

Table of Contents

Heathen.....	3
OOO Notes on the World	4
Play, Look, Feel.....	6
Play	6
Looks	6
Feel	7
Religion in the Game.....	8
Equal Opportunities	9
Mental Health	10
Sexual Harassment	10
Our Behaviour	11
How We Will Handle Complaints.....	11
Sticks and Stones.....	12
Terms and Ref Calls.....	14
Basic Character Requirements	15
Character Generation	16
Backgrounds	16
Kingdoms	17
Vocations	19
Changing Vocation	19
Those Who Fight - Houscarls	21
Those Who Pray - Monks.....	22
Those Who Pray - Kabbalists.....	23
<i>Known Rituals and Rites</i>	24
Saints in the Game World.....	26
List of Official Saints.....	26
List of Official Saints cont'd	27
List of Official Saints cont'd	28
List of Official Saints cont'd	29
List of Official Saints cont'd	30
Those Who Work - The Cunning Folk.....	31
Patrons for The Cunning.....	32
Those Who Work - Frydd	34
General Crafting.....	36
Monks - Draughts, Poultices, Poisons and Unguents	37
The Cunning Folk - Potions and Charms	39

Potions..... 39

Charms..... 40

 Talismans..... 40

Weapon Safety and Fighting..... 41

Role-Play Effects and Atmospheres 42

 Atmospheres 42

Timings..... 44

Weapon and Shield Definitions..... 45

 Weapon Sizes and Definitions..... 45

 Shields 45

Combat and Healing..... 46

A Novice's Guide to Rituals 48

Useful Links 50

List of Changes from v1.4..... 52

Heathen

"England stands on the edge of a precipice; descent into Paganism and endless slaughter are embodied by the berserker armies of the Crow-born. The Danes, the Frisians, the Northmen - all pollute our sacred and Holy Land where Jesus once trod, and where his children turned long ago to face the true Church in Rome. They first arrived in the time of our grandparents; raiders to these shores, burning the coasts and stealing from the Holy places but when Ragnar came, all that changed. Even after Ragnar's death his foul-spawned offspring set themselves up as kings, as rulers of God-fearing folk, killing anyone who stood in their way. They claim this land is theirs by right of battle. They deny God. They steal the gold due to God. They fornicate, and sin in every way. They take off our relics of the most holy Saints. They must be eradicated, destroyed utterly, their pagan altars cast down, and their bodies dumped into the sea from which they came. This is God's great test and for so long as there is strength in my chest and power in my body I will see the glorious work done. They believe us to be weak; they are wrong."

Prince Alfred, Reading, 871 AD

"Far across the sea my father Ragnar Lothbrok sent the Crow-Born. We Danes, blood of the earth and forged in the fires and snows of the world, travelled from the cradle of the Gods. We were called to England to settle the land and fill the Casket of Idunn with the gold of that place by The All Father himself. Each year we grow stronger and the snivelling Saxons weaker. Their fear is our sustenance. Their God cannot save them no matter how long they spend praying. Their Priests' magic is no match for our swords and our strength. With the Gods at our side, we cannot fail. I pass now to the halls of Valhalla, where I wait to hear the tales of your victories."

Ivar The Boneless to Ubar, 873 AD

".....And so it shall be that in that Holy Place the lead Priest will open a vein in their arm and with these words sprinkle upon the Relic their life force: "I shed my blood as Jesus shed his blood upon the Holy Cross for our sins, and so I, as a mere penitent, do now spill my blood in this Holy place for his consumption and to fill our fallen friend," whereupon the Relic should be seen to glow in the Light of God, and then as at communion when we drink the blood of Jesus and eat his flesh so shall the Priest now fill a vessel with his blood and use these words, "Be then now my brothers and sisters, dedicated to the Almighty and through Him and with Him and in Him, bring our dearly departed back to be once more amongst us in the Light of God," and so shall those gathered at that place drink of this vessel and be bound to one another and the Relic. Then the lead Priest, or another if the Priest be unable to continue, shall finish the ritual with the words "Rise then, oh dearly departed, in the Light and Warmth of God, come once again to the world of Man such that you may continue the Lord's work"....."

From the Rite of Sinless Reawakening, The Followers of Lazarus c. 873 AD

"It is said that those rites we have always performed for the glory of God have now begun to work in new and miraculous ways, that priests have seen the very Bread of Communion wondrously transformed into flesh, that a woman did walk into a cave and therein find the entrance to purgatory where she dwelled for three days before returning to the world unharmed, that the light of heaven has been seen to shine in the eyes of statues and that the wounds of Our Lord Jesus seen to bleed. Surely these are signs that soon we shall prevail in our struggle and eject the Pagans from this land."

Excerpt from Wonders and Sights of England, 871 AD

"From Pair Dedeni they crawled forth, fallen warriors to fight once more, neither living nor dead and totally incapable of speech. They turned the tide for Matholwch and all the host of Britain shrank back from these horrors of Annwn and one by one the fallen Britons were placed inside to rise once more; a horrid parody of what they had been in life. It was Efnysien the King's brother who hid

himself amongst the dead, and when he was carried and placed within Pair Dedeni he placed his feet at its rim and heaved with all his might to shatter the gates of Annwn breaking his own heart in the process. Some have claimed that it broke into three, but I wouldn't believe all that you hear from druids and bards."

Myrddin Wyllt to Taliesin, 560 AD

OOO Notes on the World

Firstly, welcome to Heathen! This is a fantasy LRP set in the context of real historical events from some of the most difficult times in Britain's history - the arrival of the various war bands from across northern Europe who we collectively refer to as 'the Vikings' - and their attempts to settle the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms from the early 800s to the early 1000s when first [Harold Hardrada](#) and then William the Conqueror - who claimed direct lineage back to the Vikings - finally settled the question once and for all. It's also a time of magic, superstition and the conflict between Pagans and Christians, and tensions felt by everyday folk.

We're going to take some fairly serious liberties with the history and reality; you really don't need to know anything other than there were some kingdoms, you're loyal to Wessex for reasons you can decide for yourself, and that the Danes are evil Pagans who are doing an excellent job of destroying everything you know and love. We should point out we're not claiming to be experts in *any* way, and nor frankly, do we much care if we're exactly right!

At the time the game is set the Danes had already crushed the [kingdoms of Northumbria and were polishing off Mercia](#) which they'd complete in 874 AD as well as being engaged in a long, protracted struggle with Wessex from Nottingham to Reading to Exeter, to Basingstoke to Dorset to Cornwall as alliances, bribes, peace deals and battles rolled on in a continuous and dizzying wave of fighting, victories, defeats, leaders and major figures.

This was not a happy time to be a Saxon. Whilst there were great victories, notably Alfred's defeat of the Dane armies in 871 AD, mostly it was a series of retreats, failures and hardship. For the average peasant-farmer, the threat of armed men turning up and slaughtering everyone you knew, burning your crops, and making off with anything of value from the local church or monastery was a reality for generations.

Britain was a fairly solidly [Christian nation](#) - certainly the hierarchy of Bishops and clergy that had been established after Augustine became the first [Archbishop of Canterbury in 597 AD](#), and the last pagan King in England, Arwald, died in 686 AD. But with pagan belief so close at hand, not just the beliefs held by the Danes (with whom there was also a great deal of trade as well as warfare) but also in Saxon tradition people were pretty superstitious. It's hard not to think that a great many beliefs which were not at all Christian in origin held on well into our game-period- and we fully intend to give you room to play with that tension if you want to

We're trying to take this historical context and weave into it a strong thread of fantasy. Magic is real and recognised as such by everyone but probably in very different ways. Manuscripts from the "Dark Ages" constantly report magical occurrences, whether as miracles from God, the powerful Magic that Christian priests were said to use by the Danes, or the hedge-magics of healing known to a village elder. Through modern eyes some of these magics are explicable as simply psychotropic drugs, or antibiotics from fungus or a thousand other causes, but for the game's purposes these magics are just that - power beyond human comprehension that could be put down to God, or Gods, to Spirits, to Witchcraft, to esoteric knowledge, to Devil-worship and so on. Your character's

perspective on these occurrences will vary according to their cultural background. A rite being performed by a Priest might bring a tear to your eye, which might be a simple expression of devotion to God answered fully because of the Faith of a sister-Christian. Or a rite might make you mumble a prayer of apology to the old Gods for offending their natural will. Or it might make you kiss the hammer emblem you carry with you always. Or it might make you do all of those things.

This is also the period when many of the classics that would become the basis for medicine and philosophy today were rediscovered; as the [Islamic Umayyad Caliphate of Southern Spain](#) began to crumble under pressure from the Franks, treatises translated from Arabic and Greek and into Latin began to find their ways to British shores - Ptolemy's writings on astronomy and astrology, Galen's study of anatomy and Hippocrates' writing on medicine came into wide (for the time) circulation. You should absolutely feel free to make stuff up - the heretical writings of the so called '[missing books](#)' of the Bible were around, and lots of religious orders were experimenting with different ways of translating the Bible's teachings and from time to time the Church would try to stamp these out. Whilst we don't advise you openly claim that the Holy Ghost, Jesus and God are in fact three separate divine beings you may, of course, choose to believe this, and act accordingly. Have fun with this - make up tracts on anything you like and start giving them out to people. Make them up or make 'em real - make 'em *wrong* if you want, it's all good!

You'll also note that there are sections of this document which are considerably longer than others. The length of the descriptions does not reflect the relative importance in the game; we're aiming to try and keep everyone busy, be they a straight up Houscarl or a ritual-heavy magi... sorry... Priest.

Play, Look, Feel

Play

The game rules are in fact guidelines. We'll call them rules because we want folks to know how the game should work and make it as consistent as possible for everyone but ultimately we want you, the players, to have fun, create a cool looking world, tell awesome stories, etc. The rules can help by adding a significant chance of death and some tension to those stories. We'd like folks to follow them. We know that games can get stressful, that situations can come up where you forget a hit or miss count a minute. Fair enough. Try not to do it again, or compensate for it in a cool roleplay way eg. My medic got to me at about five minutes, but I'm not really sure, they healed me up and I started fighting again, but, now I think about it, maybe it was really more like seven minutes... OK so now I'll roleplay that my wound has opened up under my bandages, and I need medical help again. Simple.

This is a game of trust. We trust you not to take the piss. Your fellow players trust you not to take the rip. If that changes you may find you're not welcome to the game anymore. Combat and wounds aside, it's very free form game.

We hope that folks will accept it's 'Players vs the Environment / Monsters' rather than 'Player vs Player'. We aren't going to outright ban killing your fellow players instead we'll point out it's bad manners to do so without a really good reason and permanent solutions to temporary problems rarely end well in a world where both laws exist and death is no barrier to becoming a witness.

There isn't any character progression in the strict sense of new skills, etc, but we hope that your character's story will ensure that you feel like you're making progress. If you feel that's not happening we'd like to talk to you about it so please come and talk to us.

You should note that Players can only play one active character during a weekend – swapping between characters to suit a situation is not going to help your or anyone else's immersion!

To begin with the game is likely to require a fair amount of ref intervention, which in turn may be somewhat time consuming. Please bear with us and be patient

If all goes according to plan we'll be running the game over a weekend, so expect there to be IC camping. The game will run late into the night and from 10am the following - typically expect there to be no refs available after midnight except for OOC emergencies

Looks

Clearly the setting for this is the Dark Ages - so the broad look and feel is anything from the time the Romans scurried home to when the Normans turned up in 1066. We'd love folks to put time and thought into what the kit looks like, and if you have a perfectly authentic set-up that's brilliant, we'd love it if you came along and show us all how it's done.

That said not everyone has the time or the resources to be able to do "authentic" and that's fine too - the watch-word is Coolthentic - make it look cool and roughly in-period and all will be well. So by all means wear your leather walking boots but probably best to leave the bright orange trainers and tracksuit bottoms at home!

As a general guide leathers should be brown rather than black / green / red if at all possible. There won't be much plate, aside from helms and shields. Shields should be generally round or oblong (Celtic diamond shapes are fine too). Swords should be fairly plain and single-handed. For all classes, wool in layers is hard to beat, and actually wool blankets are fantastic for converting into cloaks. We have a [Pinterest](#) board, so you can have a look to get an idea of what folks used to wear.

