

FIVE OATHS

What is Five Oaths?

Five Oaths is a Live-Action Roleplaying game. This means it is a collaborative storytelling and adventure game in which the players portray their characters and interact with the game world presented by the Event Team. Unlike tabletop roleplaying games, players portray their character at Five Oaths events by putting on a costume and doing and saying whatever their character does or says.

The world of Five Oaths takes inspiration from mediaeval Ireland, though no knowledge of this period is required to enjoy the game. All player characters in the game live in the Five Realms of Tirneach (teer-nock) and are members of an elite class of warriors known as the Gallóglaigh (gah-lowglee). The Gallóglaigh swear Five Oaths to serve their god, their ruler, their nation, each other and themselves. From then on they are specially empowered mercenaries, wandering the Five Realms looking to make a name for themselves, and earn some money along the way.

In the game, you will be both the audience and author of your character's story and the stories of the characters around you. Player characters are called to solve all manner of problems across Tirneach; one day acting as investigators and judges, another as negotiators or intermediaries, and when all else fails: as a raised shield and a strong sword-arm.

Combat makes up a significant portion of the adventure aspect of the game as Player Characters face off against menacing ne'er-do-wells and dangerous monsters of all sorts. Combat in Five Oaths is resolved with the use of (carefully safety-checked) foam and latex replicas of swords, axes, and other assorted weaponry. Outside of combat the Gallóglaigh need healers, ritualists, crafters, merchants, and scholars among their number to keep the band on the road and ready to earn coin and glory.

There is also, usually, camping as the events take place over the course of a weekend.

How do I play Five Oaths?

The game takes place in person, usually in a large outdoor space with a mixture of fields and woodland. You will act as your character during the game. Your character can be as similar or dissimilar to you in personality and appearance as you like but any differences in appearance should be represented by costuming where

possible. During the game you will be “*in character*” and expected to respond to the world and other players as your character would. Much of the game time is spent in this improvised roleplay with other characters, who may be other players or non-player-characters created by the event team.

Combat is carried out in real-time using foam weapons and roleplayed effects. If you want to defeat a monster you'll have to go over there and thwack them until they fall over. All characters and monsters have a certain number of body hit points, which they can potentially protect with armour. If you strike another character with a weapon they'll lose hit points or armour, eventually becoming incapacitated or dead. While you do actually strike other players during combat, it's important to note that your blows should always be pulled. If your blows cause actual pain to another player, you are hitting them too hard.

Special effects, such as magic, are handled using a system of keywords. A character who has the feats necessary to cast magic will take a moment to prepare and then call out the effect and the target or could, together with others, engage in a longer ‘ritual’ to create a more powerful effect.

How do I make a character?

The rulebook covers in detail the process of making a character, but in short you will choose a species and a homeland, and then decide what kind of skills and experience your character has. To fill out your character's background, we ask that you use the [Character Background Template](#)

There are many different approaches to character creation. Some people choose to build their character based on what kind of role they wish to play in combat, or how they want to interact with other characters. Others choose to create a character based on who they think it would be fun to portray for a weekend. Some decide on their concept based on which options provide the most interesting or least taxing costuming opportunities. It's up to you what takes your interest.

One thing to keep in mind when creating a character is that it is beneficial if they are curious, or ambitious, and generally ready to get involved in the world around them. A character with these drives will help you engage with the game and other characters.

There are nine playable species in Tirneach. Each has their own background, stereotypes and costuming requirements. There are also Five Realms, each with its own history and culture.

Your character's skills in the game are defined by Feats. Once again the rulebook covers these in detail. Feats will determine whether your character is particularly tough, what kind of armour they use, whether or not they can use magic, and what other kinds of fun tricks they have up their sleeves. They'll also allow you to gain extra information about the game world or craft useful items in the time between games.

Another way to play?

If you'd like to get a taste of the game without committing to a character of your own you can sign-up to be a “[Full Time Monster](#)” for the weekend. Playing this way you'll help to portray all the creatures and characters in the world that aren't player characters. It's a fun way to get a feel for how the game works and get a sense of the setting. Also, tickets for full time monsters are discounted.

Getting involved

You can get in touch with other Five Oaths players at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FiveOathsLRP> and can contact the event team at: info@[fiveoaths.com](mailto:info@fiveoaths.com)

The Five Oaths website, www.fiveoaths.com, contains the full rulebook and more detailed information on the setting. We aim to run three events a year and we hope to see you at the next one!

A Note on Pronunciation

Tirneach is a fantasy setting rooted in Irish history. As such, many of the names and placenames in the game are derived from the Irish language. In modern, real-world Ireland pronunciation varies dramatically from place to place and even from person to person. This would have been even more the case in our reference period, long before the invention of mass media. We aim to provide a phonetic pronunciation for any Irish-derived words that we use in the setting, though sometimes a few slip through without. This is intended to serve as a guide only, the pronunciation of these words is not fixed and is of secondary importance to engaging with the game. This also applies to the Spanish-derived and German-derived terms used in some parts of the setting. No one should be made to feel self-conscious or like they've made an error if they pronounce a term differently than suggested or expected.

The rest of this document will lay out the basic information about the setting of Five Oaths.

The Locations of Five Oaths

The land of Tirneach is divided into parts known as the Five Realms. Each has its own culture, history and personality.

Baol, the Proud Realm (*bwale*)

On the Western coast of Tirneach, Baol is a land divided physically and socially between the rolling pastures of the Lowlands and the rugged mountains of the Highlands. The Lowlanders are known to be hard-working, business minded and outward looking people. The Highlanders are loyal but insular folk, focussed deeply on their family and their clann (*clon*). The Highlanders view the Lowlanders as duplicitous, the Lowlanders see the Highlanders as barbarous. Conflict between the two is common, especially in the form of raids sent into the prosperous Lowlands by the Highland clanns.

While the Highlanders are generally happy to wear whatever will keep the weather off, the Lowlanders are said to be more fashion conscious, and blue is a common colour.

Bruid, the Hardy Realm (*brew-id*)

Holding the entirety of Tirneach's southern border with the Great Forest, Bruid is a wild and dangerous realm. The [Krieger](#) and Forest [Wildlings](#) are the two species most commonly found here with [Humans](#) a close third. Regardless of their species, the people of Bruid are known to be hardy and resilient, with a strong sense of community and a suspicion of outsiders. The local geography shifts constantly as villages get wiped out by the [Gwyllt](#) and natural disasters, and new ones spring up. This realm is one of the easiest to be granted land in, as its villages are the first line of defence between the other realms and the hordes of [Gwyllt](#) from the forest.

Despite the dangerous nature of the realm, the harbour of Zahnhafen is a major trade port that grows in prosperity.

Hard wearing clothing in dark shades of green and brown is the most common here.

Draíod, the Learned Realm (*dree-ud*)

Draíod lies at the centre of Tirneach, entirely landlocked and surrounded by the Ring Mountains. The surface of Draíod's lands are sparsely populated and the real heart of the realm lies in the tunnels and caverns beneath the ground. Towns and villages nestle in the caves and the largest settlement, Crag Oscionn is the site of the Shaper's Shrine and the renowned Arcane College, as well as the seat of the [Iarla](#) of Draíod. This unique geography makes the realm unusually dependent on trade from its neighbours. The [Vartach](#) and [Fathach](#) are almost synonymous with Draíod, being far more populous here than anywhere else in Tirneach. Success in the

arcane arts grants enhanced political power in Draíod, with learned [Riders](#) earning the title Saoi and ranking above the others.

Those proud of their origins in Draíod often wear purple with blacks and reds.

Siabhal, the Heart of the Realms (*she-vawl*)

The wealthiest and most populous of the realms, Siabhal is home to the majority of Tirneach's agriculture as well as most of its political intrigue. Despite [Uasa](#) being the capital realm and the seat of the [Réig's](#) power, many feel that honour should belong to Siabhal, especially as [Réigs](#) have hailed from this realm more often than any other. The long lived [Leasiar](#) and the Field [Wildlings](#) are the two most iconic species of Siabhal, with legacy and heritage being highly valued.

