HELLSBOROUGH & THE DARK PEAK

CURATED GUIDE

THE REVISED AND UPDATED SECOND EDITION OF PIP RIPPON'S ORIGINAL GUIDE

BULL STUART

The Curated Guide to Hellsborough and The Dark Peak

– Second Edition

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No magic, only violence

Introduction

Hi. I'm Pip, and welcome back to Hellsborough.com – or welcome for the first time, if this is where you're starting.

It's been a few years since the first version of this went out. I said back then that I understood the place, and what I meant by that was that I could cope with it. I still think that's about right, but I know a lot more now than I did – some of it from digging, some of it from Van, and rather more of it than I'd like from things that happened to me directly. This second pass is that knowledge, tidied up and pointed in your direction.

The human brain is a complex thing. Possibly the most complex thing in the known universe, and us humans, even though we all have one, don't really understand it. It's the great unknown. Multiply our interactions with others, and that we're all different – you have a different brain to me, and your experiences, upbringing and life are completely and utterly different to mine and everyone else's. There are an unlimited number of variables. Hellsborough and The Dark Peak are just like that, except here there's a fog over the whole place that does some of your thinking for you, which doesn't simplify matters.

Here's what's changed since the first version, roughly: the artwork exists now, or most of it does. Van Hallam's own story is written down properly rather than scattered across my diary – Book One of the Chronicles is out, and I'd send you there before you finish this guide, if I'm honest. And I've had time to actually answer some of the questions the first edition just shrugged at. Not all of them. Enough.

This is what I'll cover, in order:

1. What is Hellsborough, and how did it get there?
2. How is Hellsborough accessed?
3. A short history of Hellsborough
4. How is Hellsborough different from here?
5. Factions and power
6. The denizens of the hex
7. The bestiary – a field notebook
8. The Inconceivable
9. How can I learn more?

Same start as last time, more or less: it's not going to make total sense at first, but stick with it.

Chapter 1

What is Hellsborough, and how did it get there?

Hellsborough didn't get there, it got here; and it's a bit like asking how the world got here. Once upon a time, they were both the same place.

Here's the thing: if the entirety of the Earth's history was condensed to just one year, one second would be something like 145 years. A minute would stack up to somewhere around 8,695 years, and an hour, that'd be about 521,690 years or so – yeah, over half a million years would pass in one hour in this hypothetical experiment. That's crazy isn't it, but it's true.

You can do the maths for yourself if you like; or you can just believe me, or read more about the mythical year here.

You probably wouldn't think it, since humanity came on the scene a bit late – not until just before twenty minutes to midnight on New Year's Eve (around 23 minutes to, more or less) – but life itself started in the middle of spring on our yearly clock. Somewhere around the vernal equinox, funny old thing. I mean, if you were Mother Earth, where else would you choose life to start but springtime?

So from mid-March until 23 minutes before midnight on December 31st, in this fantastical year in the history of the Earth, what – on earth – were all those species, that we fully well know existed, doing? Was every living organism just swimming, or wandering around. Were they just meandering about in their respective environments, breeding and sleeping, for an untold number of years, for billions of them? Seems unlikely, dunnit?

Just take the time that elapsed between the birth of the dinosaurs and their demise, when that massive meteorite ploughed into current-day Mexico, wiping out most saurians and an estimated 75-90% of all life on Earth at the time. The saurian empire was established somewhere around 243-231 million (231 Ma) years ago. On our yearly calendar, that would make it December 11th, or thereabouts. That devastating meteor made impact in 66 Ma, or thereabouts – around 25 December in our year: Merry Christmas Mr. Lambeosaur.

From the genesis of those great reptiles until their demise is just 14 days, a mere two weeks in the history of the world – in reality, 175 million years.

Were those reptiles just fighting and feasting, fleeing and freezing? Over all those eons, over those 175 million years, did their intelligence not increase just a little bit? Just by maybe one iota. Maybe? It's a thought isn't it? Because, after all that time, you'd have thought that on all those branches on the tree of life that must have come and gone over the generations, the feeble twig of humanity can't have been the only one to have developed intelligence. Can it? Really?

What about the insects? They've been about since the end of November (400 Ma). Is it not possible that they might, just might, have developed something that we, as humans – even though we don't understand it ourselves – could possibly call sentience. I mean, we've only had recorded history since 31/12, 23:59:21, so come on, we could at least give them some credit, couldn't we?