If you're new to LRP, and need a hand, feel free to ask on the [Facebook group](#) – there are people there who can give you advice, offer simple tips on making things, and, best of all, who may be willing to lend you some bits to get you started. We encourage players to lend kit to new players - we all had to start somewhere, and having awesome kit from a more experienced player can really help. Equally if someone lends you kit, please make sure you respect it - return arrows, don't leave armour and weapons in the elements overnight, don't disappear home until you've got it back to the owner, etc. We say these things from bitter experience...

At the end of the day, the story trumps the kit, but the kit helps everyone get immersed in the story fully

Feel

Realistically we're doing [Beowulf](#) here. A good place to start is the In Our Time episode on Beowulf (you'll find a link in the Links section). If you'd like to read it, have a go at [Seamus Heaney's](#) version which has the Old English next to it. It's short, and will probably take you a couple of hours to read through. But if it's a bit much, the film adaptation done with Ray Winstone was actually very good, and put a new spin on things.

The Bernard Cornwell series, [The Last Kingdom](#), is in the right ball park, although please don't watch the TV series and assume the costume was anything approaching authentic; for the game if you want a back scabbard, go for it, but expect the Ref Team to point and laugh when you [try to draw your sword](#). Come to that, you won't be far off if you've watch the [13th Warrior](#) and enjoyed the feeling of overwhelming odds, honour, glory, magic and danger.

The truly excellent '[Viking](#)' series from the History Channel is absolutely worth a watch, so that you can know your enemy better, also because of the apparent devotion to God the Saxons portray, which fits nicely with what we're trying to do

At the risk of confusing things, as they're set a lot later in time, we're hoping for a feel a bit like some of the great Crusader films; '[Arn](#)', '[Ironclad](#)', '[The Kingdom of Heaven](#)', as well as some of the feel of the Charles Stross [Laundry](#) books, but clearly all set in Anglo-Saxon Britain. *The Lord of the Rings* series, non-human characters to one side, also do a fairly decent job of conveying the sense of approaching doom, the darkness of a world being forcibly changed, and the loss of a way of life that attended the coming of the Vikings (oops, think we just killed off another scholar of Ancient History, we meant Danes).

Religion in the Game

By the very nature of the game we're going to take Christianity and elements of Paganism and mess with them pretty hard. For some people this isn't going to be OK. We totally understand and respect individuals' deeply held beliefs and we are not actively seeking to cause offence. The game has been written by a number of people of various religious faiths and people without faith. We hope that you can see this for what it is — namely a harmless bit of imagination and not a serious commentary on any given religious persuasion.

Equal Opportunities

We take equal opportunities very seriously. We aim to create an environment at our events that is accessible to all and free from discrimination and prejudice, and to do so without removing the elements of spontaneity and humour that are vital to games. Heathen LRP is based on trust, and that trust starts with the way that we all interact with one another. Whilst we would love to simply obey [Bill & Ted's](#) motto of "be excellent to one another" we feel that it's important to make clear what that means in practice for the avoidance of doubt.

In this endeavour we must credit the invaluable assistance of the [Falling Down](#) team. At their request this statement is licensed under the following license: [Creative Commons Attribution](#)<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales [License](#). If you would like to use it, in whole or in part, or as the basis for a new statement for an event in the future then please ensure you publish it under the same conditions and credit the Falling Down team. We'd also like to thank Tim Baker and his circle of friends for helping to refine things

In order to achieve a supportive, discrimination free environment, we ask that every participant show respect to others, on an Out-of-Character (OOC) level, including using appropriate and respectful language at all times. Discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexuality or skin colour make little sense within the Heathen setting; we are creating the world as it should have been, not as it was - anyone can play any character regardless of gender, sexuality or skin colour - and comments about a Houscarl being female or a Monk being gay would simply seem irrelevant to the people of the Heathen world. Therefore we do not expect anyone's characters to express sexist, homophobic, or transphobic views nor to discriminate based on skin colour or OOC ethnicity.

Although Heathen will have themes around national and religious prejudice the point is simply that such discrimination should be purely about in-character (IC) factors, rather than factors of the person playing a character. We are mindful that we do not want Heathen to be a game that perpetuates the discrimination disabled people experience in the real world, there is no particular cultural significance to disability, and thus no justification for discriminatory treatment.

Heathen is likely to be physically demanding – it does contain significant elements of combat, and the sites we use may present their own challenges. We would never presume to tell someone what they are or aren't capable of doing but these factors may become relevant to a person's enjoyment of the game. Our aim will be, wherever possible, to provide workarounds and non-combatant mechanics exist to allow players of differing physical ability to play the game. It is, however, important to recognise there may be factors over which we have no control (mud and hills for example!) so we recommend a discussion of your particular needs with the Ref team. If you'd like to see a video of Deepmere, where we're going to be holding the first event, then please have a look at the [site tour video here](#)

Mental Health

We ask folks who wish to play to take care of their own health, physical and mental, during the course of play. We'd like players to make their own calls on whether they feel they OK to participate; LRP can be demanding of physical and mental resources - it can be stressful, challenging and not without pitfalls. We take this very seriously and will attempt to ensure your well-being in so far as we can, and ask that you make the Ref team aware before time-in and during play if you feel yourself being overwhelmed. We know from personal experience this can be hard but dialogue is key. You will see in the World Background and Rules on page 9, we ask players to portray characters with Faith and who are not "insane" - this does not mean players who have mental health issues are not welcome, merely that **characters** with Hollywood-style insanity are not appropriate for our game due to the setting, the disruption it can cause to the game and the distress it can cause to those of us with our own head-weasels. Please don't take this to mean we do not welcome **players** who have mental health issues.

On a more general note we expect our participants not to block other participants from engaging with the game; each participant should feel safe and comfortable deciding their own level of involvement, and should not experience pressure to hold back or engage when they do not wish to. On the other hand, if the Refs judge that a participant's continued involvement in the game or part of the game would be genuinely detrimental to their health and well-being or the health and well-being of others, they do have the authority to remove you from the game or simply not allow you to book on

Sexual Harassment

Socialising is an important part of live roleplaying but nobody attending an event should have to tolerate sexual harassment. We encourage any individual who experiences sexual harassment from another participant to report the incident to us at the earliest available opportunity, so that we can deal appropriately with the matter.

Unwelcome actions such as the following are inappropriate and, depending on the circumstances, may in and of themselves meet the definition of sexual harassment or contribute to a hostile game environment:

- Sexual pranks, or repeated sexual teasing, jokes, or innuendo.
- Verbal abuse, touching or grabbing of a sexual nature.
- Repeatedly standing too close to or brushing up against a person.
- Repeatedly asking a person to socialise out-of-character when the person has said no or has indicated they are not interested.

Please do note that the above should not stop players from making jokes or innuendo to one another, but rather if you are asked to stop around a person because you are making them uncomfortable, that you stop and go elsewhere if you wish to continue.

A victim of sexual harassment can be of any gender. The victim can be of the same sex as the harasser. The harasser can be any participant, a player or a member of crew.

Many sexual harassment issues in live roleplaying occur when participants use their character to justify what would clearly be inappropriate when not roleplaying. Participants should take care to ensure that if their behaviour involves conversation or physical contact in a sexual or intimate manner that they do not do so in a way that causes the recipient to feel out-of-character uncomfortable, regardless of any in-character considerations – in other words “it’s what my character would do” is never a defence

Our Behaviour

We are committed to creating an environment where there is mutual respect and equality of opportunity for all participants. We want our games to be inclusive - where everyone can take part and everyone is welcome - and we oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

We will:

- Make a concerted effort to ensure that our games are inclusive.
- Promote equality of opportunity and encourage crew and players from all backgrounds to participate fully in our events.
- Respond promptly to harassment and equality issues, including those relating to race, gender, disability and sexual orientation, and recognise the complexities of the interrelations between them.
- We will consider any and all adjustments for mental health needs, up to and including refusing to accept bookings from potential players in certain circumstances
- Treat all complaints seriously and respond appropriately.

How We Will Handle Complaints

Opposing discrimination and harassment is not causing trouble - it is helping to build a better event for everyone.

It is not possible for us to create an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment by ourselves. It can only be accomplished if everyone who participates in the game works towards that goal. Challenging inappropriate behaviour by other participants is helpful, but not everyone will feel able to do that. We want all participants to be confident that they can bring complaints to us and that we will deal with them promptly, respectfully, and appropriately.

In general we operate on a “single warning” policy; players who commit some significant misdemeanour (such as sexual harassment) receive a written warning making clear that any further complaints about them will result in their permanent exclusion from the event. The nature of complaints in LRP is that there is often very little corroborative evidence. Giving the accused a single warning gives a reasonable balance, giving them a chance to avoid making a

similar mistake in future while avoiding the need to make a judgement beyond reasonable doubt of the veracity of either party. In cases where an incident is extremely serious we will issue an immediate ban we do not require evidence beyond reasonable doubt, but rather use the same “balance of probabilities” test we use for any other incidents. Please note that, much as we would for a serious accident where we would call an ambulance, if the behaviour is or could be deemed to be, illegal we will contact law enforcement.

If a participant wishes to report an incident but wishes to remain anonymous or does not otherwise want to make a formal complaint, then we adjust our complaints process to reflect their wishes. The issue is discussed in detail with the complainant and we investigate it as thoroughly as we are able to without compromising their anonymity. The incident is logged on the accused's participants database records; if there are independent complaints in the future against the same party then we would use the history of previous incidents in determining the outcome of subsequent complaints.

Sticks and Stones

Sticks and stones, so the saying goes, may break our bones but words will never hurt us. Sadly this somewhat trite phrase does not account for the past experiences and backgrounds of the players around us; we cannot know what they've done in their lives or the things which may cause them to become distressed - so we'd like to try and make sure that all players and crew are mindful of that during the game (and it is, let's be clear, just a game and we're here to have a laugh)

To that end then we're very aware that Heathen will tackle some dark themes; there will be elements of horror, of hopelessness, of intrigue, of stress and tension (particularly religious tensions) and of course violence. We're keen to ensure that no one involved in the game, whether a player or member of the crew, is made to feel unsafe or distressed on an out-of-character level. If, at any time you do feel unsafe or distressed on an out-of-character level, you should immediately put your hand above your head, step out of play and find a Ref who will offer assistance and, wherever possible, get you back into play once you feel able. This is exactly the same process as we use for non-combatants and the same rules will apply - essentially your mental health and your physical health are really important to us and we treat them equally seriously.

As a means of helping everyone get on and have fun in a safe environment we will be using a system of lines and veils which we've lifted unashamedly from Falling Down

Lines – there are very few of these but they are things that will never be hinted at or brought up in game; they are off-limits to all involved. It is not permissible, therefore, to make any reference to, or to attempt to perform roleplay around any kind of sexual violence or sex with minors. Similarly discrimination based on gender or sexuality is completely off limits (as pointed out in the Equalities statement it makes absolutely no sense to do so anyway)

Veils are things that can happen in a game, but when it does we skip the details and “fade to black,” putting it behind a veil. Issues behind veils include the following:

Consensual sexual contact

Overt displays of extreme mental illness, especially where portraying such behaviours becomes parody or “Hollywood-style” mental illness

Extended torture

As previously stated, despite these lines and veils, there are many adult themes that we anticipate may occur in Heathen, whether introduced by the organisers or by players. The following is not intended as an exhaustive list, but rather to illustrate the point:

- Religious tension / heresy
- Wounds including blood and gore

- Torture (e.g. blood eagling)
- Killing, including killing children or old people
- Consensual blood letting in a ritual fashion
- Love, lust and sexual desire
- Loss of identity
- Loss of your grip on reality
- Hallucinations, shock and catatonia
- Phobias
- Seduction
- Suicide

Certain participants may wish to play the game in a way that is more emotionally-demanding than we would ordinarily expect, pushing emotional buttons much harder than normal, and expecting the same in return. Not everyone wants this from their LRP, so you must personally have explicit permission from the other person (or people) in the scene beforehand, and in those circumstances would be permitted to address issues normally behind a veil; people involved can then remove themselves from public view and decide whether and what they feel comfortable physrepping and roleplaying through. Consider it a social equivalent to our stance on grappling. If you do not have this explicit permission then please respect our rules on Veils and private scenes and do not engage in this play

Terms and Ref Calls

Refs will occasionally have to make calls, we hope these will be minimal.