Rich reds and yellows are the staple colours of Siabhal fashion, though ostentatious clothing of any colour is generally in vogue.

Uasa, the Crown Realm (*ooh-assa*)

Uasa is the capital realm, and the seat of power of Tirneach's ultimate ruler, [the Réig](#). Stretching from the Blind Coast on the east to the border of the Ring Mountains circling [Draíod](#), Uasa was once dominated by swampy marshland. Decades of strategically built canals and dams have rendered more of Uasa habitable but is a source of major local tension with many objecting to mortal interference with the land's natural shape. Corroch is the capital city and the home of the main barracks of the Gallóglagh. Many of the common folk of this realm herd goats or fish the rivers, and value hard work.

Loyalty is prized over any other virtue, and fashions tend towards understated yet elegant blacks.

There are other lands beyond the borders of Tirneach and some of the people of those lands have made their home in Tirneach. Two of Tirneach's neighbours are discussed below.

Orohogar, Home of the Firetouched (*oro-hogar*)

A land across the sea and far to the East, Orohogar is a land dominated by deserts and surrounded by oceans. They have a strong economy, and trade with many different lands. In contrast to the monotheistic [Shaper faith](#) of Tirneach, Orohogar is a land brimming with spirits and small gods, though mortal interaction with them often bears more resemblance to a business contract than to religious worship. Orohogar is ruled by the Prosperidad, a ruling council of the 5 richest citizens on the basis that those with the most to lose will be most invested in keeping Orohogar safe and prosperous.

While there have been a scattered number of [Firetouched](#) throughout Tirneach's history, they have begun to appear in greater numbers in recent times, rumoured to be fleeing a disaster in their homeland.

Schlachtfeld, Home of the Krieger (*shlackt-felled*)

A land across the sea to the West of Tirneach, Schlachtfeld is a harsh and bloody land of constant warfare. The East coast of this land is mainly islands which is where the [Krieger](#) predominantly hail from and have earned the reputation of the best seafarers in either land. Most [Krieger](#) in Tirneach are descended from raiders who decided to settle down in a new land. Honour glory, and community are important ways of life.

Much like Tirneach, Schlachtfeld is dominated by a monotheistic faith, the worship of Eroberung. A god of war and victory, Eroberung urges their followers to be Bold, Merry, Strong, Relentless, and most importantly, Victorious. Every 25 years villages host great competitions to find the most skilled warriors. These warriors earn the honour of travelling to the volcanic shrine of Eroberung and fighting their god to the death.

A Guide to the Species of Five Oaths

Your character may be from any of Tirneach's nine playable species.

The Creidhe (*cray-ah*)

The Creidhe are renowned menders and tinkerers, with an insatiable curiosity for how things work. If you are playing a Creidhe, perhaps you have a love of fixing things and joined a band to keep their weapons and armour in working order. Or perhaps you are a skilled blacksmith who crafts excellent items for your comrades (for a price). Or you might just be a curious individual, eager to see the world and find out how things fit together.

Every settlement wants at least one resident Creidhe for their valuable skills and a Creidhe will seldom have problems entering a new town or finding employment. Few Creidhe are known for innovation or new discoveries, instead generally preferring to maintain and perfect what already exists. Young Creidhe are known to make a nuisance of themselves with their tendency to take things apart before they've developed the skill to put them back together again. Some rumours exist of Creidhe who rebel against the expectations of their species and turn their aptitudes to destructive ends.

The Creidhe's golden touch for repair manifests as golden fingers and any player taking on a Creidhe character should paint their fingernails or hands gold to represent this.

The Drakeblooded

The Drakeblooded Houses are great bloodlines, traced back to the days when the storm dragons still ruled the skies above Tirneach. If you're playing a Drakeblooded, your character could be a member of one of the great Drakeblooded Houses and an heir to an age-old tradition. Or perhaps due to a terrible defeat you were fostered as a child, either to another House not your own or even another species, and you strive to surpass the memory of what you have lost.

A Drakeblooded character inherits a rich history, and carries it with them wherever they go. The Drakeblooded are renowned throughout the Five Realms, and are generally welcomed as people of intrigue and majesty. Some Drakeblooded may choose to take advantage of this reputation for personal gain, although if they bring their House into disrepute too often they may get an unexpected visit from an angry cousin.

The Drakeblooded may not be dragons but they're still scaly. To play a Drakeblooded you'll need to add scale patterns of Green, Purple, and/or Silver to your exposed skin.

The Fathach (fah-hock)

The Fathach are beings made of stone animated by the magic of the [Vartach](#) and set to a purpose. Your character could dedicate themselves wholly to that purpose, whether it be guarding their “parent” [Vartach](#) or seeking to gather knowledge on arcane secrets from all over the Five Realms. Alternatively, your character might have turned against their original purpose, either to escape an overbearing or oppressive [Vartach](#) or simply to feel like they have free will.

Fathach experience emotion and have their own hopes and dreams just like other people, but they also have a strong sense of what they are supposed to do with their lives, imbued in them from the moment the animating magic suffuses their being. Their inorganic nature means that the Fathach are without sex and cannot reproduce without the aid of a willing [Vartach](#). The creative intention imbuing some Fathach may include a sense of gender while in others it can emerge spontaneously. Though some find it to be a rewarding field of expression and experimentation, most feel no attachment to the ideas of gender common among the organic species.

Fathach players need to be particularly committed to their costuming and prepared to make sure all of their exposed skin is made to look like stone.

The Firetouched

The Firetouched are recent arrivals from a faraway shore, with a reputation for music and trade. If you’re playing a Firetouched, your character could be a cunning trader, who knows the value of currying favour and alliances, but is brash enough to break a deal when they know it’s truly important. Or you could play a character who uses their inner strength to defend their new homeland against the evils that lurk there, determined to keep the hearth fires lit.

The Firetouched have been known in Tirneach for many centuries, though they might appear only by themselves or as part of a very small contingent. In the past five years, the Firetouched have arrived in the Five Realms in greater numbers, seeking opportunity in a new land. They settled first in the coastal towns and have since spread inward, generally congregating where there is commerce, revelry or intrigue to be had.

To play a Firetouched you’ll need to embody the flame with red, yellow, orange and/or white make up or face paint evoking the theme of fire.

The Humans

If you’re playing a human character you could be playing an alchemist who pushes the boundaries of what is thought possible by others...sometimes with explosive effects! Alternatively you could be playing a brash

warrior who flings themselves headlong into the fray.

Most human characters will share an enthusiastic outlook on life and are always seeking new opportunities to innovate and experiment. This is an attitude that other species regard as blindly optimistic at its best and flagrantly reckless at its worst. A cautious human, and there are a few, is one of the most frustrated people in the Five Realms, having to deal not just with the recklessness of their own friends and family, but the prejudice of others and seeing them flinch every time they go near something dangerous. Many give up and behave as others will treat them, leaving a rare few to insist that “because I want to see what happens” is not a valid reason to do anything.

Congratulations, you already meet all the requirements to play a human! No additional make-up required.

The Krieger (kree-gur)

The Krieger are warriors from across the sea to the west, famed for their joy and love of battle. If you're playing a Krieger, your character likely has an ancestor who raided towns and villages along the western coast of Tirneach, but they are just as likely to be descended from an heroic Kriegerish Gallóglaigh who defended the common folk against the evil magic of the [Gwyllt](#). Sometimes those Krieger were one and the same!

The Krieger respect strength and bravery, and will get along best with those who are not afraid to take risks and enjoy life. Krieger are most commonly found in the wilder realms of [Bruid](#) and [Baol](#), but nowhere in the Five Realms is so settled and secure that a Kriegerish mercenary could not find work. Of course the Krieger have a not-entirely-undeserved reputation for banditry, piracy and general marauding, but since all Krieger will cheerfully deny any such activity it is hard to prove.