Us humans have only had recorded history for 3,700 years, more or less. To imagine that every creature that ever evolved in the history of the world was universally stupid is madness, isn't it? It's a bit of a failure in the thinking of our species, and at the same time, really rather arrogant. That's what I reckon, anyway. All of this is just hypothesis, of course; it can't be proved one way or another. Intelligence, if not recorded anywhere, is clearly imbecility, at least as far as we're concerned – us, the children of the last 39 seconds of Earth's existence.

All those saurians that passed after that fateful day, whenever it was, when all the murk was stirred up after that meteor impact – some didn't succumb. Birds, some of them at least, survived. The corvids, they survived – or at least the ancestors of the corvids, and the intelligence of corvids is well known. Officially, birds are dinosaurs; their lineage is the same. So the dinosaurs aren't extinct – it's just that those that survived had feathers.

My research has led me to the conclusion that one of those dinosaurs, one of the avian variety that managed to survive post 66 Ma, eventually evolved into the most ancient creature of The Dark Peak. It was at this time that the murk began to form on the earth. The murk, that dark and desolate fog that shrouds everything and suffocates the life from the planet.

If I'm correct – and I'm pretty sure I am – these angels of Dunlockslyn, this intelligence born of the dinosaurs, a lifeform in continuous evolution for 66 million years (or 5 days, in our yearly view of the Earth), had a formative impact on the life of The Dark Peak. And why am I so confident in this statement? Because I know that the last 39 seconds – as academia would have us believe – is wrong. Recorded history goes back further than 3,700 years. I have seen, with my own eyes, evidence of recorded intelligence that dates back around 17 million years.

Of course, these creatures I refer to have lost their wings now. They live and die like we do – albeit over what we'd think of as ridiculously long timespans – their species evolves as does ours. They're no more angels than you or I now, and they remain a secretive species. These days, they are a shadow of their former selves; incredibly ancient, they hold the secrets that we seek, but they have no real interest in anything other than leisure. Can't say I blame them.

Milting. I think they've probably travelled to the stars.

But I'm getting ahead of myself: when that meteor hit back in 66, the quantum universe fractured.

And that's the deep time – the geological kind, too vast to mean anything on its own. There's another kind of deep time, though, much smaller, much closer, and it's the one that actually matters for the rest of this book. People – proper, off-world, two-legged, worried-looking people – first walked into this valley, into the crossroads where all of this happened, somewhere around 12,800 years ago, as the ice let go of the land and the ground was worth standing on again. That's not deep time to the murk. To the murk, that's yesterday. But it's the whole of everything to us, and it's where I'm going to pick the story back up in a couple of chapters, once I've told you how you get here in the first place.

Chapter 2

How is Hellsborough accessed?

That meteor and the massive forces that ruined the Earth and the dinosaurs isn't what interests us in this chapter.

Right now, we're more interested in tiny forces, infinitesimal ones. Changes so small they're not visible to the human eye.

When that meteor hit, it caused a quantum fracture that forged the creation of two parallel worlds.

Apparently. Our universe, it's a strange place.

There's this thing: quantum gravity. If spacetime is time and space wrapped into the same thing, then quantum gravity is just space and time and gravity all wrapped up into the same substance. How can I explain it better?

Think about doing the washing up – when you wash the dishes. Them bubbles of soap. Each soap bubble clings to the other, each a shining rainbow of light. Occasionally, some pop. That's life; that's the universe, I guess.

You've heard of Albert Einstein, right? Pretty much heralded as the cleverest bloke who ever lived. But this quantum gravity, that's the bit that the great man couldn't work out, bless him.

Einstein predicted light-speed travel and black holes and all that crazy stuff – which turned out to be spot on – but this is the bit he didn't get to: gravity is a quantum element. Just as a photon is the quantum element of the electromagnetic field, so the graviton is the quantum element of the gravitational field.

With quantum gravity, each of them soap bubbles is a universe that exists in its own right. I know, hard to get your head around, but stay with me.

These soap bubbles, they all rub up against each other. They're all jostling, all the time. Mostly this jostling is harmless, but sometimes – every once in a while, given a sufficient source of energy, like that almighty meteor strike of 66 Ma – them bubbles get severely agitated.

In times like that, they move apart. Maybe only a Planck length (which is an almost incalculably minute amount), but that's enough.

That meteor strike in 66 was enough. It caused a fracture. A rift. A rupture in quantum-gravity spacetime.

That's when the illimitable cleavage happened. One world became two.