"Man Down" - a safety call made in the event of a real-life problem or casualty. Please stop play, stay where you are, and let the first aiders deal with it. If you believe that others have not heard the call, please repeat it so everyone is aware. Under no circumstances should players use the words, "Man Down," unless there is a real-life safety issue. For more information please look [here](#)

"Time Freeze" - a temporary hiatus in play; stop play, please close your eyes and hum. Bonus points will be awarded for humming Men of [Harlech](#)

"Time In" - the Point at which play starts, or re-starts, called only by refs.

"Time Out" - the end of play.

It's also worth being aware of the [Atmospheres and Role Playing effects](#) guidance.

Basic Character Requirements

Heathen is designed to be a historically-based fantasy LRP with a balance of heavy combat, ritual magic, faith, politics, survival and horror, all led by the players weaving their own stories into the world. We want to give anyone who wants to play as much room as possible to explore the things they enjoy. There are essentially only a very few requirements for a Character, these are:

1. You're loyal to Wessex. Whether you were born one, whether you're a Christian or not, whether you're a peasant or a thane. For one reason or another, you're fighting for Alfred. This might be temporary, or it might be a life-long cause, but for now you're loyal.
2. You're not utterly insane. Characters who are out-right psychopaths or totally without a connection to the real world often mess games up for everyone else, so this is really about courtesy to your fellow players and ref team
3. You have Faith. The presence of magic in the world is reason enough to conclude that **something** is going on outside mankind's control. You may be deeply unclear on what that something is, or totally convinced, but it is there and it is real. You might have a Christian background, but wonder if that's all there is, or you might have a Pagan background and wonder if perhaps the Christians are onto something or your views may be a blend of the two ideas. This is really only important because we want the look and feel to include a strongly faithful world - if everyone rocked up and said, "God is Dead" whilst puffing on a filter-less Gitane, it would rather render the Dark Ages theme redundant. For more information, have a look [here](#).

Character Generation

Character generation is simple, 1) Pick a background - this is where you are from and should determine whether you are devout or superstitious, or both. 2) Pick a Kingdom of England, this is where you've just come from 3) Pick a vocation; this essentially determines what skills you have.

Backgrounds:

Anglo-Saxon

"For God, for glory, for the King!"

You're an Anglo-Saxon, born and bred a Christian – at least in public. You're considered devout and you have respect for the church and the clergy, you attend most services and pay your tithes, but you may be aware of the ancient call of the land too. You were born in one of the Saxon Kingdoms: East Anglia, Mercia, Northumbria or Wessex.

Briton

"That which came from the Earth must return to the Earth."

You're a Briton and were born and bred a Christian, but you have also seen the "old magic" at work. The kings and princes of your people frequently seek the advice of Seers and Cunning Folk. Britons are, by and large, both devout and superstitious respecting and fearing the Church, the Clergy and the Cunning Folk in equal measure. You were born in one of the many British Kingdoms found in Wales, Cornwall, and Strathclyde.

Dane

"The all father guides my path to Valhalla."

Congratulations everyone hates you, you're a Dane. The term "Dane" covers anyone who we refer to today as Vikings - so northern Europe and Scandinavia. Your people are superstitious and believe in all kinds of Gods, including the death-cult of Christianity, but as a rule, you worship the Norse Gods. Typically you'd think twice about crossing the Cunning Folk, whereas you would quite happily stab a member of the Clergy as a direct threat to your own Gods. You were born and raised in Scandinavia, probably Denmark, before finding yourself in Britain.

Frisian

"The land of heroes of old, the home of the devout."

Everyone loves a Frisian, because they are easily bought. You were raised in Frisia (modern day Netherlands, around Heligoland, on the North Sea coast) where Christianity is common, but some people still cling to the old Gods. As such, you're both devout and superstitious, paying your tithes to the church, and keeping the local Cunning One happy; you may even wear a Thor's hammer under your tunic. Ancient Frisian lore is very fatalistic, and in times past - and possibly still today - mothers would seek out a Cunning One to give their children a reading to predict their death. This prediction

is often considered absolute, meaning a Frisian may be utterly without regard to their personal safety in battle if that day is not their day to die. Of course the Cunning One could always be lying...

Irish

The Irish are a law unto themselves and very different from other inhabitants of these isles – they are extremely devout yet also extremely superstitious, leaving them at a significant disadvantage when dealing with things that are clearly not for the eyes of mortal man. Originally the Irish came to England and Wales from across the sea to raid and pillage or to sell their swords, but over time more and more have settled in South Wales and Pictland. Importantly not just do they share a religion but they too have suffered at the hands of the Danes. The Irish have a deep respect and fear for all things religious and magical and travel far and wide for faith and for gold.

Kingdoms

East Anglia

"Kingdom of saints and angels."

East Anglia is ruled by the pious King Edmund. He has a great collection of relics and has allowed the Danes to pass through his Kingdom on their way to sack Northumbria. Since the fall of Northumbria, King Edmund has become more and more of a recluse, locking himself away with his prized possessions, he claims to receive visions from the Saints, and he has requested aid from Mercia and Wessex.

Mercia

"Bread basket of England, beset on all sides."

Mercia is ruled by weak King Burgred, it is a shadow of its former self. Once a powerful and wealthy Kingdom it has a longstanding rivalry with Wessex and Northumbria who still occupy its southern and northern borders respectively. To Mercia's west lie the fractious lands of the Welsh princes whose warriors make frequent forays across Offa's dyke to raid and pillage.

Northumbria

"Where the ravens feast."

Northumbria is a land in chaos; it has been riven by civil war with King Aella and King Osberht both claiming the throne even as the Danes sought a foothold on its land. When Aella executed the famous Dane war-leader Ragnar Lodbrok, his sons raised the Great Heathen army to take their revenge. Aella and Osberht eventually joined forces, but were been defeated, their armies scattered, and the brightest and best of Northumbria are slaughtered. The Danes killed Osberht in battle and captured and blood eagled Aella as a sacrifice to their Gods. Now the puppet King Ecgberht sits upon the Northumbrian throne and dances to the Danish jig.

Wessex

"The Giants of Wessex"

Wessex is the most powerful Saxon Kingdom, it is ruled by the pious, ruthless, cunning and sickly King Alfred; well known for his scholarly pursuits and his impressive collection of the written word as well as his ability to lead armies. Some believe that he covets King Edmund's great collection of relics, others that he has designs on Mercia, others still believe that he has a vision for a united England under the Wessex crown. Either way, since the great victory over the Danes at the gates of Reading in 871 AD, a series of defeats, setbacks and fragile peace accords have held Wessex in check. Riven internally by rivalries between the major earls Wessex is held together almost single-handedly by Alfred.

Vocations

There are five primary vocations in the game, each designed to give you something slightly different to the game, and each based on the ancient medieval concept of Those Who Fight, Those Who Pray and Those Who Work. Vocations are what your life's work to this point has been about. They're what you know and what you've studied and learned. Vocations can be what your family has always done. They're also about your social status and they're pretty inflexible, reflecting the hierarchical nature of a feudal society without all the crap that goes with actually trying to be strict on feudal systems.

Changing Vocation

Under some circumstances it might be possible to change your character's vocation. This can be done only once during your character's life and you can only move between being a Monk / Kabbalist or Frydd / Cunning Folk. This should not, then, be done lightly or quickly. Indeed the transition may happen over a period of months (several events) whilst you find a teacher, learn the trade and begin the transition. Once you have moved, you will lose access to the skills you had from your previous vocation - so a Monk becoming a Kabbalist will no longer be able to produce potions or read Cyphers. A Cunning One becoming a Frydd will no longer be able to perform rituals.

It is not possible to move out of your social status - a Monk cannot become a Houscarl for example. This represents the difficulty not just of learning the necessary martial techniques and skills, but also the fixed nature of feudal society in which your birth determined to a large extent your path in life

Those Who Fight - Houscarls

You are one double-hard bastard, trained from the age of fuck-all to fight with whatever comes to hand. Swords, spears, axes, bows - you name it, you can maim with it. You're strong and fit enough to wear heavy armour and smart enough to use it properly. These are your tools and your trade. You have land, unlike virtually everyone else, either in Wessex itself, or claims to land in one or more of the fallen Kingdoms and Alfred has seen fit to recognise these claims provided you continue to serve his interests and are sufficiently pious (at least in public). The Danes are a clear and present danger – they represent the destruction of your way of life and that of your parents, and the end of the line for a tradition of Saxon warriors that stretches back centuries. You above anyone else, have material reasons to resist the Dane invasions and the Great Alliance of the Lothbrook brood. Houscarls are the elite of society; they may even be Thegns or Earls in their own right leading small bands of Houscarls loyal to them. Respect is due to you by everyone, even the Church, not least because you could have them killed - but bear in mind Alfred is a stickler for the law.....

It is your job to fight and to kill, to prosecute war against the Danes and to bring the Light of God to the heathens via the medium of ultra-violence. It is also your job to keep the peace, to provide leadership and direction and to curtail the Church's baser instincts in a polite but robust fashion. At the same time it is wise for a Houscarl who is perhaps swayed by the Old Ways to keep that knowledge to a few, very close friends lest the Church inform Alfred.

Those Who Pray - Monks

These are the practical branch of the Clergy; often very practical indeed - cooks, brewers, masons, beekeepers, etc, but able to read and write Latin, and perhaps other languages too. They also practice the art of secret communication, working with ciphers and codes of their own devising. Those novices showing a particular aptitude for either working with their hands or towards mathematics in particular are drawn to this branch of the Church.

Those Who Pray - Kabbalists

This branch of the Church is closely related to, but different from that which most people see every day, standing in front of a congregation, incanting the Latin of the litany, performing the miracle of transubstantiation and hearing the confession of poor sinners - even Frydd from time to time. Although well capable of performing these rites, indeed many Kabbalists are employed by parishes to do this regularly; your branch of the Church also holds the secrets behind dialogue directly with the Saints. Rites, Reliquaries, and Rituals are your thing. This makes you not just potentially powerful, but also in demand from Holy sites hoping to attract the pilgrims who are starting to flock to various points around the country seeking salvation from sin and The Dane.

Those Who Work - Cunning Folk

The Cunning are the last remnants of the Druids and the land before the Romans came. Illiterate and often with a peasant's background they may well be nominally Christian, or even devoutly so, but they know the stories passed down by their grandfather's grandfather. What fruits will kill a woman, and which will save her. What the Olma said at the gates of Frethena as she died. Why that hill is sacred and no children should play there. Who is buried in that barrow and why. That knowledge garners respect and status in any village or group of Frydd. And it earns grudging respect by those who realise that God's Will moves in mysterious ways - for who else can gather the necessary herbs and plants to make Holy Oil? Who can heal as well as a Cunning One? Who, aside from a Monk, can cure the many poisons and toxins of the world? And who indeed, can make them? Respect is due.

Those Who Work - The Frydd

Congratulations! You're a peasant! You'll die young, and no one gives a shit about you except when they want something. You, and 90% of your mates, are illiterate cannon fodder who're useful to harvest stuff, to make things such as armour or shields, farm the fields and pay your tithes to the Church and to the Houscarls, but you are otherwise considered a waste of precious space in the Church on a weekday morning (actually you'll be standing... at the back... with your animal). However, being quite so low does have its advantages. For one thing the Holy Objects that seem to pretty much kill anyone they don't like basically ignore you. You're very much a practical person - making and fixing things, fighting when necessary (or ordered to) - if the job needs a true craftsman or just a lot of muscle, then it's a job for you. Metal, wood, leather, and even fine metals like silver or gold - they all need your skill and persistence, so you'll be told to get involved in almost everything from time to time. Just don't expect to be asked nicely.

Those Who Fight - Houscarls

Income - 50 Shillings / Year

Armour - Heavy – Total of 6 Hits Global if in Chain and a helm, 5 if just in chain

Weapons - Any

Shields - [Yes](#)

Purview - Sending their enemies to Divine Judgement

- Often part of a specific group of Houscarls loyal to a thegn, an earl or directly to the King.

You are one double-hard bastard, trained from the age of fuck-all to fight with whatever comes to hand. Swords, spears, axes, bows - you name it, you can maim with it. You're strong and fit enough to wear heavy armour and smart enough to use it properly. These are your tools and your trade. You have land, unlike virtually everyone else, either in Wessex itself or claims to land in one or more of the fallen Kingdoms and Alfred has seen fit to recognise these claims provided you continue to serve his interests and are sufficiently pious (at least in public). The Danes are a clear and present danger – they represent the destruction of your way of life and that of your parents, the end of the line for a tradition of Saxon warriors that stretches back centuries. You, above anyone else, have material reasons to resist the Dane invasions and the Great Alliance of the Lothbrook brood. Houscarls are the elite of society; they may even be thegns in their own right, leading small bands of Houscarls loyal to them. Respect is due to you by everyone, even the Church, not least because you could have them killed – but bear in mind Alfred is a stickler for the law...