To play a Krieger you will need to make sure that all of your exposed skin is painted blue, optionally you may also include tusks. Krieger who grow tusks are said to have inherited the strength of their most heroic ancestors.

The Leasiar (lass-ear)

If you're playing a Leasiar you could be centuries old, while still appearing young and vigorous, and decide to take up a new life as a Gallóglach after you finished your great masterpiece. You could also play a Leasiar who has just started a new life, waking up beside a crooked tree with a note written in a strangely familiar hand telling you to go to the Gallóglaigh headquarters at Corroch and report for duty.

Leasiar have a lasting effect on the world around them, and see through plans which only come to fruition after decades. Leasiar are set apart from the other species by their incredibly long lifespan, and many take full advantage of this. A Leasiar might live one incredibly elongated life, and reap the benefits of cultivating alliances

with families instead of individuals, of accumulating wealth and reputation over centuries. Others reject this lifestyle and choose not to outlast all around them. For them, there is another way, called [the Path of Many Candles](#) which allows them to forget their old life and begin a new one.

The Leasiar are distinguished by their pointed ears and players with Leasiar characters should wear a suitable prosthetic.

The Vartach (var-tock)

The Vartach are underground-dwelling mages and scholars with a rigid caste system. If you're playing a Vartach you will likely be trained in the arcane arts, or if you do not have the ability to cast spells you will be dedicated to a particular pursuit or martial discipline. It takes a lot to bring the Vartach up from their subterranean home in the Realm of [Draíod](#), and those Vartach who emerge into the outside world are often the most driven and determined.

Every Vartach is marked by one of five birthmarks called "brands", most often on their forehead or cheek. These brands are seemingly random and they do not follow family lines, however traditionalist Vartach set great store by them and will judge individuals by the brand they bear. Even as children, Vartach are expected to live up to their brand. If you are branded with the Sun Spear, you are deemed to have a great destiny, and will receive intensive tutelage from a young age in order to meet your full potential. At the other end of the spectrum, Line Breakers born in traditionalist communities are considered cursed and will be blamed for any misfortune. The details of each of the brands are set out in further detail in [Appendix 3](#).

Every Vartach Must have one of five symbols on their face. The symbols are the Sunspear, the Line Breaker, the Broken Chains, the Hook, and the Clashing Swords. Alternatively, you must have a prominent and visible scar where this symbol was removed.

The Wildlings

The Wildlings are those with the strongest connection to nature in all of its forms, with a reverence for stories. If you're playing a Wildling, your character could be a skilled guide who has been to the depths of the Great Forest and survived. They could also be a renowned herbalist, who knows the names and uses of every plant of Tirneach, and can coax them to grow where everyone else gives up the soil as barren. Both characters are eager to share their accomplishments and prowess with others.

Wildlings are distinguished from the other species by the mark that their connection to nature has left on their face. The Wildlings call this their glamour, while other species dismiss this as yet another Wildling boast

and call it less kind names such as the mark of the [Gwyllt](#).

Wildlings are divided into two categories: Field Wildlings and Forest Wildlings.

Forest Wildlings see themselves as the only true Wildlings and by and large shun larger settlements, preferring the woods or the edges of smaller settlements where they can feel at one with nature. They are renowned hunters and trackers, taking game from the Great Forest to eat, or to trade with villages for anything they cannot make themselves.

Field Wildlings are often derogatively called Tamelings by their Forest cousins. Their glamour is green and verdant, and reflects the calmer and more nurturing side of nature, imitating fruit, berries, grass or crops. They can be found tending the fields, harvesting the crops and caring for the livestock. Some say the [Leasiar](#) have tamed them and made them useful. The Field Wildlings respond that they have given the [Leasiar](#) an appreciation for living in the present. They have helped the [Leasiar](#) find a connection to nature, while they themselves have merely adapted to a life where they aren't starving or in constant danger of being eaten by wolves.

Wildling characters should be marked with make-up appropriate to their natures. Either verdant and gentle or with fangs and brutal vibrancy.

Politics and Government in the Five Realms

The land of Tirneach is ruled over by the Réig and their appointed vassals.

The First Réig

The first Réig was a legendary figure from a war-torn land across the Shaper's Sea to the east of Tirneach. From humble beginnings in their homeland they rose to lead the first Gallóglagh on a quest to recover Tirneach from the grasp of the [Gwyltt](#), spread the teachings of the [Shaper](#) and fulfil the Prophecy of the Réig.

Through extraordinary feats of faith, warfare, wisdom and diplomacy the first Réig united the Five Realms of Tirneach and drove back the [Gwyltt](#) that had scourged its people unchallenged for centuries. Once the hold of the [Gwyltt](#) was broken, they established the laws and traditions that govern Tirneach to this day.

The Réig Today

The title of Réig has changed hands many times over the centuries and their role has had to adapt to meet the circumstances of their day. No longer a legendary hero of prophecy, the modern Réig must concern themselves with the petty squabbles of their vassals as much as the grand battle of [Shaper](#) against [Gwyltt](#).

The Iarlas, Riders, and High Families

Each of the Five Realms is ruled by a Iarla (*eer-la*), except for [Uasa](#) which is governed directly by the Réig. The Iarlas are granted their power in exchange for oaths of loyalty and service to the Réig. Iarlas are appointed for life and their title is not inherited by the heirs upon death. Although, in exceptional circumstances the Réig may honour someone with a title that can be inherited for a number of generations, whether or not the next Réig will recognise this grant is an open question.

The Iarlas devolve their power to Riders who govern over smaller regions within the realm. Once again this power is granted in exchange for oaths of loyalty and service and the titles are not usually inherited. The Réig does not directly appoint Riders but they can exert significant influence over a Iarla's choice if they wish, although careless use of this influence would be seen as overreaching. Collectively, the Iarlas, Riders, and Réig are known as the Tiarnaí (*teer-nee*).

While the titles of the Tiarnaí are not inherited, there are families in every realm who are traditionally more powerful, prestigious, and influential than their neighbours. These High Families' influence is primarily recognised by traditional appointment to something akin to a civil service. Local coordination of tax collection, road maintenance, irrigation or many various other tasks is granted to these prestigious families. Thus providing them with the power and responsibility appropriate to their station. These High Families include the

Courtly Clanns of Baol, the Chieftans of Uasa, the Ruby Families of Siabhal, and the Houses of the Drakeblooded.

The Gallóglaigh

All Gallóglaigh serve the Réig and the Réig is the only person in Tirneach permitted to maintain such a standing force of warriors. To meet the military needs of the Iarlas and Riders, the Réig allows their Gallóglaigh to work for them in exchange for coin.

The Gallóglaigh are employed to many ends but commonly they are called upon to defend settlements from bandits and the [Gwyllt](#), to fulfil security and bodyguarding duties, or to begin and end border disputes between Iarlas. It is not uncommon for bands of Gallóglaigh to be employed in direct opposition to one another but these conflicts are generally limited in lethality as wanton destruction of the Réig's forces is not something any band or their employers wants to be accused of. The Gallóglaigh form an elite warrior class and it is common for the ambitious to join up to build a reputation to rely on in a future political career.

Religion in the Five Realms

The land of Tirneach is dominated by the monotheistic Church of the Shaper.

The Shaper

The Church of the Shaper binds and sustains the social fabric of the Five Realms. The Shaper wishes for their children to thrive and lead good lives. The reward for a life well lived is a place in the afterlife, where the dead are reunited with their departed family and friends, and live on in oneness with the Shaper.

The Shaper does not give commands for what their children should not do, instead they exhort their children to do great deeds. Children of the Shaper are encouraged to build communities, to find love and to fight for what matters to them. They are directed to question rather than to blindly accept, to act rather than to brood, and to give of themselves rather than to hoard wealth.

The Shaper does not have a gender and is never depicted in humanoid form; their nature transcends that of mortals. Where they are depicted in iconography it is often as useful tools or as the Moon.

