accommodation for their share of the refugees from Holy Isle. Meanwhile their spiritual leader is locked in consultation with a young Armengarian as they speak of circles, void energies and aspirations.

Akamon – The port of New Galfrese is as busy as ever. Trade continues in spite of the current conflict. Yet there is seemingly some dissatisfaction in the body language of foreign traders.

Archon – As always, Castle Demetus is largely unoccupied whilst the denizens are scattered widely. At the sea wall, the vigilance continues and the torches never go out.

Rysarius – Once again, the island receives visitors from those seeking the mysterious Wayward Flame. From on high, there are encampments not marked on any map.

Andulus – On the Isle of Justice, a figure in a Sheriff's uniform moves from the circle to the offices. He is laden with armloads of scrolls. The Gathering may be upon us but the paperwork never ends.

Tamarus – There is a constant presence at the circle waiting for any activity. At irregular intervals, the circle alights and a group of children emerges and is eagerly received by the waiting adults.

Armengar – Within the Citadel, a quiet vigil is kept over a tree which, even from the skies, looks wilted and sickened. Elsewhere, doors open and close as someone wanders between them.

Spine of Tebron – Smoke still rises from the island that was once home to Sengool the Sorcerer. Nothing remains any more.

Steel Sea – From above, the waters that should be empty and blue are filled with much that floats. Lion Vessels and Unliving Hulks

dance as superior forces hunt elusive ships that can sink and raise at will. Pods float towards island shores and... a pub sets sail?

Obituaries for July 2003

Commissar Cadet Drake (ARSE)

A bold and courageous warrior whose dedication to the faction could not be questioned. Drake's disappearance is uncharacteristic and, sadly, suspicious.

Charity McEwan (Clan McEwan)

Mother to Runt and niece to Grand Ma, Charity was full of life and much loved. A healer with the heart of a Knight, Charity died fighting the Conclave.

Sandrim (Clan McEwan)

A quiet Healer with a big heart, always ready to help, even in the middle of a terrible battle such as the one Hengist visited on the Fulcrum Guards or the one that in the end claimed his life. I only wish I'd had more time to drink, laugh and enjoy his company.

Lynx (Children of Malar)

A fiery young healer with a firm belief in his own abilities. Sadly, his confidence was not tempered with caution and he fell in a battle against unliving.

Nox (House Soulsplitter)

A staunch friend and companion to all his fellow Soulsplitters, his unique talents often invaluable, Nox will be sorely missed by House Soulsplitter, and all who no longer watch their backs as much as once they did.

Alvin DeBeers (Celestial Knights)

Alvin de Beers was a man who led not with flashy gestures, or glib phrases, but by deed and example. He guided the Faction through many crises, with honour, integrity and wisdom. In all the battles the Lions fought, his was a steadfast and courageous presence. Above all his faith in the ancestors, and in the Lions was clear to all. And yet, despite all his many skills and evident qualities, he remained a man of quiet modesty and deep and genuine kindness. He died as he lived, fighting for what he believed in, and for what was right. With his death, not only have the Lions lost their High Incantor, and the Celestial Knights their Grandmaster, but Edreja has lost a great man, and I, a great friend.

Ebric (House Soulsplitter)

Sensei of the Thruddite Order and Head of House Soulsplitter, not to mention the Host of the Pattern of Justice; Ebric was also a well-respected general, religious leader, husband, father and alcoholic sociopath. It is safe to say that, though he kept the company of kings, he refused to lose the common touch. His most notable exploits are best left to legend, ask one of his friends if you want an overblown and marginally factual account. To be a little more serious, which is something the man himself was rarely accused of, he was known to many of all factions, guilds and creeds, as one of Edreja's few true heroes. May his mantle be taken up by all who respected and loved him, for truth, honour, and most of all, for justice.

Solomon Wisheart (Elemental Outcasts)

Solomon Wisheart came to the faction from a faraway place. Some had the chance to know him and others will be denied that opportunity evermore. Yet, at the last, his absence will grieve his family the most and thoughts and prayers are with them at this time.

Captain Roberts (Lions Navy)

Captain Roberts was a man who took to the shadow fleets like a kraken to water. His enthusiasm, dedication, imagination and skill were not to be doubted - and his passing leaves those who knew him, wishing they knew him better. While there is hope that the enigmatic Captain will return, it is thought that he fell victim to unknown assailants at the first Moot this year.

Monsterring at the Gathering

(Something New and Special for Lion Players)

IC:

Lions – If you find yourselves at a loose end at the Gathering, there is always work to do back in Lantia. The Sheriff's department can always use some volunteers for a variety of tasks.

Duty Sheriff Ironside
The Sheriff's Department
Andulus

OOC:

The Lorien Trust system is dependant on players volunteering their time to play monster roles for the plotlines they run. However, when a player monsters, where does their character go?

The Lions Plot team has written several "briefs" for characters that return to Lantia to help out an over-stretched Sheriff's department. These briefs will cover something happening on Holy Isle that is relevant to present or future plot.

So:

1. If you find yourself at a loose end,
2. Or you fancy monsterring and want an IC story to tell when your character gets back,
3. Or want to get involved in Lions faction plot and aren't sure how....

Then pop along to the monster room, do a spell of monsterring and then ask a member of the Lions Faction plot team for a “monster brief” (i.e. ask for Barney, Dan, Daniel or Fergal).