It is your job to fight and to kill, to prosecute war against the Danes and to bring the Light of God to the heathens via the medium of violence. It is also your job to keep the peace, to provide leadership and direction, and to curtail the Church's baser instincts in a polite but robust fashion.

Historically, Houscarls started out as retainers, essentially non-servile people, (all men technically, but, we'll ignore that) who fulfilled a variety of military and administrative roles. In England, by the time of The Danes' arrival, the term came to mean 'a body of retained troops' often with land of their own.

The key advantage in game is the use of heavy armour – this gives you 6 hits (5 from the armour and 1 for your natural body) in combat and only Houscarls get this benefit. The downside is that you don't get to make anything yourself, but you can benefit from things like rituals, charms or anointment with oils – indeed if you're fighting non-human opponents, these may be vital

You also have a significant income, 10 times what a Frydd might expect to earn. This represents money from your lands and from the thegn you serve or directly from the King if he has chosen to recognise your claim.

Those Who Pray - Monks

Income - None

Armour – None, 1 Hit Global

Weapons - Any

Shields - None

Purview - The more Practical Arts - healing, paper making, assisting in the rites of the Church, researching hidden knowledge, cyphers and information.

- They can hear confession.
- They're literate in Latin and possibly another language as well.
- They're often part of a specific Holy Order.
- They can create, and read, cyphers.

You're a scholar and a practical one at that. Regardless of gender, you are a Monk and have spent much of your life in a monastery. You have many practical skills that make you invaluable to society and the church, as well as the ability to preach the word of God to your often wayward flock. You can bake, brew, read and write, create remedies to deal with ailments, even swing a weapon if you really, really must. You have spent much of your life either living in a monastery, sworn to a particular order, (Benedictines are the most common, though there are others) or traveling the countryside spreading the word of God.

The Danes are the greatest danger Christianity has ever faced, they are hell-bent on destroying the Church and all it stands for, what's worse is that they seem to have no compunction to killing your brothers and sisters of the Faith. Needless to say the heathen must be stopped by any and all means necessary. You more than anyone else have a deep rooted fear of the Danes, for they will not just kill you, they'll kill you in the most horrendous manner they can, and all because you deny their heathen Gods. You also have the greatest spiritual need to challenge the Danes; this is clearly a battle between the Gods. They are wrong, of course, there is only one God who is merciful to the penitent and furious in his anger to the damned, but they seem to think there is some sort of divine battle and if that's the case, then Christ must surely prevail. People across society generally offer you respect, after all you are of the cloth, you treat their ailments, hear their confessions and have the ear of the Abbot. It's your job to spread the word of God through word and thought and deed. And if those don't work, through rhetoric and threats of eternal damnation. It is also your job to keep the archives and records, to communicate news of your times to your fellow members of the Church, to provide spiritual counsel to earls and peasants alike, and of course collect the tithes.

Historically Monks did, well, rather a lot and were pretty much self-sufficient within their monasteries and their orders were, at least in theory, single-sex. For the purposes of the game all Holy Orders are mixed sexes, all called "Monasteries", "Cloisters" or, "Holy Orders".

Your key advantage is that you have several useful skills, you have some healing and apothecary abilities and information gathering abilities. The downside is that you have no mystical abilities like your brothers and sisters, the [Kabbalists](#).

So What Can I Do?

Read & write Latin and another language of your choice and create and translate cyphers. You can make draughts, [potions and unguents](#) primarily of a physical and practical nature. You can heal, use any weapon but no armour, hear confession and offer absolution, Participate in, but not lead, Kabbalist's rituals

Those Who Pray - Kabbalists

Income - None

Armour - None, 1 Hit Global

Weapons - Staves only – you may use this to attack if you choose to but a staff will not affect anyone wearing armour and are therefore primarily for defence

Shields - None

Purview - The Esoteric and Mystical Rites and Rituals of the Church, Reliquaries, Holy Orders

- Literate in Latin.
- Typically former Monks.
- Often part of a specific Holy Order.

You are an esoteric servant of God, you have a higher calling and almost certainly had a monastic upbringing, although now walk amongst a more exalted echelon of the clergy. You trained in seminary school until your particular talents were unearthed; the ability to commune directly to the Saints and perform miracles. You are beloved of the church, and Alfred certainly thinks highly of you.

Yes you don't have many (any?) of the practical skills your brothers and sisters in the monasteries do, but you can speak to the Saints, and moreover you can achieve miracles and interact with Holy Relics; the Divine Mysteries are yours to conquer, to control.

The Danes are an incredible danger to all good Christians and the Church in particular. The Dane's vile blood magic and superstitious beliefs are the mark of savages; the Dane is the cat's paw of Satan and his demons. Worse still, the Danes' magic seems to imbue them with incredible power, power which should surely be your (and of course) the Church's hands not in the control of ignorant blood thirsty Pagans whose primary concerns in life appear are killing, drinking and...well...other base human urges.

You are in an excellent position to help defeat the Danes, and perhaps subsume their power; after all you do channel the very Will of God. Unfortunately for you the Danes love killing the Clergy and doing so in some highly unpleasant ways. Doubly so in your case. You're prime blood eagling material, one of your late brothers was even used as a battle standard, well his skin was, and you're damn sure that's not God's design for you.

The Danes are clearly a punishment from God, and it is up to you to decide how best to stem the flow of Pagans into the country. You will need to work with your Monkish brothers and sisters, who will guide your thinking but you are the iron fist in the gloved hand of the Church. If the Monks ask, you alone can unleash the forces of God's power.

Your brothers and sisters in the faith are more visible but you are the iron fist in the gloved hand of the Church. You are able to rub shoulders with the aristocracy, and of course you have been ordained by the Church, granting you some authority in itself – overall your position in society is probably slightly less than a Monk or a Houscarl, but a great deal above a mere Frydd. That said, the peasantry are a law unto themselves, not that you have anything to do with them anymore, but you get the distinct impression they're talking about you behind your back.

As with your sisters and brothers in the Church, it's your job to spread the word of God through prayer, but in your case, with the added strength of miraculous deeds; deeds that rely on your strength, cunning and force of will more than your status. Should you happen across a Relic, be it lying about unattended or in the hands of the Danes it falls to you to protect it. You are lucky to walk amongst the upper echelons of the Church, though you have no formal rank or title other than that of Brother and Sister, the rich and powerful are keen to learn more of the mysteries, or make use of them and that lends you their ears.

Kabbalists are members of the Church with a specific skill set that makes them stand out from their brothers and sisters before being whisked off for further training. They are a sect completely made up for this game.

Your key advantage is that you can perform divine rituals, contact the Saints and interact with relics and other such items of cosmic power. Your faith in God manifests in your rituals and that is a rare and unique ability that makes you stand out from others. However your focus leaves you sorely lacking in other areas with no real means to defend yourself, luckily you're very, very useful to most people.

So What Can I Do?

Read Latin.

Perform Miracles via Rites and Rituals.

You're a God-fearing mystic focused on the use of Holy Objects to influence and change the world, often via a Saint. These can be offensive or defensive, but be careful what you ask for.

We want you to take the idea and run with it, so we're not going to limit you in what you can try, but obviously things are more likely to go wrong, the larger the thing you try to do. Also, the more violent the outcome you try to create with a ritual, probably the worse it will be for you if it fails.

For rituals, first have a read of [this](#) – you're going to need some kind of Focus, some kind of Power, and some kind of Target to make them work. Bear in mind that all magic is dangerous and unpredictable.

Known Rituals and Rites

This is not intended as anything like an exhaustive list. Theoretically God can do anything through you as the vessel, but to test His power is unwise. Be careful what you ask for; consider your Calling as a member of the Church and the dictates of your Order before attempting something new.

Speak to a Saint

The Anglo-Saxon world has a number of [major Saints](#) and many, many local Saints in it – each of them has a different perspective on life, and a purview according to tradition or Church Law. Provided you have a connection to that specific Saint, you can attempt to make contact with them in their, presumably Heavenly, resting place. It carries a certain risk and of course many Saints are far from sane after their experiences whilst alive, but you can try to seek their guidance, advice or information about the world, or indeed ask them interesting questions of a theological nature. Just

bear in mind that the Church is always watching for any inconvenient answers that might emerge. Best done with trusted friends.

Speak to the dead

Naturally ghostly evidence is not admissible in court, but imagine if you could ask someone who killed them? Or get the advice of a long-dead parent? Or speak to Emperor Nero? The further back you go, the harder this will become, and beware: where the dead reside, you may not wish to go

The Sinless Reawakening

Hazardous in the extreme, you can attempt to bring back the dead. Stringent rulings from Kabbalist councils down the years, along with exacting instructions as to how, when and upon whom this process may be used were contained in the Codex of Lazarus, now sadly lost. That it can be done, and that it is dangerous, is all that is really known of this rite. Viewed as either an abomination against God, or as a means to provide a mortal with a second chance to atone for their sins before eternal damnation, this rite should not be attempted by those who are unwilling to die themselves.

Exorcism

One of the first advance rituals every Kabbalist is taught. The truth is accidents do happen, and if things do go badly wrong, this ritual is crucial to the Kabbalist's survival. Dealing with the mistakes of others, deliberate or accidental, is vital and may form a large part of the work Kabbalists will be expected to perform. Failure will mean not just death, but to be denied the Resurrection. Thus, do not fail.

Master Tongues

It is possible to be granted farsightedness by a Saint or other of God's Angels; sight that will allow the reading of, if not comprehension of, words and texts in other languages. For some reason this has not yet been known to work on Ogham – not that you want to read the Pagan's words.

God's Light

Enable a person or people to walk into the Spirit World and interact, including hurt, the inhabitants thereof.

Armour of the Faithful

Used primarily as a means to temporarily allow a Monk to enter combat this ritual is short in effect and will lend God's strength, briefly allowing a Monk to act as if they were in Chain. When the ritual's effects are over, the target will take a wound as their strength drains away.

Saints in the Game World

Saints are people who've died and are venerated for their power in the world even beyond death. Christians believe that they intercede with God, Jesus, The Holy Ghost, etc, on behalf of a mortal. For Kabbalists their relics are a means by which you may be able to create a Focus for a ritual. You do not necessarily have to have a relic of the Saint you wish to aid you, but if you can lay your hands on it. With the coming of the Danes almost all relics and reliquaries have disappeared whether carried off by the Danes themselves, or put in really, really safe places known only to one person (who in some cases may well have then died). The list below then, is of Saints who are well known in the Anglo-Saxon world. You will need to research them, enlist the help of your local band of nutter Houscarls and Frydd and sally forth to go and try to find them if you want serious juice in your ritual.

It is important to note that these Saints, whilst sharing names with real-life Saints in some cases, are entirely a product of our fevered imaginations! It is also worth noting that there was no process of Canonisation until much later in history. The result was [literally hundreds](#) of people became regarded as Saints, often for obscure and bizarre reasons.

For the purposes of the game we're going to assume that there are official and unofficial Saints, not least to give the players some chance of calling on a "recognised" one – but you should absolutely feel free to create your own... indeed when particularly Holy characters die you may want to regard them as Saints in their own right. We leave it entirely up to you.

List of Official Saints

Aethelwine

Born in about 580, Aethelwine was a Houscarl in the service of King Tallis, ruler of what is modern day Mercia at the time of Augustine's mission to Britain. Her courage in battle was second to none; time and again she is credited with turning the course of battles, laying ambushes for her Lord's enemies and slaying mighty warriors in one-on-one contests. When she heard the Gospel it is said she cried tears of blood and was baptised then and there, against King Tallis' direct orders. Enraged, but unwilling to lose such a mighty fighter, Tallis offered her the chance to renounce her baptism or die by hanging. She chose a dishonourable death over life without God. At her execution the gallows broke forcing her tormentors to kill her with a sword, a miracle indeed. She is often seen as the Patron Saint of Courage, Honour and Carpentry as a result.