Principles of the Shaper's Church

The Shaper's Church holds up 10 virtues that mortals should strive for in their lives, with each Order of the Church focusing on different Aspects. The 10 virtues are: Ambition, Prosperity, Loyalty, Compassion, Duty, Perseverance, Clarity, Wisdom, Vigilance, and Courage.

While the Church generally avoids dictating what their followers should not do and considers honest atonement possible for most transgressions, there are two big exceptions which are generally unforgivable crimes: wilfully raising Undead Abominations (an act known as Graverobbing) and knowingly conspiring with the Gwyllt.

The Gwyllt

The Gwyllt (*gwick*) are inhuman monsters who plague the Shaper and their children. Inimical to mortal life, the Gwyllt exist only to terrorise and kill. The Church encourages its children to oppose the machinations of the Gwyllt wherever they are discovered.

The Undead

The balance between life and death in Tirneach is strained, and the undead are regrettably common. Often, a person can have difficulty resting after death. If their family or loved ones grieve for them too much it can pull them back, raising them as an abomination. If a person dies in an unusual circumstance, area, or with significant unresolved issues they can rise again as well. The Cinnirí and even the local community will keep a close eye on those who have lost someone in case they become a danger to the community or unleash a danger themselves.

The Cinnire

The Cinnire (*kin-er-rah*) are the ordained disciples of the Church who dedicate their lives to the Shaper's service and lead the people in this worship. The cinnirí (*kin-er-ree*) have over time realised they can best aid the Shaper's children in certain ways, and this is the origin of the five Orders as they stand today. The Orders do not hold themselves apart from Five Realms society, since that is not the Shaper's way. They have families and they work and fight alongside other people.

The Order of Counsellors

The Order of Counsellors uphold the virtues of loyalty and compassion. The Shaper wants their children to create communities, to find love, and to provide for a future generation.

The Counsellors can be sought out by those who encounter difficulties in their life. They provide advice equally to all; a Counsellor cinnire could advise an Iarla one day and a shepherd the next. They act as confessors, allowing the Shaper's children to lighten the burden that mistakes and evil deeds can bring to mind and soul. They advise those who have erred on how they can atone. They perform marriages, and provide advice to couples that struggle to stay together.

The Counsellors are welcomed everywhere, as they offer support without judgement.

The Order of Hospitaliers

The Order of Hospitaliers uphold the virtues of duty and perseverance. The Shaper knows that life in this imperfect world is a struggle, and that their children will encounter danger and strife, so they ensured that their children would have the power to survive and earn their place in the afterlife.

The Hospitaliers use that power to heal and to protect. They maintain infirmaries, where the Shaper's children can be brought back from death's door, and hospices, where the Shaper's children can rest after a life well lived. A Hospitalier cinnire might provide healing to both sides of a conflict between the Shaper's children, or

they may refuse to provide healing if they deem that a war has gone too far, forcing the two sides to come to terms or face losing hundreds of lives.

The Order of Hospitaliers is the most politically influential of the Orders for this reason, for the warrior class could not survive without them.

The Order of Necromancers

The Order of Necromancers uphold the virtues of clarity and wisdom. The Shaper knows that the knowledge of the dead can be of great benefit to the living. The Shaper has also judged that the dead should remain dead, to enjoy their reward in the afterlife and not be drawn back into the mortal world.

The Necromancers keep the rituals for communion with the dead, and ensure that those who use the rituals do not do so for any fatuous purpose, lest it anger the spirits of the dead. Angry spirits can be drawn back into the mortal world and become abominations. Proper funeral rites are the province of the Necromancers also, for few things are as dangerous as a soul not properly put to rest, or called up just to salve someone's broken heart.

Necromancer cinnirí roam the Five Realms, visiting the recently bereaved and ensuring they are ready to let go of their dearly departed. It is important for people to see the truth: their loved one has gone to a better place, where they will receive their reward.

The Order of Teachers

The Order of Teachers uphold the virtues of ambition and prosperity. The Shaper wants their children to succeed in their aims and to derive great benefit from skills and knowledge.

The Teachers ensure that no knowledge is lost, and that skills are maintained from generation to generation. They run schools, and amass great libraries, covering every subject from magic spells to agricultural techniques. Teacher cinnirí travel from town to town gathering the wisdom of the Shaper's children, offering help to artificers, farmers, and scholars, and encouraging those who would attain new heights of invention and discovery.

The Teachers are the most numerous of the Orders, for they have the broadest remit. They are also at once the wealthiest and most generous Order, for they put what they know to good use, and make good use of what the riches they gather as a result.

The Order of Torchbearers

The Order of Torchbearers uphold the virtues of vigilance and courage. The power of the Shaper is opposed in the mortal world by the power of the Gwyllt, beings of malice and insidious influence who constantly seek

to corrupt and lure the children of the Shaper into their grasp. The Shaper empowers their children to fight against the Gwyllt with all their strength. The first Réig liberated Tirneach from their grasp, but there are still pockets all throughout the Five Realms where the Gwyllt's influence is keenly felt. For the people in those places, the Torchbearer cinnirí are their protectors and saviours.

The Torchbearers have the knowledge to free a mind from Gwyllt spells, and they know how to kill the terrible Gwyllt creatures that emerge from the forests and cursed places. They always travel in pairs, for safety and security. They are the most removed of the Orders from the rest of society, for they must constantly watch the wild places, and the secrets they know make them strange.

Appendix I - LARPing Glossary

LARP/LRP: Live Action Role Play or Live Role Play, both refer to the hobby and are pronounced “larp”, the difference is purely personal preference.

IC: “In Character”, referring to something that exists in the game world, ie. “IC there’s a castle in the background but we don’t have the budget for that”. Also used to separate player and character identities, “I know we’ve been friends for years now but IC I hate your guts”.

OOO: “Out of Character”, referring to something that exists outside the game world, ie. “Don’t go over there, there is OOC unsafe ground”. Also used to separate player and character identities, “I may be Firetouched but OOC my feet are freezing.”

PC: “Player Character”, a character controlled and portrayed by a player. The main characters in the story of the game.

NPC/Monster: “Non-Player-Character”, a character being portrayed to forward a plot or demonstrate some part of the game world. These are collectively known as Monsters and the people who portray them as Monsterers, whether they are ravaging hordes of undead or a friendly local baker.

GOD: “General Operations Desk” or “Game Ops”, the theoretical physical location of the event team. More often they are wrangling players and monsters in a field somewhere.

Bleed: The phenomenon of having your own emotional experience influenced or overwhelmed by your character’s emotional state. Can be fun and interesting or unpleasant and a good reason to take a short break.

Monster Box/Monster Room: The base of operations for Monsterers. From here they are briefed, kitted up and sent out to make the player character’s lives interesting.

Phys-Rep: “Physical Representation”, an object that represents something in the game world. This can be applied very narrowly, “I need a phys-rep for the magic amulet they’re going to find” or very broadly “I’ve lost Steve-the-Krieger’s phys-rep!”, here referring to the person that plays Steve-the-Krieger.

Lammie: A laminated card attached to a phys-rep to describe any special in-game properties it might have.

Linear: An expedition away from camp involving a certain number of players exploring, fighting or otherwise dealing with a certain plot-point or threat. A unit or module of adventuring.

Soft Skills: Those things that your character can do because their character sheet says they can. Includes healing, casting spells or sending enemies flying away with their blows.

Hard Skills: Those things your character must rely on your own abilities to achieve. This includes actually

hitting people in combat without getting struck yourself or convincing people of your trustworthiness and good intentions.

Appendix 2 - Full Time Monster

What you'll be doing:

Playing Monsters and NPCs

This is the core part of monstering: We provide you with the stats, info, and costuming for a given monster or NPC, and send you out as part of one of our encounters. This can range from a mindless beast, out there to give our players a good fight in the woods, to a social encounter sent into the player camp. We try to tailor our monster roles to our players, so if you want to only get some cardio in and fight all weekend long, or prefer to play talky NPCs, we'll do our best to facilitate that for you. Time-in (ie, time in which plot is happening and we need monsters) generally lasts from 10am to midnight, with regular breaks for lunch, dinner, etc.

