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- Introduction -

The county of Somerset lies in the English West Country. To its north lies Gloucestershire, in the east it borders Wiltshire and Dorset, and to the southwest it abuts Devon. A green and pleasant land steeped in millennia of history, folklore and superstition, it is often overlooked by investigators as being little more than a rural backwater, good for nothing except strong cider and tall tales passed down the generations.

It is true that the myths of Somerset concern themselves with dragons and giants, witches and the Devil, ghosts and goblins. But these tales are modern retellings of much older and far darker events, for Somerset boasts powerful, ancient and still very active ties to the Cthulhu Mythos. The witchcraft cults of Shub Niggurath have worshipped here since before the heavy tread of Roman sandals echoed through the hills and valleys. The blood of the deep ones has flowed through the vein of families dwelling on the boggy Somerset Levels since the thawing of the last ice sheets, the greatest scion of that accursed interbreeding being none other than King Arthur.

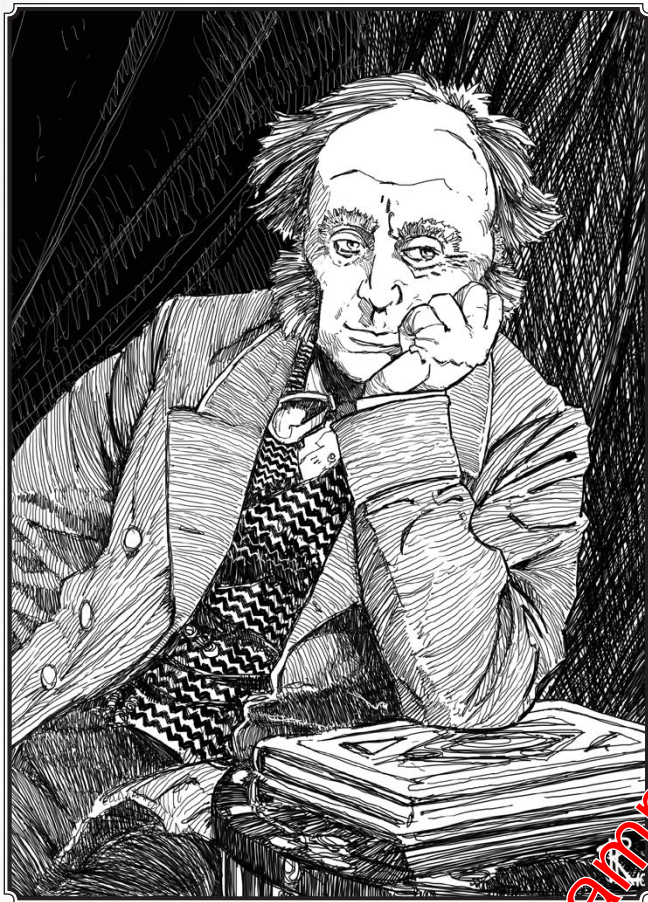
Ghouls haunt the stygian caves that run through limestone plateaus, having dined on human flesh for thousands of years. At night the flapping of wings, shadowy figures and peculiar buzzing signifies the appearance of dread beasts like shantaks and nightgaunts, called forth by sorcerers and warlocks to perform terrible deeds.

This sourcebook takes a look behind the green veil of Somerset's hills and forests, providing the keeper with the material he needs to run a game in Avalon, the legendary seat of King Arthur.

Written by a Somerset-born author proud of his county and its rich folklore, this supplement is first and foremost a sourcebook for the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game and thus should be considered a work of fiction rather than an accurate study of the county. Where necessary certain details have been altered or added to provide stimulating game play.



Professor Noah Ainley-Chant



Two works, both penned by Professor Noah Ainley-Chant, were instrumental to the writing of this sourcebook. The first, *Legends and Myths of Avalon*, is a collection of three slim folios, while the second, *Beneath the Green Veil*, is little more than a collection of notes.

Ainley-Chant was a man who neither sought nor earned public recognition, and few details about his life have been uncovered. Born in Yorkshire around 1846, he studied at Oxford University before moving to Bath in 1876. It is known from surviving papers in the author's possession that he developed an interest in the occult during his Oxford days. Fragmentary scribbles in a diary make passing mention to Cthaat Aquadingen, the copy Ainley-Chant read likely being that held in the British Museum, and the Ponape Scripture.

Between 1879 and 1890 Ainley-Chant spent much of his time exploring Somerset, paying special interest in its many myths and legends and eventually publishing

several small folios on the subject. Toward the end of this period the scholar was noted as becoming more eccentric and withdrawn. In 1894 he used the small income from his books to purchase a cottage on the windswept cliffs overlooking the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary close to the town of Weston-Super-Mare.

Professor Ainley-Chant was reported missing on January 23, 1897. The last witness to see him alive reported seeing the professor an hour before dusk on January 20 heading toward the cliffs. It was well-known that Ainley-Chant regularly walked the coastal path at night in all weathers. The police found the cottage locked and in good order, prompting an exhaustive search of the cliffs and coast. A coat, later identified as that of the scholar, was found on the cliff top several miles from his cottage but there was no sign of the academic. A coroner's inquest determined that the scholar had either fallen or been swept into the sea, for a ferocious storm had risen suddenly and battered the coast that night.

In 1899 Ainley-Chant was officially pronounced dead. With no known family to collect his belongings, the meager contents of his cottage were sold at auction. Among his many papers was the incomplete manuscript of *Beneath the Green Veil*. It ends with the cryptic phrase, 'I have heard their call and shall answer them soon'.

The only copy of *Beneath the Green Veil* lay in Taunton Museum, where Mr. Wade-Williams first read it in 2003. It has since disappeared.



Avalon: The County of Somerset

History

Sample file

-History-

Beneath the greens and blues of Somerset's verdant fields and burbling rivers there is a red stain. Over the millennia the Celts, Romans, Vikings, Saxons and English have all shed blood in this ancient county. Largely invisible to the naked eye, there is another stain, a more insidious one, which flows unseen across the landscape. This is the dark taint of pagan gods, witchcraft and devilry, and the cults of the Cthulhu Mythos.

In the text which follows, italicized paragraphs beginning 'NAC:' indicate entries from Professor Ainley-Chant's unfinished work, *Beneath the Green Veil*.

Talkin' Loik a Lo'al



The Somerset dialect owes much to the Late West Saxon Germanic tongue. While the dialect is more English in origin than that of Cornwall, it retains many peculiarities and idiosyncrasies no longer present in modern English.

When acting the role of a local, the keeper should pay particular attention to local patterns of speech and phrases. Doing so helps the players get more into their role, as well as highlighting the linguistic barrier that separates locals from outsiders.

Here are a few simple rules – they do not cover every nuance but they are enough to get you started.

First, it is important to speak slowly, with lengthened words. West Country dialects have long been prejudiced against, with speakers considered uneducated and slightly retarded individuals. While the dialect is often parodied in the movies as being the way pirates speak, the Somerset accent is much softer. Do not be afraid to speak like a pirate if you must but do not turn all your NPCs into comical characters with exaggerated accents or any atmosphere that you have built up around the table will evaporate.

Second, use of the verb 'to be' should always be spoken incorrectly. A Somerset man says 'I/he/it be' not 'I am' or 'he/it is.' Typically 'be' should always replace 'is,' such as in, 'It be that way.'

Third, 's' is pronounced as 'z.' Thus one comes from Zummerzet, calls social betters 'zur,' and one 'zez' something was true rather than says it was true.