Augustine

Augustine. Born in Rome around 550 AD, he was sent by the Holy Father to England to convert the Pagans there to the Church of Rome. After many adventures, setbacks and a not inconsiderable amount of personal risk (he was threatened with death dozens of times) Augustine was installed as the first Archbishop of Canterbury in 587 AD. Stories of his miracles continue to be discovered, but his particular ability to convert people through discussion and logic make him the Patron Saint of Conversion, Exorcism and Safe Retreats.

List of Official Saints cont'd

Bertha of Kent

Bertha of Kent was born around 600 AD, although being originally of Frydd stock, her exact date of birth is unknown. Noticed early as a child of exceptional Godliness, able to read the Gospels almost from the cradle she took Holy Orders in her early teens and became a peripatetic Monk, travelling the land to cleanse the sin from it through preaching, baptism, confession and reason. Privy to the secrets of hundreds, her ability to remember names faces and their specific actions at specific times made her renowned throughout the Kingdoms of England, Wales and Scotland. She brokered peace deals, over saw the establishment of Ecclesiastical Courts and interpreted the law for dozens of rulers. Her sudden death whilst bathing in 657 AD led to her being declared a martyr and she rapidly became regarded as a Saint. She is the Patron Saint of Secrets, Confessions and Cleanliness.

Cuthbert

Born about 550 AD, in Wales, Cuthbert's parents sent him to Rome as a boy to learn the ways of the Church, and he returned with Augustine as a man, becoming the first Kabbalist in England, and is credited with teaching the craft to a whole cadre of seminary students. Said to have particular skills in speaking with Saints he was martyred when he challenged and defeated a Pagan priest to a test of faith, after which the enraged local tribe cut him limb from limb. He is credited with repeating the Litany even after his head had been removed from his body. He is considered the Patron Saint of the Kabbalists (indeed many wear a pendant depicting him pointing the direction toward home around their necks), also Travel, Teaching and Challenges Against the Odds.

Edabert

Cloistered at Lindisfarne for most of her life, little is known about her early years however her writings on all matters of reason, the human experience and philosophy are still in wide circulation. Credited with many insights into the nature of life, death and the will of God she famously demonstrated that the Trinity could be understood as aspects of one being whilst simultaneously being separate entities. Unfortunately Edabert was at Lindisfarne in 470 AD when the first Danish raid hit the monastery. Her crowning miracle was to be suddenly able to fight like a Houscarl having apparently been imbued with the knowledge and strength required by God. Unfortunately she was martyred in the process and is generally seen as the Patron Saint of Knowledge, Writing and Blacksmiths.

List of Official Saints cont'd

Fithurwick of Bredon

Born in 710 AD in Wessex Fithurwick's parents were both Cunning Folk. In about 720 AD he is said to have seen the heretical views of his parents for what they were, and justly killed them both by burning their cottage down whilst they slept. Rightly recognised as a zealous young man, he was sent to the famous monastic retreat of Pannok off the north coast of Orkney for a period of retreat and private contemplation. When, unfortunately, Pannok was destroyed by fire in 723 AD Fithurwick miraculously survived before travelling back to Wessex and settling in Bredon on the Hill in about 735 AD. There he worked for many years as a baker before dying in a freak accident when the oven's fire set light to the building he was apparently sleeping in. Considered Patron Saint of Cooks, Piety and Justice.

[Author's note - Bredon on the Hill is perhaps one of the English language's weirdest contortions. "Bree" in Saxon meant Hill. "Don" meant Hill in old Norman. And clearly "Hill" means "Hill" in modern English. Thus it means Hill-Hill-on-the-Hill. Eat that New York].

Hilda of Whitby

Born in Freesia in around 610 AD Hilda was the ruler of a minor Kingdom near Heligoland on the North Sea Coast. She is credited with being a just and pious ruler and with a number of miracles including converting local Pagan groups to Christianity. In 635 AD she lead a trading mission to East Anglia when she found a group of raiding Danes attacking an East Anglian settlement. Leading the charge herself, she burned their boats, and captured their leader who, in exchange for his life, converted to Christianity and returned to Denmark. The people of East Anglia, in recognition of this foreigner's courage and willingness to aid a fellow Christian declared her an earl and allowed her to establish a permanent trading post in Suffolk called Hildabourgh. She was martyred in a trading mission to Northumbria although the details are somewhat unclear. She is considered Patron Saint of Trade, Conversion and Those in Peril.

John the Sage

John was a long time scribe for a number of kings of Wessex and Mercia having had, "a life as long as Noah" according to contemporary accounts, including ones he penned himself. Indeed such confusion exists about his birth. It is quite possible he was simply one of several people to hold the name John and that these Johns became conflated together under a single person called John the Sage. The first writing under that name appears just after the departure of the Romans in 410 AD, and stopped in about 590 AD. His writing on potions and the healing arts were amongst the first to correctly identify the healing properties of a number of herbs and medicines used by modern-day Monks. Beautifully illuminated and written, his texts are sought after by Monks across the known world. He was canonised in 687 AD and is Patron Saint of Long Life, Healing and Relief from Sudden Illness.

List of Official Saints cont'd

Leofwynn

Born in 603 AD to a poor family from an early age, she claimed to be able to hear the words of Saints that guided her actions. Revered by her village as a teenager, she was seen as a threat to the Church and promptly arrested. Over four months of questioning, including being tortured, she was able to recite the Gospels almost word for word and moreover demonstrated a highly commendable understanding of their teachings. Although horribly disfigured by her ordeal her trial was abandoned when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Laurence, intervened directly and had her trained as a Kabbalist. She proved highly adept, and quickly surpassed her tutors in ability. She is still held out as the seminal master of Kabbalism in England and many of her treatises remain in circulation. However she made many enemies as a result of her base birth and sudden rise to power, and following a ritual in which she raised an apparently dead man back to life, she was once again accused of witchcraft. Although acquitted, she was stripped of her position in the church and placed under house arrest. How and when she died is unknown, as she apparently vanished in the dead of night, never to be seen again. Often seen as the patron of Kabbalists, and in particular The Children of Lazarus, she is seen as the Patron Saint of the Unjustly Accused, Hope in Dark Times and the Frydd.

Melor

Reputed to have been a native Roman Centurion around 411 AD, when he was involved in the assassination of the last Roman Governor of Briton. He apparently converted to Christianity later in life and repented his sins, dedicating himself to establishing an order of holy warriors to fight against the various Pagan forces abroad in the land. Credited with performing many miracles, he was said to have had a way with birds who would overhear secret conversations and carry messages back to him. His manner of death is unrecorded, but legend has it that his body was carried off by a flock of thousands of small birds toward the setting sun. Canonised for his fight against the Pagans, he is often called upon by monks when seeking to seal secret messages as well as by farmers to protect their crops from predation. Officially he is the Patron Saint of Just Battle, Repentant Sinners and Birds.

Oda the Rock

Oda was the first Dane to become a Saint in England, having been a part of the Lothbrok's initial invasion force he was baptised in Mercia in 859 AD and began to train Mercian Houscarls in the way of Danish fighting. He wrote training manuals with the aid of a Monk called Athelstan. Oda's prowess in battle was said to be second only to his ability to imbibe vast quantities of alcohol afterwards. Sometimes called on, secretly, by wives to help their flagging husbands, he was canonised after his death in battle in 864 AD he is regarded as the Patron Saint of Danish Christians, Battle and Feasting. Generally unpopular with some native Anglo-Saxon men.

List of Official Saints cont'd

Yolanda of Overbuy

Born as an heir to a significant part of Wessex in the early 700s on the border with the Britons, Yolanda grew up in atmosphere of constant pressure from the Church that claimed ownership of her Mother's estates. Additional pressure came from Welsh raiders who constantly raided on her lands for livestock, and from her father to marry well, and from a string suitors attracted by her great beauty and considerable wealth. Trained as a Houscarl, she became a great warrior in her own right, often challenging her suitors to fight her with her hand in marriage as the prize – suffice to say that God saw to it that she won every bout (some scurrilous rumours circulated that she took some of the losers as lovers when she felt so inclined). However, the pressures of her life began to tell and when the Welsh made a concerted effort to take her land from Wessex she found herself and a small group of Houscarls in a pitched battle which they were wholly unready for. Unsupported and outnumbered, Yolanda lead a final, suicidal charge to try and break the enemy's shield wall. Despite grievous wounds, she survived and was captured. She was to be sacrificed to the Pagan Gods as a Victory offering, but somehow she managed to take her own life in the night, preventing her soul from being given to the Pagans. She was canonised for her courage in the face of certain defeat and is considered the Patron Saint of Heroic Death, Unrequited Love and Defence against injustice.

St Paega

St Paega was taken from pagan stock and shown the light, truth and love of the holy trinity at a young age. His early martial training as young boy left him hardy and diligent and his hard work saw him administer the care of the beloved Abbot Wilibold, but despite his best endeavours the father passed. Young Paega then travelled to the renowned pagan house Vortigern in Gwent where is estranged brother served as housecarl. St Paega's sense of duty was always paramount in his service and endeavoured whenever possible to show his pagan family the light of Christ and the errors of their ways. His dedication to Christ and doing the right thing in face of pagan scorn and adversity culminated at Behotric's Ridge in 873. St Paega, upon witnessing the savage blood eagling of Earl Behotric, was seized by God's Fury and lead the charge deep amongst the heathen Danes. Suffering from multiple wounds he fought like a man possessed laying about the Danes like a berserker until he succumbed to his wounds. Alas once his righteous fury had left him his wounds were too grievous to recover from but his martyrdom was witnessed by all who fought and survived and he was pronounced a Saint shortly there after. Paega is considered Patron Saint of Fury in Battle, Running up Hills and Righteousness.

Those Who Work - The Cunning Folk

Income - 5 Shillings / year
 Armour – None, 1 Hit Global
 Weapons - 1 handed
 Shields - None

Essentially hedge witches - capable of healing and performing rituals.

Known variously as 'The Cunning', 'a Cunning Man', or 'a Cunning Woman', you follow the old ways and pay no heed to the carpenter God. You are as one with the land, as you are the sky and the sea; you feel the pulse of Britain through your veins and the thrum of magic upon the breeze. The soft, seductive call of The Craft whispers to you in words few others can hear. You feel the glow and caress of the ley lines of old, you hear the spirits of the rivers and the trees, you know that the old Gods walk the realms of man when winter is at its thickest, and summer at its peak. The Christians claim the old Gods are no more, the church teaches that magic is a heresy and a sin, but who comes knocking on your door when their crops fail? Who sleeps naked beneath the moon when they cannot conceive? To whom do people whisper the old words when the shield wall forms?

There is magic in us all, but you are the key. The common folk come to you for help, but the Church will just as quickly burn you out when it becomes convenient; they claim your magic is black and their magic is white, never realising the truth that all magic has an iridescent hue. The Danes are a threat. The very earth tells you of a lie. Do they come to make themselves kings, to take land? You think not. If they come to settle, why does a puppet sit upon the throne of Northumbria? No, they come for power; to seize the magic of these lands, to seek out those with The Blood and spill it for their own purposes. The ley lines scream at their sacrilege. You may make offerings to the Old Saxon Wotan, or to the British Llyr it matters not; the Danes are coming and your life's blood, the lands of your people, and the treasures of this isle are their goals. They are close to total success and must be stopped.

At times as dark as these, to whom would you trust the defence of these ancient lands and the traditions of your forefathers? To those who cannot feel the breath of the land or the hear the screams of its spirit? No. It is your burden to bear.

The Frydd respect you, for when their harvests fail and their marriages are barren, it is to you they turn. When the Monks' salves and poultices fail to remedy the pox and sores, it's your talents that the poor require. The Houscarls fear you, for when petty rivalries arise, it is to you they turn to curse and damn their rivals, and to keep their secrets safe. In exchange you tell them they do not own the Land, they merely borrow it awhile from their children, and they know it to be true. The clergy hate you; they blame you, they fear you, they love you, they need you – if only to have someone to burn when hunger and hardship stalk the land, when the livestock get sick, and when one Bishop poisons another. Of the cloth or not they will come to you for help if the need is desperate enough

It is your job to look after the legacy of your people as your mentor did, and as theirs did before that, back to The Sacking of Mona. You are part of a rare and dying breed, whether you revere the old Gods of the Britons, Llyr, and his brood or the old Saxon Gods, Wotan and his kin. You harness offensive magic and can speak to the spirits. Your key advantage is, although you can heal people, you can also perform arcane rituals capable of interacting with the spirits of the lands. Your ritual magic is aggressive and can be used coercively, to aid those who fight on your behalf or to curse those opposed to your will; you are seen as both threat and salvation, but only you know the true cost of such things.