During an encounter, you'll likely play a single monster under the control of a referee. You'll be walked through the encounter, your stats, and your background in the monster room, then given your makeup and any costuming from ourselves, and then armed and sent out into the field.

Spending Some Time In Character

All of our monsters are entitled to some time in the field as a character, rather than as a monster. All of our players do some monstering over the weekend, so our monsters get the reverse- They get a bit of time to go into the IC camp as their characters and get some experience on the other side of the fights and encounters as a "break". As such, we encourage our monsters to have a basic character that can be brought into play.

Gaining XP

If you purchase a monster ticket, you will obtain 1 Experience Point- The exact same amount you get for playing. This can be put towards any existing character you may have, or future characters if you choose to return in a future event.

What you won't be doing:

Non-Monster Work

You're playing our NPCs and Monsters, but you're not site "crew": You won't be required to do any other work like site cleaning, event setup/teardown, etc (Unless you really really want to pitch in and help out, which is always appreciated)

Writing Plot/Refereeing Encounters:

The plot lies entirely in the hands of the event team and referees (the people in hi-vis vests). You won't be required to come up with monster stats, or plan out encounters: That's all handled by the event team beforehand.

What you'll need:

Good shoes

You're going to be spending a lot of the day walking on fields, woodlands, and other rough terrain, fighting and running around occasionally. Make sure to bring good boots with appropriate ankle support (and a few spare pairs of socks to change out during the day!)

Base Layers

The majority of monster costuming is provided by the event team- But it's a great idea to have a nice, plain, preferably dark base layer on that we can build off. Black/dark pants, and a dark plain t-shirt is perfect in a pinch. Plain setting-appropriate clothing (ie "fantasy"/medieval shirts, pants) is even better, but by no means necessary!

A Water Bottle/Mug/Drinking Vessel

Due to covid, we won't be passing around bottles of water for both players and monsters: make sure to have a canteen or water bottle on you that we can refill for you throughout the weekend. Hydrate, don't die-drate.

Camping gear

Accommodation is not provided- So standard camping gear (tent, roll mat, sleeping bag) is needed, much like if you were playing the game.

A can-do attitude

Monsterring lets you try out all kinds of play-styles that you may not get a chance to do when in-character. Our encounters can let you play dramatic villains, ravening beasts, roaming traders or sneaky undead, allowing you to test out roleplaying in a quickfire, lower-stakes setting than bringing something in as a full character.

Moisturiser

Monsterring often involves makeup to get you to appear as a non-Human species, from facepaint to the occasional stick-on prosthetic or mask. A layer of moisturiser underneath facepaint makes it far easier to take

off and put on, and keeps your skin protected across the weekend. Monsterers who cannot or do not want to wear face paint will be given roles that do not require it.

Benefits:

Discounted Ticket Price

Monsterring tickets generally run at a heavy discount as you'll be unable to play your character for the majority of the event. We can't announce definite prices now for our August event, but we can promise reduced prices for our monster team.

Rules Experience

The best way to learn the rules system is to get in there and use it. This can be done through playing the game, or by monsterring- The stats for our monsters vary extensively, so by the end of the weekend you'll likely have given or taken every type of spell, damage, or roleplay effect.

A Low-Stakes Entry to the Game

If you're nervous about making a character and diving straight into the world of Five Oaths, monsterring is a great way to try out the game: We literally tell you what you'll be playing for most of the weekend, and you'll still get some time to try things out from an in-character point of view.

Appendix 3 - Character Background Template

Backgrounds are subject to a 500 word limit, not including prompts and the final question on things we need to know OOC. This means that everything up to that final question should come in under 735 words.

The basics:

Player name:

Name character is most commonly known by:

Any other names character goes by:

Age:

Family (or otherwise) Background

Who raised the character? What was their relationship with them? Do they have siblings, children, a spouse, or other family?

Species and Realm

Where is your character from? Do they fit in there, or do they stick out. Are they perceived as being a typical member of their species?

Life before joining the Galloglaigh

How did they learn their feats? How did they make their living? Any great deeds? Close friendships or bitter rivalries?

Joining the Galloglaigh

Why did they choose to join the Galloglaigh? Who recommended them? If they aren't from a noble family, how did they get their recommendation?

Other oaths, paths and roles

If your character is a Cinnire, what led them to become one. Which order have they joined and why? If your character has taken the Path of Peace, what led them to make that choice?

Hooks

One thing they love

One thing they fear

One thing they hope for

One thing they regret

One thing that makes them angry

One goal for the future

Important OOC bit.

We are not actually evil. We want all of our players to have a good time at our events, even if their characters do not. For this reason we ask; is there anything that is not already covered by the rules of the system that you do not want to interact with as plot for OOC reasons?

Appendix 4 - The Peacesworn

What are the Peacesworn?

The gallóglaiigh swear the Five Oaths, and become capable of great feats. There are some who choose to take another oath, to take the Path of Peace and become Peacesworn. They swear to do no harm, and become incapable of violence, and gain an additional measure of protection.

Peacesworn characters have a noticeable aura of serenity, all beings encountering them instinctively understand that they are incapable of violence and unable to defend themselves. Creatures will not attack a Peacesworn character without first being provoked by them, and even then will issue a warning before attacking them. Provocation can include, but is not limited to: Trespassing, searching or carrying people, and verbal insults.

Even if someone attacks a Peacesworn, few are willing to kill them. Any being who slays a Peacesworn character suffers an indelible mark on their soul, as the blood of the Peacesworn does not wash off, and can not be concealed. Anyone encountering this being will know that they have killed someone completely defenceless.

Due to this, most creatures will give a warning to any Peacesworn before attacking them, to give them an opportunity to flee, including wild beasts, Gwyllt, and the undead. Most bandits have the tradition of the “Peace Penny”, where they will demand some form of token of money, food, or information from a Peacesworn before allowing them to go on their way unharmed.

There are also those who seek wisdom, or a keen eye, or the judgement that only those who have sworn to do no harm can be trusted to give. The mark of the Peacesworn carries with it a reputation for all of these things, and a Peacesworn of renown can expect to be as sought after as the greatest blademaker in any band.

In gallóglaiigh bands, Peacesworn can act as diplomats, arbitrators, traders, smiths, alchemists, scholars, puzzle solvers, counsellors, hosts, impartial witnesses, and messengers. In their life after leaving the gallóglaiigh, many

Peacesworn become teachers or priests, while others even become retainers to the particularly paranoid, who want to ensure either a surviving witness to their assassination, or a permanent blot on their assassin's soul. Others become trusted advisors due to their inability to cause physical harm.

How does the Oath work?

A person who wishes to take the Oath of Peace will traditionally spend a period in preparation with the Cinnirí of the Order of Counsellors in order to ensure that they fully understand the nature of the commitment that they are making and intend to hold to it under even the most difficult circumstances. The methods used to do this are often not gentle, particularly where someone does not seem to take it seriously enough, and most swear the oath already knowing what it is to see violence and be unable to act to prevent it.

The Oath prevents you from wielding a weapon or entering a battle situation. It prevents you from directly causing physical harm to another living being. Peacesworn who have broken those rules have been, in the words of the oath, “unmade”. In the moment of their oathbreaking, they simply cease to exist. No attempts to contact the soul of one who has died in this way have been successful.

There have been cases where this punishment has been visited on those who do less direct harm, though it sometimes takes longer for the hammer to fall. Peacesworn who have ordered or hired someone else to harm another sentient being seem to be judged by the Shaper as if they wielded the blade themselves.

Beyond this, everything gets less clear. Some will say that you can craft any tool you like, anything can be a weapon in the wrong hands, that is a choice that the wielder makes (Others will say that this is simply disclaiming responsibility for harm you could prevent). There are some who say that one should not heal a warrior because of the harm they will do (Others will ask “and leave them suffer? What good is that?”). . None of these debatable points of the oath have ever caused someone to blink out of existence, though they do sometimes cause the Peacesworn of a more purist bent to worry about the state of your soul. If you start to develop a reputation for being a “dodgy” Peacesworn, you may well end up visited by the Order of Counsellors, and in some situations Peacesworn who are struggling with their Oath have been firmly encouraged to spend some time in a remote outpost maintained by the Church. The intention of this is to keep them out of the way of temptation while they come to terms with the limits of the life they have chosen, and to protect the reputation of others on the path of peace.

It is important to remember that the Shaper is watching, and cares about both the spirit and the letter of an oath. It is rumoured that anyone who has deliberately set out to push the boundaries of the oath has experienced warning signs from the Shaper. Dark dreams, mysterious maladies, and if the warnings are ignored, an untimely end.

Out of character, The Peacesworn provide an avenue for players who are physically unable to safely take part in combat can still enjoy our game, and these rules have been made with their safety in mind. As such, all players who are non-combatants for medical reasons are encouraged to consider playing a Peacesworn character.

Players who do not wish to take part in combat for reasons of preference or just because the Peacesworn seem interesting are allowed to play a Peacesworn. However, they will be expected to follow the same rules as those players taking it for medical reasons, so that the standard of safety isn't diluted. .

Appendix 5 - The Weeping

What are the Weeping?

The Weeping are individuals who bear the mark of an extraordinary and unsettling supernatural phenomenon. Rarely, when a mortal dies in Tirneach their body returns fully and truly to life. They are not [undead](#) and they show no signs of [Gwyllt](#) corruption. However, they have their own strange characteristics; those who have returned begin to weep blood and do not stop. Perhaps more unsettling still is the fact that they bear no memory of their former life. Though they may have been dead for mere hours or even minutes, when they reawaken their closest friends and family are total strangers to them.

Reactions to the Weeping

Hundreds of years ago, when the Weeping first appeared, most people took them to be dangerous enemies of the [Shaper](#) and their people. However, [the first Réig](#) granted them protection under a decree that became known as the Atosú Edict. The edict declared that the Weeping should not be judged on their appearance or their origins but on their actions and made all Weeping eligible to serve as [Galloglaigh](#) so that they may prove their worth. Over the centuries many who are suspicious of the Weeping have questioned the authenticity of the edict but its rulings have prevailed nonetheless.

While the Atosú Edict is usually enough to prevent Weeping from being destroyed on general principle, most people still find it hard to trust them. Apart from the unsettling appearance granted by their bloody eyes, they simply have too much in common with [undead](#) abominations and [Gwyllt](#) impostors for the average person to let their guard down around one. While friends and family might initially be excited at the return of their loved one, they are usually quickly let down by the reality. In addition to having no memory of their former life, the Weeping typically have different mannerisms and patterns of speech than they did before their return. It is common for them to have different tastes than they did before; turning their nose up at their favourite foods, taking on a completely different style of dress, or setting aside a long favoured type of weapon.

Following their return, a moment known as their Atosú, a Weeping may find they have skills and aptitudes that are completely foreign to their former life. Some Weeping even demonstrate traits and abilities not usually possible for a member of their [species](#). This alienness from the person they were before makes it extremely difficult for a Weeping to remain settled in the place they are told was once their home. Many are ultimately driven out by their former community while others find it easiest to quietly slip away before things can get nasty.

Many have sought an explanation for the Weeping condition over the years, though many more are perfectly content to rely upon superstition and slander. As yet, there is no universally agreed upon or verifiable explanation for what causes the strange phenomenon.

The Weeping and Rituals

Perhaps the element of the Weeping condition most commonly cited as evidence of their evil nature is the effect they have on rituals. Non-Weeping who attempt to include a Weeping in their ritual circles report that it is more difficult to gather the energy needed to complete the ritual, as though the Weeping is a dead weight that must be carried by the others rather than a contributing participant. Rituals may fail repeatedly with a Weeping in the circle only to be completed successfully as soon as they are swapped out for someone who does not bear the mark. It is also known amongst ritualists that performing certain rituals upon the Weeping can produce unpredictable and unpleasant results.

Curiously, when several Weeping gather to perform a ritual with no non-Weeping present they are capable of working much more powerful effects than would normally be expected. Many insidious things are whispered about what sinister power they must be in communion with to achieve this.

Playing a Weeping

If you decide for your character to be a Weeping you should be prepared for the people of Tirneach, both PCs and NPCs to react uncomfortably towards you. They may simply be put on edge by your appearance, they might be distrustful or even outright aggressive towards you. There are definite downsides to playing a Weeping but we hope they offer a rewarding option to players drawn to supernatural mysteries and the role of the outcast.

Appendix 6 - The Path of Many Candles

Without a doubt the most mysterious aspect of [Leasiar](#) life and culture is the Path of Many Candles. Those who are walking the path cannot remember why or how they came to do so, and those who oversee the ritual are often less forthcoming than inquiring minds would wish them to be, leaving fertile ground for wild rumours and speculation.

Who embarks on the Path of Many Candles?

Most will take their first candle relatively early in their lives. This can partially be attributed to the personalities involved; someone willing to make such a radical change in their lives will rarely wait until their middle years to begin. Of course there are counterexamples, particularly when an older [Leasiar](#) has undergone some traumatic or otherwise transformative experience, or have been released from some responsibility which had held them back from considering it previously. This is not the only reason. An older [Leasiar](#) who has slowly amassed wealth and land, or has made a name for themselves over many years will have a great deal more to lose by starting again, which often dissuades them from the Path.

This is also a reason why those who stand to inherit are likely to decide against it. Some [Leasiar](#), particularly those who actively disapprove of the Path, are very insistent on sending their younger offspring to the Gallóglaigh when they come of age. Becoming a Gallóglach gives them a career where they can gain wealth and recognition independently, which might prevent them from lighting the candle. [Leasiar](#) who have had children early in life and are of a suspicious bent might send all of their children to Corroch on the grounds that that a child who stands to inherit but has a century to wait, may choose to hasten their parent's death rather than lighting the candle or dutifully standing by, and if military life doesn't distract them, it will at least keep them far from home.

Very few will take their first candle after having children. Most who plan to live this life will delay having children until comparatively late in their lives, knowing that it may be more difficult to start again afterwards.

How does one take the path of many candles?

The ritual is overseen by the Shrinekeepers, a group of [Leasiar](#) who have taken the Path themselves. Not many of them make themselves known to outsiders, but they have links to the [Order of Counsellors](#) and there are some within the Order who know how to contact them at need. All the Shrinekeepers who have made themselves known are in their elder years and some say that they are all on their last candle. The Shrinekeepers themselves make no comment on this. There are many things about which the Shrinekeepers

make no comment. The few things that they are prepared to say about the ritual are; that it will not work for someone who has something in their life that they cannot let go, and if you feel the need to bring any treasured possessions or detailed messages with you that means you're not ready to let go yet, although short messages to let yourself know about any peculiarities of your body are seen as a reasonable precaution.

To undergo the ritual one must seek out one of their Hearth Shrines. It is not generally known how many of these exist but it is rumoured that there is one in each realm. There are no maps to guide you there, you must rely on scant rumours and persistence. Over the years some enterprising individuals have attempted to sell enchanted accoutrements of various kinds which will supposedly point in the right direction to [Leasiar](#) seeking to light the candle and curiosity seekers of other species alike, but they never seem to last too long. It is unknown whether this is because word gets around that their "enchanted" rods are merely nicely polished sticks, or whether they are silenced.

The Ritual

The first part of the ritual is known, as there are some who remember it and will speak. The [Leasiar](#) decides that the time has come to light the candle again and searches out the Shrine. They are welcomed by the Shrinekeepers. They are given a meal and a place to lay down their goods and gear, bathe and sleep. They pass a night there before they are called.

They go into a room where the walls are lined with many bottles, each containing a roll of paper. The Shrinekeeper explains that these are the testaments of all that have passed through this place. They light a candle and as it burns, the [Leasiar](#) speaks, the Shrinekeeper writes.