So What Can I Do?

Read Ogham
Cast Rituals
Make Charms and Talismans
Heal

You're a mystic focused on spirits of nature and the Old Gods (note - not Norse ones, they're new to you) and with a distinct bent towards blocking or unblocking people's life-forces.

We want you to take the idea and run with it, so we're not going to limit you in what you can try, but obviously things go wrong, and the larger the thing you try to do, or the more violent the outcome you try to create with a ritual, probably the worse it will be for you if it fails.

So Rituals. First have a read of [this](#) - you're going to need some kind of Focus, some kind of Power and some kind of Target to make them work. Bear in mind that all magic is dangerous and unpredictable

A few examples of known rituals and rites might include:

- Protections of the Earth – a simple ritual to make armour immune to damage for a short period of time.
- Speak to the Mother – a ritual to commune with the Earth and see what she sees.
- Truth Tell – Compel your target to speak the truth to a single question.
- Protect from Exorcism – Prevent your subject from being Exorcised by the Christians.
- Curses – lots of curses... think them through carefully for they exact a terrible price.
- Ghost Fences – protect an area against intrusion by a spirit.
- The Protections of Wode – go into battle wearing little or no armour and be protected against attacks.
- Channelling of the Fallen Enemy – Power something, or someone, using the spirits of those who fall at the hands of your chosen champion.
- Breaking the Bond – Seriously dangerous, both as a ritual, and if you get caught. In theory this ritual could destroy a Christian Reliquary's connection to a Saint.

Patrons for The Cunning

It is extremely important to note that contacting a Patron can be very, very difficult. Generally you will need an introduction to them by a guide who already knows them. A guide will want to know that you're trustworthy, that you understand the nature of the creature you're attempting to pact with, and that you appreciate the consequences for your soul when you do pact with it. However, once done, you will then be able to call on your Patron to help you in your rituals, adding power and potentially reducing the risks. You may also be able to call on them for information, general help, protection and curses. Know your Patron's nature, as nothing in this life, or the next, is free.

There are various names known to Cunning Folk who they may try to seek out – Abigor, Forneus, Lotan, Aspis and Metatron. They are neither male nor female in the strict sense and normally referred to as "they" rather than "he" or "she" but they manifest in a number of ways depending on their mood. Stories about these entities are around, but you would be well advised to check them with your guide's understanding

According to the oral traditions of the Cunning Folk, seeking the spirits will require a suitable location, a place that has significance for the creature they're attempting to speak with. However this can present a problem as often these places are highly dangerous. Furthermore legend holds that a traveller will need to leave their mortal remains behind, which can involve anything from taking a powerful herbal concoction, through to simply killing yourself and hoping a Frydd can keep you from bleeding out.

Those Who Work - Frydd

Income - 5 shillings / year

Armour - Light – Total of 3 Hits Global in Light Armour plus helm or 2 if just in Light Armour

Weapons - [1 Handed \(can use collapsible tip spears – see Weapons section\)](#)

Shields - [Yes](#)

Holding wounds closed

Purview - Aside from dying young and starving to death the Frydd are good for fighting, working leather and metal and working the land.

You're a freeman, free to work the land as a tenant farmer and pay your dues and generally do what you're told. Some call you the great unwashed and whilst its true you've never washed you'd never be arrogant enough to claim that you were great, just plain unwashed is fine by you. Now all folk have trades, Houscarls kill folk, Monks pray at folk, those weird looking Priests seem to spend time mumbling to themselves and looking over their shoulders but don't seem to actually do a lot, and of course the local Cunning One is who you go to when you need a bit of ju-ju to help the animals recover or some bugger needs to learn a lesson. Your trade, on the other hand, is everything else really. You tend the land and the livestock and make things; Houscarls need armour, weapons and shields and you make 'em. You'd offer to give 'em a plough too but then they get that killing look and it's back to boring old swords, axes and mail. Some bugger is lying on the ground, you stuff their guts back in till a Monk or a Cunning Man can seal 'em back up. No bugger respects you; oh they respect your craft well enough when they need something but the rest of the time you're largely ignored except maybe by Monks and Cunning Folk.

The Danes are a very real and dangerous threat to you; for a start you're for of the Frydd and will be expected the fight them at some point. Also they're pretty open about stealing your land and your loved ones and turning you all into thralls, assuming they don't come up with some hilarious way to slaughter you first.

It's your job too support everyone, to make and maintain the kit, to fight when called to a banner, to pray when called to a Church and to work the fields the rest of the time so the armies get fed. You're the backbone of Saxon society and whilst everything is casting its' benign or baleful gaze on your companions no bugger is watching what you're up to. Which is good really because the heart don't grieve over what they eye don't see.

Historically the Frydd were freemen who formed the majority of the Saxon army, they were skilled men (for our purposes women too) who lived in and around fortified towns known as Burhs. For the game we want to take what the Frydd where and put our own spin on them, so they're your average Joe (kind of), but sometimes your average Joe with his spear and poor personal hygiene makes an unlikely but awesome hero.

The key advantage to the Frydd is that you can do little bit of everything, you have useful crafting skill, you can fight but maybe more importantly- you are the salt of the earth and are completely beneath the notice of any supernatural being of stature, hurrah no smoking boots for you.

It has been observed that Frydd also seem to have an uncanny ability to touch very Holy objects with their bare hands and without rituals or rites to protect them. Quite why this should be is unclear.

You also receive an income of 5 shillings a year, this represents how much disposable income you have from selling your wares, harvesting your crops and slaughtering your livestock after your taxes to the Burgh, the rent on the land and of course your Church Tithes. Don't spend it all at once

So What Can I Do?

Well a bit of everything - you can make armour and shields but only one of each a day. You can help restore hits to a player before they're wounded at the rate of 1 point for every 2 minutes of work; note that this doesn't stack so multiple Frydd working on a single Housecarl won't speed the process up. Once they've been wounded (and let's face it, the nobs seem to be quite careless about this stuff) you can lay your hands on folks who're bleeding out and stop them from dying till a healer gets there. You can take part in rituals and help your local Kabbalist and/or Cunning One. And of course, you can fight. There is nothing a Frydd can't try to get involved in, but their strength lies in working in groups and with other character classes.

General Crafting

Items that you can make will fall into one of three tiers which we've imaginatively labelled "Tiers"

Tier 1 items are the simplest, they take the shortest time to produce, 15 minutes, and you can make 3 of them in any 24 hours

Tier 2 items are a bit more complex and require a bit more time, 30 minutes, and you can only make 2 of them in any 24 hours

Tier 3 items are the very pinnacle of your crafting abilities; they will take 1 hour to make and you can only make 1 in any 24 hours. Furthermore you will need the help of a member of the Frydd.

It is important to note that we do not expect players to role-play making things for hours at a time - it is sufficient to inform a ref what you want to make and after the appropriate period of time you will have made the item. You can do as much, or as little, roleplay as you wish

There is deliberately no resource system for making items - the lists in Monks, The Cunning Folk and Frydd are exhaustive and represent everything they can make

Monks - Draughts, Poultices, Poisons and Unguents

Draughts, Poultices, poisons and unguents are apothecaries concoctions that can be used to heal or harm, and as with all items they come in three tiers. A Monk can make 3 tier one, 2 tier two and 1 tier three items per day. These items are reactionary, in the sense that they will need to be administered as and when desired. All such concoctions last until the following dawn at which point they go off, and you will need to make more

By way of example Ranulf the Houscarl is wounded in battle and is bleeding out but so is Agatha the Frydd and only Eadwylf the Monk can save them, he can heal one but the other will bleed out, fortunately he made a Staunch Poultice earlier that day, he can apply the Staunch Poultice to Agatha to stop her bleeding whilst healing Ranulf.

It's worth noting that if Eadwylf the Frydd tries to be cunning, applying the Staunch Poultice before anyone is actually wounded, it does nothing to help and he's wasted your Staunch Poultice. A firm telling off is in order.

Tier 1

Antidote Unguent- poison is deeply unchristian, fortunately there is a universal antidote which will totally negate the effects - assuming, of course, your patient is still alive when it's administered.

Rouse Unguent-this unguent can wake almost anyone when applied; it can be used to wake anyone subject to a sleep effect.

Staunch Poultice- this poultices immediately congeals blood around a wound and stops any further bleeding. Your patient's life clock stops and they're no longer dying hurrah! However they are not healed yet and this stuff is pretty unpleasant - it'll knock your patient out cold and they'll need the wound properly treated.

Validity Poultice- this poultice fights off disease mundane or otherwise. Apply it liberally to the affected area. If the victim is Frydd consider tongs and gloves

Tier 2

Poison- from time to time it may be necessary to resort to the less Christian arts. Poisons are deadly but take time to work; they need to enter the body in some way, typically applied on a weapon or ingested orally. Note - the weapon must cause a wound, for it to work. If poisoned then after 30 minutes the victim will lose all their hits and fall to the floor as if wounded. If no antidote is administered the victim will die in the next 10 minutes.

Remedy Poultice- this poultice is used when someone's life clock has passed 5 minutes, at this point they have a fever which may kill them, this is determined by a dead draw (see XXX). If the remedy is applied it bypasses any need for a bead draw, however they will need to be healed as usual.

Sleep Draught- sleep puts whomever consumes it into a very, very deep sleep; their heart rate slows completely down and they are essentially in a coma during which they will appear to be dead to all but the trained eye. Anyone in this state cannot be woken up at all unless a rouse unguent is applied. Anyone subject to sleep's life clock stops as their heart slows down so much it cannot pump poison around the body fast enough for them to take further damage or pump enough blood out of them to kill by the time their wound clots.

Tier 3

As with all Tier 3 items you will need a Frydd's assistance to make these items

Berserker's Draught (secret recipe)- anyone drinking this draught will fly into a blind fury, they are completely immune to any form of damage for 30 seconds and will grievously damage the first thing they strike- a ref will call this effect. *This recipe is Norse in origin although known to exist, Monks will not be able to make it unless the recipe is acquired in some underhand way*

Giants Blood Draught- this strong beer makes it's taker feel like a giant, once its been drunk they'll feel a build-up of strength that must be immediately unleashed; they'll destroy the first thing or person that they hit before returning to bounds normality- at which point they'll feel pretty messed up. In other words, light blue touch paper and stand well back

Second Coming Unguent- The Good Lord works in mysterious ways, and this unguent is one of them. Once applied it seals all wounds, rectifies all ailments and makes the user fit for purpose once more, it essentially heals you of everything- it however will not wake you up from Sleep.

The Cunning Folk - Potions and Charms

Potions

The Cunning Folk potions are different to the Monks in that they are an extension of their magical power and are not scientific in any way shape or form

Tier 1- takes 15 minutes to make

Spirit's Friend- this potion is used to appease malign spirits. The potion will cause a Spirit to accept the drinker as neutral rather than seeing them as a threat. This effect lasts 20 minutes.

Spirit Sight- some spirits are good, some uncaring and other bad. Bad spirits often seek to interfere with our daily lives; this can be very testing, trying and irritating if not downright dangerous as spirits can exist in our world and their own simultaneously if they choose to which makes it very difficult to harm them. This potion allows the drinker to see spirits in our world and in theirs, meaning the drinker can now hurt them with mundane weapons if they feel the need to do so. This effect lasts 10 minutes.

Resolve- this potion fills you full of vim and vigour, you look good, feel good and when you're flagging and may just give you enough oomph for one more ritual that needs dealing with today.

Tier 2- takes 30 minutes to make

Corpse Breath- this potion is distilled from all sorts of unpleasant things, its truly rank and vile. It has an unusual side effect in that it makes your skin sallow and pallid, your hair brittle and your eyes sunken and bloodshot. You'll also stink to high heaven. On the plus side any neardead will completely fail to notice you and accept you as one of their own, unless of course you start acting in a manner that would suggest otherwise. This affect lasts 20 minutes.

Courage- this potion has Frisian origins and is renowned for its high alcohol content; it fills you with courage and not much will scare or frighten you. Once imbibed this potion will make the drinker completely immune from any fear like effects for the next 15 minutes.