And this is where knowledge of the ritual ends, because it is at this part of the story that anyone who can remember it says that the Shrinekeeper looked up from their paper and said, perhaps with a hint of sadness or pity or even exasperation, that they are not ready. The Shrinekeeper handed them the unfinished story that would have been their testament, brought the candle, still lit, into another room. They offered some advice about their problem and sent them back out into the world. Those who attempt to retrace their steps and return to the shrine cannot find it, so cannot give more than a general idea about where to search.

Presumably something else happens if you are ready, but you won't remember it and the Shrinekeepers will not say.

What remains?

Many ask whether those on the path of many candles retain anything of who they were before. Some will argue the toss over whether some aspects of personality persist, but almost none of them have any information to go on. We know that basic skills are retained, from walking and speaking up to reading and

writing but after that it's harder to tell. Some who have recently undergone the ritual show great natural aptitude for certain things that they don't remember doing previously, but how precisely that maps to things they did before is unknown.

[Leasiar](#) who have lit the Candle do not recognise anyone that they knew before, however, there is something worked into the weave of the magic which means that they will know instinctively if someone they meet is a close blood relative. They will not know how they are related, but it is unmistakable. Of course they have no idea whether the other person remembers them or not, or what their relationship was like, and speaking to someone in that circumstance is almost universally at least a little uncomfortable for all concerned.

Both the [Order of Counsellors](#) and the Shrinekeepers are very clear that the [Oath of Peace](#) will bind a [Leasiar](#) through all of their candles. It is rare to find someone who is both so firm in their convictions as to swear the oath, and so willing to change utterly as to walk the Path of Many Candles, but there are some who have, and the Shrinekeepers ensure that a member of the [Order of Counsellors](#) is nearby to explain to the individual just what their past self signed them up for when they come back to themselves.

They are equally insistent that the stain which comes from killing one who is sworn to peace cannot be washed away by the ritual, as that is soul-deep. Of course, there are always rumours, the idea of secret murderers who have forgotten their crime walking among us unseen is great fodder for tavern tales, but these are of the sort where someone's nephew's spouse's dog might have seen something, and one would wonder how the church could tolerate such a thing if it were true.

Appendix 7 - The Brands of the Vartach

[Vartach](#) society is fundamentally based on the five marks that define them as a species, called brands. Starting as an indistinct tangle of black and gold magical veins, these coalesce as they start to come of age, and the shape it takes defines the rest of their life. There are five brands observed in the [Vartach](#), and below is further detail on how the brands influence the lives of those who bear them.

Sunspear

The most auspicious mark, those chosen by the Sunspear have a bright future. It is a mark associated with power, wisdom, and good fortune. Many Sunspears become great mages or military commanders, and they make up the vast majority of the Council of Saoi. Regardless of what their specific destiny is, those marked by the Sunspear are seen as having tremendous potential and being meant for something great.

Upon developing the Sunspear, the [Vartach](#) usually receives a significant scholarship stipend to either attend one of [Draíod](#)'s most prestigious colleges of magic or receive other intense training suited to their skills.

Clashing Swords

Those marked with the Clashing Swords are well regarded, and seen as stalwart defenders of [Vartach](#) kind. While this is often interpreted in a martial fashion there have been many Swords who became renowned healers to defend their people from disease, or teachers to protect the [Vartach](#) from stupidity. The mark of Clashing Swords is associated with courage, loyalty, and strength.

Upon developing the Clashing Swords, the [Vartach](#) often enter a period of intense martial training, and many will end up serving with the Gallóglaigh for a time with almost any [Vartach](#) (or indeed [Fathach](#)) Gallóglach being happy to sponsor a Clashing Sword.

The Hook

The most common brand, the hook is seen as the mark of the honest, decent, hardworking [Vartach](#). While not destined for individual greatness, the industriousness of the Hooks is seen as vital to the success of the [Vartach](#), and [Draíod](#) as a whole.

The mark of the Hook is associated with duty, intelligence, and honesty.

Those marked with the Hook normally enter a year long period of apprenticeship shortly after developing it, moving between multiple professionals to find the craft that their talents are best suited for.

The Broken Chain

The Broken Chain is seen as an ill omen, a warning sign of an untrustworthy individual. A Broken Chain is normally the first individual to be investigated when a crime is discovered. While they are not necessarily excluded from [Vartach](#) society like the Line Breakers are, they are generally viewed as troublemakers and often have difficulty obtaining and keeping positions of influence.

The Broken Chain is associated with untrustworthiness, anger, and criminality.

After developing the Broken Chain, a [Vartach](#) is often assigned a mentor to oversee them and attempt to keep them on the straight and narrow, frequently a Hook or a Clashing Sword.

The Line Breaker

Those marked as Line Breakers are viewed as the biggest threats to [Vartach](#) society. The least common of the five signs, these individuals are destined to destroy [Vartach](#) society if they are not opposed and thwarted. They are generally feared and despised by [Vartach](#) society as a whole.

The mark of the Line Breaker is associated with doom, destruction, and chaos.

Many [Vartach](#) who develop the mark of the Line Breaker are summarily exiled from their community and must find a place in the world among the other species, generally outside of [Draíod](#). Some families continue to shelter and care for their Line Breaker kin but the many famous examples of those who attempted to live up to their mark means that they are kept under close observation.

The Marred

Some [Vartach](#) either feel their destiny is a burden they wish to reject, or do not wish for others to know what destiny is in store for them and burn off their brand. This is a painful process not lightly undergone, and leaves a permanent and very obvious scar where the mark was, which never fades away.

Those who chose to hide their mark are generally treated with suspicion by the rest of [Vartach](#) society and are frequently assumed to be Line Breakers. Because they don't have a mark they are considered to be outsiders to [Vartach](#) society who have chosen to reject their place in it along with their destiny.

Appendix 8 - Practical Advice

With permission from a seasoned LARPer some of his Facebook posts on practical advice for LARPers are reproduced here. Some terms from other LARP systems and settings are used but the broad points are applicable.

First post - 13th September 2014

We probably have some new people, so I thought I'd put together a list of things I find really useful to bring to events. How much you can bring, of course, depends on how much carrying space you have.

So, obviously, you need your tent, toiletries, sleeping bag, light source, costume, blah, blah, but some other things that I've found essential over the years are -

Plastic bags. Never underestimate how useful it is to have plastic bags to throw rubbish or used clothing into. In the event of it raining, the tidier your tent is, the easier it is to keep everything dry. Also, if you intend using the site showers, having a plastic bag to put your clothes into while you shower is invaluable (there's no dry area to leave them, other than in the communal bathroom)

Foil blankets. To ensure warmth at night, you want to insulate yourself from the ground (of course, it may be blisteringly hot like last year, but just in case...). A really good way to help this along is to put a foil emergency blanket down as your first layer (so, if you have an airbed, you put it under that). You can pick these up either in camping shops or, for dirt cheap, in any of the Dealz shops.

Fleece blankets. You'd be amazed how important layers underneath you are when you sleep. Again, if you have an airbed, carry mat of camping bed, consider a layer of blankets on top of that, but beneath your sleeping bag.

Moisturiser. Even if you don't normally moisturise, if you are going to wear facepaint, you should (suncream will do - suncream is also a good thing to have with you). Moisturising should stop the facepaint invading your pores so badly, reducing the jaundiced look many greenskins endure for a week afterwards.

White facepaint. If you intend doing coloured facepaint, consider basing in white, like you would a wargames model (yes, I know some people base in black. Hush). Not only will it make the colours more vivid (which may or may not be the look you are going for), but it will mean you are more likely to get white in your pores than the more troublesome colours.

Base layers. Whatever your costume is, consider layers for underneath. The great thing about layers

underneath, is that they don't have to look in character. Particularly consider base layers for your legs, as many people tend to bulk up on top, but neglect their lower half. Simple things like an old, ratty tracksuit bottom or even a pair of shorts can work wonders to trap heat. If you are wearing some sort of baggy pants, well you can wear a normal pair of trousers underneath.