Tier 3- takes 60 minutes to make. As with all Tier 3 items you will need a Frydd's assistance to make these items

Ghost Touched- this potion allows you to walk the spirit world whilst observing in the physical; you can walk about and speak to people and they can see you, however you cannot physically interact with anything. Any item you attempt to pick up or use simply passes through you, likewise anyone attempting to touch or strike you with a weapon simply can't everything passes through you. This affect lasts 20 minutes and is not reversible during that time

Trickery- this potion allows the imbiber to assume the look of another race and converse in their manner, Dane, Briton, Irish even Welsh if they so choose. They will look and sound like any other person of that cultural affinity, but not like anyone in particular. They need to be aware that although they will appear to be of their chosen race, actions that would be totally uncharacteristic will jar with the observer's expectations and shatter the illusion e.g. A Dane praising the Lord during a Norse ceremony or an Irishman revering Odin will break the effect. Assuming the user is smart enough the illusion will last at a maximum of 30 minutes.

Charms

Charms have a limited lifespan, and can be used only once unless explicitly stated.

Charms are generally one use items that when used have no further use; they last until dawn the following day. All charms are one-use items unless specifically stated and have a limited shelf life.

Charms and talismans are latent in the sense that when worn they lie dormant until an event would trigger their use.

e.g. Agatha the Frydd wears an Protection Charm given to her in the morning. During the course of the day she ends up in a fight, her armour is damaged and she is struck. Normally she would take a wound but in this case her charm activates, protects her from the blow but is now discharged and the next wounding blow will hurt her as normal. If, on the other hand, she does not go into combat during the day it will discharge overnight and she will need another.

Tier 1

Aegis- you are protected from the first hostile supernatural effect

Protection- you are protected from the first physical attack that would damage you

Serpents Tooth- you are made aware of any poisoned food or drink that are in your hands once

Tier 2

Liars Tongue- you are made aware of any lie told to you, this lasts five minutes (give or take)

Rabbits Foot- you're lucky, well your equipment is anyway; if struck with a blow that would destroy your shield it will

Not then your shield miraculously survives, however you are still thrown from your feet

Faye Stone- this charm allows you to open Faye Gates, whatever they are

Tier 3

As with all Tier 3 items you will need a Frydd to help make these items

Wight's Bane- you are protected from all supernatural effects from the neardead until the next dawn

Heroes Lament- after being wounded you are immediately revived and conscious and may continue to fight if you choose to do so. Essentially it acts as an instant cure-all

Talismans

Making a talisman is an extremely difficult process, but they are much more flexible, able to do almost anything in theory and having a longer life, although still only one charge. The nature and the effect of the Talisman is determined by its crafter but this is not an exact science, or indeed any kind of science at all, and sometimes things may go a little awry.

Weapon Safety and Fighting

Two Rules

- Make it look as cool as possible
- Be safe at all times

If you've never done LRP before, or you're in anyway unsure please speak to us; we're here to help and all of us started as newbies. No question is stupid and no one should be shy about asking, not least because otherwise you can't obey the Two Rules.

We ask that combatants don't target folks heads - if you get hit in the head the hit counts but we ask you only target the body or the limbs. It's just good sense and we're here to have fun, not give one another concussion with all the attendant immersion breaking ambulance action. Repeatedly going for someone's head may lead to you being asked to leave the site

If, for whatever reason, some is actually hurt in real life the call "Man Down" should be made loudly and clearly. It is the only time the phrase "Man Down" should be used. On hearing this call players should immediately stop whatever they're doing, and stay where they are whilst the refs and First Aiders sort the problem out. As tempting as it is to dive in and check on a friend or just see what's going on the issue could have been caused by the terrain and you could simply be adding to the casualty list. Stop, sit down if possible, and wait for further instructions.

Weapons need to be longer than 8" to actually cause damage. This is really to stop the throwing dagger becoming stupidly powerful (again be cool / make it look cool) and also to stop people from fighting with tiny fruit knives which just results in you punching the other person. [All weapons](#) do 1 hit for each blow, and the maximum number of hits you can sustain from a single attacker is 1 per second, therefore don't drum roll people - remember the Two Rules. If you're being attacked from multiple directions and realistically can't tell how many times you've been hit obey the Two Rules. Likewise if you're fighting with 5 mates to job 1 person obey the Two Rules

Want to brawl? Again obey the Two Rules BUT verbally check with the other person they're happy to engage in hand-to-hand. It'll briefly break immersion but given the uneven nature of LRP sites it's essential. It is absolutely fine to say "no" This is one of those situations where refs will very quickly lose their cool if you don't check so please, please do. Remember fists cause no lasting damage so this is purely for the visuals. Never grapple with the crew and please don't disarm them

All weapons need to be safety checked and marked with a rubber band prior to time in - again the refs will get cross if they find you breaking this rule and may kick you off the site without a refund

Don't shield barge people - that is do not run at someone bracing your shoulder or extended arm behind your shield. Apart from the clear danger this represents to safety it also risks breaking your or your opponent's kit. These things are seriously expensive

There may be non-combatants around who will make themselves known to you by putting their hand over their head; please don't hit them. They are now incapacitated and unconscious bleeding from a wound and will need medical aid. If they are able they may choose to drop to the ground but do not have to

Using a bow? Totally cool be we'll want you to demonstrate you can use it safely and that its LRP poundage – that is 28lbs at 30 inch draw or less - and not your mate's 130lb re-enactment war bow that'll send an LRP arrow clean through an LRP shield so come and see a ref well before time in and we'll do a short competency test.

Role-Play Effects and Atmospheres

There are no in-combat calls for the game, this hopefully helps immersion and keeps people focused on what they're doing, but there will be two key concepts for players to be aware of - roleplay effects and atmospheres.

Roleplay effects will be mostly generated by players using rituals or specific items, and will normally affect a small number of players. These will take the form of a brief from a Ref, from a player or from a written document which you can react to. They're deliberately kept as loose as possible giving you, the player, the maximum scope to decide how your character behaves in a given situation

These are choices made by players, which can have a very significant effect on the game and for it to work we all, players, crew and refs, have to work together

As a rule of thumb roleplay effects created by rituals will last about 12 hours, some may last for very much shorter periods or very much longer periods but 12 hours is the [base](#).

Rituals, potions and charms - all of which are made by other players - can be of enormous benefit to Houscarls or the Frydd when in combat but are by no means limited to just aggressive fighting roles

Atmospheres

Atmospheres are a refereeing tool to describe an atmosphere and convey and overall feeling that characters are subject to at the time. Atmospheres typically lasts 10 -15 minutes but may go on for longer. As a rule of thumb if, after 15 minutes, you have had no further instructions the atmosphere is over. They're designed to create a mood and feel that hopeful will be roleplayed rather than throwing a lot of different calls around. We will endeavor, wherever possible, to give you a brief ahead of encounters just reminding folks of how these work. Be aware that this list is simply a subset of the possible Atmospheres but gives you a feel for what you may encounter.

Disquiet

Everyone in the area will have a sudden, deep rooted, feeling of anxiety and fearfulness, as if something were dancing upon their graves. Something is definitely not right, for the remainder of the scene characters will be anxious, scared and fearful. Anything that is clearly unnatural approaching a player causes fear, they may not engage it and will move away from it if possible and safe to do so, they may defend themselves if they are in position where they cannot move away from it. A mere gesture from anything unnatural will send shivers down their spines cause them grave distress.

Rapture

Rapture- praise be to the Lord! Rapture is a feeling of intense spirituality if you are devout – typically a devout Christian. Characters who are caught up in rapture feel the Lord's touch upon them and the Angel Michael's breath upon their necks, filling them with righteous fervour; truly the blessings of the Lord descend upon the party, surely nothing can stand against the agents of Christ...."WHO WILL KILL THE HEATHEN!" will become their watchword.

Biting

The temperature drops and a cold chill fills the air. Candles and flames are doused and metal objects are painful to touch. It becomes increasingly uncomfortable to remain outside, the very air seems to freeze the lungs. Anyone venturing outside must be wrapped in layers of robes and cloaks; remaining outside for extended periods will get sick and will need medical attention (all hits are gone irrespective of armour)

Foul

The air is heavy and rancid, the stench of rot and decay impregnates everything. Even the carrion-eaters will avoid this place; anyone leaving the area will find that the smell lingers upon them and clings to their clothing, their hair, their equipment. Anyone spending more than a couple of minutes in the area will find their stomachs churning, and to remain for an extended period they will become diseased and need medical attention

Sweltering

The air is hot, furs begin to singe and crisp, breathing becomes laboured and hard, wood begins to scorch and metal impossible to handle or wear. Moving is laborious and incredibly strenuous, everything seems like an effort as vision becomes blurred and distorted. You will have an unquenchable thirst but will not be able to do anything about it but suffer.

Bewildering

Sounds seem to reverberate off one another and lights shift into strange patterns, shadows come alive and dance right on the edge of your peripheral vision. Nothing seems right, one moment it's do dark then its blindingly bright, you find it hard to focus and get your bearings, and harder still to make decisions.

Fury

The atmosphere is one of fury, the air is charged with impending violence and you feel your rage and anger boil inside you; hatred for the foe overwhelms your rational mind, you and your opponents will become utterly fixated on the others destruction. All blows from Dane axes for the duration of this atmosphere shatter shields

Timings

We're going to largely give the players room to make whatever they're doing look cool, and rather than prescribe exactly how long everything takes we think a few guide lines should be helpful

2 minutes for a Frydd to restore a single point of armour

3 minutes to heal someone's wounds

5 minutes to bleed badly enough you'll need to do a bead draw to be healed

10 minutes to go from wounded to dead without help

15 minutes to make a Tier 1 item of any kind

20 minutes roughly the period of time a potion or other consumed concoction will last

30 minutes to make a Tier 2 item of any kind

1 hour to make a Tier 3 item of any kind

1 day to die from a septic wound caused by a red bead draw and left untreated

Conducting a Rites or a Ritual? Well.....they can be very brief indeed if they go wrong.....[for more information have a look here](#)

Weapon and Shield Definitions

Weapon Sizes and Definitions

All weapons must be designed for LARP combat and must be weapon checked prior to time-in. Under no circumstances being real weapons to a game

Single handed weapons, are any bladed weapon you can realistically wield in one hand. So although you may be able to physically wield your Dane axe in one hand, please don't it's really rubbish. We recommend they do not exceed 42"

Two handed weapons, are bladed weapons that are too large to use in one hand, these tend to be Dane axes and really long spears. To make things look cool please ensure that you take a suitable step back when hit with a big two handed axe, or indeed from any blow that looks hard enough to have staggered you. It's not a mechanic, just something we'd like to encourage....if you don't do it, and we think it looks uncool you may find your amour disintegrates

Note - Fists do no in-game damage. Role-play with them to your heart's content but they do not count as hits. Staves will hurt only those not wearing armour and are therefore primarily defence weapons

Stab-safe / collapsible tip weapons are fine provided they've been checked. Again remember the Two Rules. We'll want to do a quick brief with players planning to use them. You can wield a collapsible tip spear in one hand with a shield if it's less than 6ft, but only by having your hand in the middle of the weapon so you can maintain control. Anything over 6ft will require two hands

Dual Wielding Weapons – it is allowed but looks a bit odd; we expect Monks may want to try it but be aware that you can only inflict 1 hit per second on a target even with two weapons

Spears that are not of a stab-safe / collapsible tip build should always be used in two hands, and should have a ribbon of coloured cloth tied around the top of the shaft. Under no circumstances stab with these weapons!

Helmets, we won't make you wear a helmet, and we don't want people being hit in the head so won't be targeting your head. However helmets are really awesome and add to the look and the feel of the game, our crew will be wearing as many helmets as we can muster and it would be great if you could too. To encourage their use any character permitted to wear armour will gain an additional hit by wearing an appropriate helmet

Shields

Shield sizes are a guideline rather than a fixed size, we aren't going to be walking around with tape measures to check, however as a rule of thumb if it's higher than your hip it's too big for you to fight safely with as you'll probably only be presenting your head as a target. Above all they should obey the Two Rules - look cool and be safe.

We know this goes without saying but they should be LARP safe; that is padded foam and latex construction not re-enactment wood or metal!

Sorry for the tone of this section but whilst we're sure you're a smart and reasonable person we also have to account for folks who might be somewhat hard-of-thinking.