Shoes you can slip on quickly, and something baggy you can throw on. Nobody likes waking up in the middle of the night and having to get dressed to go use the bathroom. Make it easy on yourself. I bring a dressing gown. I'm not sorry.

Gloves. I know I keep mentioned things to keep you warm, but we've been really lucky so far, in that most of the events have blissfully temperate. If you aren't used to being out all night (i.e. no indoor time at all), it may come as a surprise to you how much your body can lose heat. Having cold hands is miserable. Bring gloves.

Spare socks. Nobody likes wet feet. If you are lucky enough to own Sealskinz waterproof socks, bring them.

Also, in terms of preventing prep, some sort of treatment on your ic footwear helps. Even something as simple as polishing them (if they take a polish) can increase their water-retardant properties.

I've probably forgotten a load of stuff, but those are just some thoughts from someone who has been doing this for, er, some time.

Second Post - 1st October 2015, after an event which was very hot during the day but surprisingly cold at night

Warning - old LARPer giving unsolicited advice.

This last event was a good example of awkward LRP weather. Blisteringly warm days followed by cold nights is a real pain for LARP, particularly when you are trying to adapt your costume for conditions. These are a few ideas that I've picked up over the years for such things.

You can add layers either under or over. Obviously, if your tent is a distance away, or if your costume is a bit of a pain to put on, adding underlayers in the evening can be awkward (who doesn't hate taking off greaves or boot uppers, only to put them back on in five minutes' time?). It is, however, possibly the best option. A good set of thermals under your clothes works wonders.

If you want to hedge your bets by having a layer underneath that won't bake you during the day, sports base layers are really good for that. Of course, you may or may not have the disposable income to buy them.

A pair of shorts under your trousers (assuming you are wearing something reasonably loose) can also work well. They'll trap a bit of warm air against you at night, but allow your legs to breath. It's actually amazing

how uncomfortable sweaty legs can be.

Moving out a few layers, the next question is whether you are wearing metal armour. If you are, for example, wearing chainmail, it will leech the heat out of you at night. I remember someone once telling me that chainmail would keep you warm, because it's like a radiator. Yeah, radiate... Anyway, if you are wearing chainmail, look into a decent insulating layer you can put between it and your skin. This last event, I was wearing one of the Mytholon leather tabards (they cost about €50) for this. Cheaper options include making a gambeson (it's effectively just a lagging jacket for your body), or just putting some thick normal clothing underneath. It's not going to be on display, so I wouldn't go worrying about it not looking really authentic.

Next up - hoods. Do you have any idea how much heat you save by having a hood covering the bit at your neck where your kit ends? Quite a lot, it would seem. Certainly, I found myself overheating when I wore my hood during the day. I'm not a sewing person, but hoods should be reasonably easy to make.

Cloaks are, undoubtedly, very warm, but not something you are going to find outside of a speciality shop, making them a bit expensive. Also, they are a bit of a pain to fight in. More useful, in my experience, are glorified blankets. What do I mean by that? Well, this kind of thing appears to be in at the moment - http://www.debenhams.ie/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/prod_10052_10001_025010400465_-1 Now, that's €45, but you can keep an eye out for similar things in TK Maxx or Dunnes for about €20 (like this one - <http://www.dunnesstores.com/natural-wrap//dunnesstores/fcp-product/6325515?colour=natural>). Failing that, you can make one reasonably easily out of an old blanket. I have a few of this ilk and they are desperately handy. If it's very cold, you can belt them tight to you. If it's only a little bit cold, you can drape it over you. Make or get this in a reasonably neutral design and you have an extra layer that you can shuck on and off at will and tends to go pretty well with most costumes. Garments like this (er, I think I have four at this stage) have kept me from freezing several times. Hell, they can even then double as a blanket when you go to bed later.

You also lose quite a bit of heat through your feet, if you aren't careful. Get thicker socks, or wear two pairs.

Finally, consider picking up some little reusable chemical hand warmers to drop down the front of your kit. That little bit of extra warmth can make all the difference.

All things considered, the weekend wasn't that cold. It was just the drop from about 17 to 7 (if various internet records are to be believed) that made it a pain in the ass to stay at a comfortable temperature. You get better at being prepared for such things. Just remember, when you are looking for kit/material/old cast offs that this isn't re-enactment. Nobody is going to tell you off for having synthetic materials in your clothing, or mixing up two different periods. That's not what this particular hobby is about. Make a reasonable effort to look fantasy (whatever the hell that is) and it will all be fine.

Third Post - a post about speaking up and asking for help at LARP. There are many Eblana specific references, but the advice is widely applicable.

(Editors note: Eblana was a previous LARP run in Ireland - which could be considered an ancestor of Five Oaths)

Afternoon.

Over the last few years of this game, I've put up quite a few guides here regarding dressing for the weather, having the right equipment, etc. We're now coming up on the last weekend before the event, so they may be worth looking at while you still have time to grab some last minute bits and bobs. I'm not going to link them all, but you can actually find most of them by searching the group for the word "unsolicited"

Yes, really.

Anyway, I was thinking again the other day about what I wish I'd known as a new player, or what I'd wished someone had said to me (or maybe that I'd listened better), and I came to the conclusion that a lot of it boils down to one word

Ask

Allow me to explain (or, you know, just don't read any further. You can do that too). LARP is an amazing hobby, which you can get a lot out of. It can also, if you don't click with it right away, be kind of a lonely hobby, as you spend a weekend far from home wondering what's actually going on. Now, the people involved can be great, but they are also trying to get the most out of this complex, involved hobby, so may not always notice somebody feeling a bit left out. So ask...

How does this work?

Can't get your head around the rules? How monsterring works? When meal times are. Ask. Everyone there, at one stage didn't know, so nobody should be obnoxious about it

Can someone help me with...?

Can't get your tent to go up? Aren't sure you really know how to fight with a LARP weapon? (Seriously - definitely ask for help in that case). Forgot a piece of kit and now you are cold? Ask for help.

Can I help with?

Oh look. Somebody else can't get their tent up, or needs a bit of help becoming a better fighter, or is short a

blanket or two for the night. We create the hobby we want to see.

This also counts in character. Can I help with translation/decryption/guard duty/whatever.

What's going on?

OK, this is a big one. So, apparently the Storyteller's dispossessed minions are hunting down decadents in the mistaken belief that they share a link to AkashMortum, which will allow them to apotheosize a new Regent, possibly as a challenge to the Sovereign, who may have some nefarious hold over the Gatekeeper.

What?

That's not actually a plot line (that I know of...), but a lot has happened and a lot is happening in the game. Everything will be more fun if you know why we are being attacked, or why we are trying to repossess the fabled artefacts, and so on. Nobody expects you to know off the bat, so ask someone.

Who is that?

While the above plot line was pulled out of my ass, none of those people/groups were. Add to that the other Sidhe (who?), the Academy masters (be they ever dwindling in number), the mayors and leaders of various towns and a whole host of other personages, and there's a big cast to keep track of. Never be ashamed to ask either who is being referred to or even who that person that just arrived is.

Can I come in?

There will be a number of ic tents around, besides just the command tent. Sometimes people will be having super secret meetings and won't want anybody extra in, but sometimes they are happy to have more. folk come in and join the discussion/strategy session/singsong/bizarre game/inquisition.

Just make sure you are respectful of people's stuff when you are in there.

Can I come along?

There are always a number of missions that go out during the day. Wouldn't it be awesome to go along on some of them? While the folk leading the mission will generally do their best to distribute such opportunities, people can get overlooked. Ask if you can come along.

As a final thought, I know that a lot of people are very shy. Me, I'm really shy. I know that for some of you putting yourself forward may seem like quite a task. All I'm suggesting is that if you feel like you are drowning, throw your hands up so somebody knows to throw you a lifeline. That way, you'll get the best chance to appreciate just how great the game can be.

Crusty Old Larper

Purveyor of Unsolicited Advice