Combat and Healing

Combat is supposed to be dangerous - there is a chance of death in every encounter but we also want to give you plenty of room to play with it. In the real world during the Dark Ages a wound with a sword might have about a 20% chance of infection, quite apart from whatever damage it may have done during the initial cut. Infections would lead to sepsis and probable death, so even cutting yourself chopping or skinning food could lead to a long drawn out period of hovering between life and death. For reasons that may or may not become clear healing times amongst this party will be radically different

All characters have 1 hit plus additional benefits from armour see ([Character Classes](#)), all weapons over 8" inflict one hit per contact regardless of size and all hits are global. Again remember that fists do not cause lasting damage. Once you're out of hits you're onto your life clock which is ten minutes, and if you don't get treated, you then die (Good News! There are people who may be able to help with that! Or buy your body off your friends!)

It's worth pointing out, before we get to the bits about what happens to your physical body that under some circumstances armour can get destroyed - indeed it may get badly damaged during combat. To recover your armour hits, i.e. to get healed before you get wounded you'll need a Frydd. They may be beneath even the attention of God but you will need them at some point, so although it's funny to run them through you may live to regret it. Being essentially incompetent it will take a Frydd 2 minutes to restore 1 hit to your armour. Note, they cannot help you recover hits once you've been wounded. To find out more about the Frydd have a look [here](#)

Once you're out of hits you're wounded at which point you'll need treatment from someone who knows what they're doing - either a [Monk](#) or a [Cunning One](#) - in the first 5 minutes they'll need about 3 minutes of roleplay to patch you up.....for some reason you appear to heal really quite fast but I'm sure it's nothing sinister and perhaps that two handed axe just looked bigger when it was rushing toward you....anyway you'll be fine

If a Monk or a Cunning One can get to you, but does not think you are a high enough priority they may choose to apply a [Staunch Poultrice](#) - this will stop your life clock until they can come back and sort you out properly

Failing all of the above, a Frydd can hold your wounds - they need to use both hands to do it - until a Monk or a Cunning One can reach you.

If, however, no medical aid reaches you then after 5 minutes you'll need a bead draw and after 10 you'll die

Under normal circumstances there'll be 5 green beads, 2 red and one black in a bag. Again your healer is going to be holding the bag so the draw can happen quickly. Be aware that from time to time things happening in the game may vary these odds considerably.

If you draw a green bead you'll be fine after a short period.

Draw a red bead, however, and things are not well with you; you can continue to fight but that wound is slowly poisoning you, your humours have been badly disrupted and if you don't receive a Remedy Poultrice between now tomorrow morning you'll wake up dead. If you chose to fight in this state you effectively have no hits and the next wound will render you unconscious

Draw a Black bead and you are dead.

A note for those wishing to get into combat - these Poultice things; they're really good. Really, really good. One might almost say addictively good. It would be wise to keep an eye on just how many you've taken over a period of time....

Healing Summary	Base Bead Bag 5 Green 2 Red 1 Black
< 5 minutes from wound	Simple healing works first time and takes about 3 minutes after which all your hits are restored Wounds can be held by Frydd and Healed by Monks and Cunning Folk Staunch Poultice Stops Clock
After 5 minutes	Bead draw
On Green	You can be healed – treating the wound will take a further 3 minutes after which all your hits are restored
On red	Continue to function - will need a Remedy Witness within 24hrs Another wound will render you unconscious
On Black	Death

Armour and Combat

Your armour is going to take a fair amount of punishment. Even when you get a Frydd to patch it up during combat, there may come a point where it's basically fallen apart, depending on how much damage you've take / what you're trying to fight etc. A Ref will let you know if that's happened. Replacing it may not be cheap, so be a good citizen and kill something in armour or, if you have to, go and see the Frydd when the killing has stopped and get them to make you some from scratch. They may just be peasants who are so lowly that not even the Saints will pay attention to them, and burning their villages might be fun but at a moment like this they're vital. Be nice. Note that for some reason your sword, axes and spears don't seem to suffer from this degradation, indeed after they've been used they seem almost clean themselves

Heavy armour is any metal armour, or metal looking armour. Broadly speaking it should look like chainmail, scale or lamellar armour. Heavy armour offers you 5 global points of protection.

Light armour is any leather or padded armour (gambesons etc). Regardless of whether the armour has metal studs or rings attached if its mostly leather then it will count as light armour. Light armour offers 2 global points of protection.

Helmets stack on armour and offer an additional global hit if they're appropriate. Helms must be metal (or metal looking) to work. Only Frydd and Housecarls can use them

A Novice's Guide to Rituals

Anyone of any background can conduct a ritual or a rite. For most people, aside from Cunning Folk and Kabbalists, this will be a purely ceremonial process - for example a funeral which is really for the audience to have time to remember the deceased, or a knighting ceremony to join a particular order of Houscarls or even a formal feast to celebrate a victory. They're about remembrance, celebration, bonding not to mention authority and power

However.....

This is a world where magic is real and for those with the right knowledge the world can be directly affected by intervention from Saints, from the Trinity, from the spirit of the land, from the Gods etc.

This means that rites and rituals can work and can have world affecting consequences. They can be attempted by anyone, but at significant risk of failure. Realistically Houscarls and Frydd should stand back and leave it to the trained professionals. In the recent turmoil a lot of documents purporting to contain new or forbidden knowledge have emerged, and everyone is having to adjust slightly. It also seems that rites and rituals which haven't worked so well (or at all) now seem to be having a greater affect. Transubstantiation has always given the communion wine a vague smell of blood but now....well let's just say it doesn't always taste of wine anymore

Kabbalists and Cunning Folk may well need to call on the services of Houscarls, Monks and Frydd to make their rites and rituals work even if it's just to serve as a vessel for the power they're channelling. We've provided lists of suggested rites and rituals and what they might do but this is really an area which you, as Players, can go crazy with. For some this is an excellent opportunity to express yourself and do really cool things. For others this is a bit of a problem as it requires planning, confidence and a degree of nerve to stand up in front of other people so we thought we'd offer some guidance and thoughts

- **DON'T PANIC!** People are far more forgiving than you realise; give yourself time and space to compose yourself before you start. Know what you're going to say roughly. Practice makes perfect, so think about having a dry run through with your fellow cultists...sorry.....brothers and sisters of Faith, even if it's just an outline e.g. "I'll say this and then you do that, then I'll say this and you do this etc."
- Work with other people - don't pile all the pressure onto yourself but share the load with your fellow players. Get Houscarls, Monks and Frydd involved where it's appropriate. Get your fellow ritualists to do things, and share the burden with them - if there are three of you perhaps you open, give the other two a section each and then hand back to you to close out?
- Think carefully about what you're trying to achieve. Does it sound realistic and appropriate? We might struggle, for example, to physrep the sun rising at midnight. You're unlikely to drive the Danes into the sea and "win" the war. You probably won't be able to turn invisible or walk through walls. You probably can't kill people just by looking at them (probably) but you might be able to make a warrior strong in their Faith, or get guidance from a spirit or speak to a Saint etc.
- Are you all agreed? Are you all of one purpose or are you all trying to do different things? Probably best to do one thing at a time

- Have you or your fellows done a ritual already today? Has the Focus (see below) been used already today? If so the ritual might still work but your chances of failure will increase
- The more atmosphere you create the greater your chances of an outcome. Note we say an outcome and not success - you may not get what you ask for, or worse you may get precisely what you ask for, but atmosphere - chanting, props, candles, props, ritual structure and did we mention props, will all help get the attention of the entity you're trying to deal with
- You're attempting to channel power infinitely greater than yourself and to do so without the assistance of modern scientific methods. What worked today may not work tomorrow. Don't beat yourself (or anyone else up) if it doesn't come off
- Rituals can be deadly. The more you do, the greater the chance it'll go horribly wrong. Bear that in mind before trying to bless everything that moves or summon your undead army one at a time. For that matter the more power you put into a ritual, the greater the outcome, positive or negative. How you put power into a ritual is something you'll need to experiment with
- You'll need a Focus. For the faithful that will be a Reliquary, for the Cunning Folk it'll be an object of importance to the Spirits, which could be a glade, a barrow, a grove etc. depending on what you're trying to do. For the Pagans...well now wouldn't you like to know
- In most cases you'll need a Connection to the target of your ritual or rite - this will vary and you should be as creative as you like to get that connection. For example the hair or teeth of a person if they're not physically present, a weapon or some armour might also serve if the person is/was a warrior. Soil from a specific location might serve, or an object your target venerates. It'll need to be physical present with the ritualists in some way.
- You'll need some kind of power source. For the Holy the rough order of magnitude is prayers =good, blood = better, and martyrdom is best. For Cunning Folk or Pagans incense, mushrooms etc might serve in place of prayer but blood or a soul are of course better.

Useful Links

This is a bit a stream of consciousness section and we'll try to update it when we can

Religion

Orders of Monks that were around in 873

Basilian's - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilian_monks

Benedictines - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Saint_Benedict

Diversity in the Church - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversity_in_early_Christian_theology

Anglo-Saxon Saints

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Anglo-Saxon_saints

Anglo-Saxon Magical Practices

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_in_Anglo-Saxon_England

General Inspiration

I've put this here but it could really go anywhere first the ever brilliant Ladies Who LARP Tumblr feed

- <http://ladieswholarp.tumblr.com/> and the second is a good general article on armour for women

<http://larphacks.tumblr.com/post/117433105618/armour-for-women-what-works-what-doesnt-i>

As a general rule chain is the way forward for men and women looking for armour as it's very easy on everybody...in that it hurts everybody. But it is at least highly practical and looks good

We've also put together a Pinterest board for folks to have a look at -

<https://uk.pinterest.com/billy7766/heathen-kit-inspiration/>

Kit

Chainmail - <http://www.medieval-arms.co.uk/detail/id/684/name/medieval-riveted-chain-mail-shirt,-blackened>

Good Anglo-Saxon Weapons - <http://www.saxonviolence.com/collection/dark-ages>

Brilliant all round base kit - <http://www.darkbladeuk.co.uk/>

Superb armour - mostly custom made these days - <https://www.facebook.com/Evenlode-Studio-63026886404/>

Polyurethane armour - fantastic helms but all of the shiny, shiny things -

<http://www.wyrmwick.com/>

Absolutely superb custom made costume -

<https://www.facebook.com/themidgardseamstress/?fref=ts>

There's also the ever brilliant Etsy for example - <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Glucks>

Historical Information

In Our Time

The incredibly fine "[In Our Time](#)" series from BBC Radio 4 is an almost inexhaustible supply of 40 minute long podcasts on all manner of topics. Some Heathen appropriate links include

Beowulf - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0542xt7>

Merlin - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9j2>

Alfred and the Vikings - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9gm>

Alfred and the Battle of Edington (878 so just after our time) -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9gm>

Norse Gods - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y243>

The Celts - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054894>

St Hilda - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/inourtimeprototype/episode/b007768m>

The Druids <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mqg94>

Athelstan (bit later than our time but nevertheless great) -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00sv7wd>

The Collapse of the Roman Empire <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547ds>

Le Morte d'Arthur <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pp989>

Icelandic Sagas <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01s8qx9>

The BHP

There is a really superb, and free, set of podcasts called The British History Podcast, which we highly recommend and which can be found [here](#)

In addition to the podcast series, which is currently in the period of Alfred's life, and thus highly relevant, you can also find things like a [Saxon family tree](#) including the Normans, [a full time line](#) for the period (and before) and a bunch of interesting folks in the [forums](#). Jamie does it for a living and so is keen that folks sign up for membership, which is about £5 a month and is absolutely worth it if history is your bag but you don't have to

Jamie's approach is not about the "great men of history" but rather about who these people were, what they believed in, why they believed it, what did that do in their day to day lives, so although he is covering a great deal on the names, partly because that's all we have in some cases, he also tries to draw out a great deal about the culture of the time, something that I hope we too can draw out in the games. So, for a single episode that everyone should listen to I recommend downloading and having a listen to Episode 51 (for some reason listed as Episode 192 on iTunes) which you can get here - <https://www.thebritishhistorypodcast.com/archives/641>

List of Changes from v1.4

- Frydd armour repair rules updated (see [here](#) paragraph half way down the page)
- Note on taking a suitable pace back from Dane Axes and similar heavy blows (see [here](#))
- Detailed description of Atmospheres, how they work, what they mean and how long they last added [here](#)
- Updated the list of [Saints](#)