Hellsborough and Hillsborough. The town within the city and the town within the city. The same, but separate. And this was before either town existed; don't forget that.

At the time though, no-one noticed. Not really. Most inhabitants of the world had died in that instant, when that split occurred.

This ain't really my thing. I'm more of an anthropologist and folklorist, but if you've followed so far, this is my summary of it:

- A meteor struck 66 million years ago. The dinosaurs and 75-90% of life on Earth were wiped out.
- Some creatures survived, otherwise life wouldn't have.
- Two parallel worlds were created (possibly more, but there are two that we know about, so let's stick with two for now).

66 Ma was under a week ago in geological time, according to our yearly calendar from the last chapter.

Of those survivors, though, Milting were amongst them. Milting knew that parallel worlds existed. They also knew that there was nothing to stop anything crossing between those parallel worlds – everything was the same. There were no sides as such, there wasn't left and right, it was the same on both sides, and a river ran through it – as rivers do.

A river, the Loxley in this case, runs through these parallel worlds. Like clouds and air drift across the boundaries, the murk pays no attention to this border between worlds.

So nothing noticed, and nothing cared. For millions of years, it was the same place. It looked the same, it was the same. But it wasn't the same. Things were developing differently on each side of that invisible fissure.

Who knew?

Well, Milting knew. Ask Milting today, they remember the illimitable cleavage. I think I know what you're thinking. How can anyone – how can anything – remember that?

Milting. They might have been travelling to the stars, or they might not. Their history doesn't go into detail (if it does, I've yet to locate and interpret it). But they recorded things, they wrote things down – not in any language that can be readily understood, but written down nonetheless. And remembrance for them is hereditary, passed through their lineage. Their life history is recorded in their DNA.

That evidence of recorded intelligence I mentioned? In my research, I found it. Semagrams, like fossils – hidden, buried, closeted by the eons past.

Where they came from, no-one really knows; I investigated. I talked to the librarians. I spoke to the Vice Principal. No-one knows what they are. I had them spectrographically analysed – they told me that they shouldn't exist, that they were impossible, that I had somehow fabricated them, that they were fake. They wanted to keep them though, course they did. I said I needed them for my research.

It was around then that my troubles with the university began.

I know what these semagrams are, though: they're the most ancient data in the universe.

Until I found them they languished in a deep cellar, far from inquiring eyes. How I came to be in that deep cellar is a whole story in its own right, and not one I'm going to explore further here, but if you're interested, read these diary entries:

- Part one
- Part two
- Part three

They're made of stone. Pumice. When you look at them, the first thing I thought of was a QR code. They are, I guess, of sorts. But they're more than that, they're like poetry. Think of a road sign in the off-world, they're like that – lexical symbols with no spoken referent. They're hieroglyphics, with meaning.

What are they about? The junction, mostly.

66 million years ago, no roads existed, so what was there to do? It was just the gushing Loxley cutting its way through the limestone scarp.

But as the two worlds developed – independently, yet forever and inherently linked – and as bridges and roads were built over the river, and then those roads became a crossroads, Milting realised that a centre of liminality was forming. Had formed.

It was called the junction. The most powerful source of liminality in existence.

Even though the two worlds could be transgressed easily, and had been for eons, the dark of the murk, the antimatter of Hellsborough, was seeping into the off-world – your world – and Milting stepped up, foreseeing the dangers of massive leakage from one side to the other. Dark matter from Hellsborough leaking back into the off-world and vice versa. The light and the dark cannot ever mix; to do so is certain destruction, and this much Milting knew well.

Milting used the semagrams of the junction to conceive The Hinge.

The Hinge. First time I've mentioned it. The Hinge is that place, that Planck-length gap between Hellsborough and the off-world.

Milting were the creators, and the observers, and the curators of the after, after the aftermath.

Milting locked the portal – The Hinge – so that it should never be breached. That lock was never meant to be opened. Milting knew what would happen if it did.

Dark matter is also known as antimatter. Subatomic particles that have the opposite electrical charge to the matter in the off-world. Its electrons carry a positive charge, the off-world's a negative. And conversely, its protons are negative, and the off-world's are positive. The dark matter of Hellsborough is a mirror image of the off-world's matter.

When matter and antimatter come into contact, it results in a catastrophic release of energy. Total and abject annihilation.

Crossing over from the off-world to Hellsborough has long been expected, but not witnessed. In fact, it is commonplace, and the off-world is "infected" by many things from Hellsborough and The Dark Peak, and of course, over the eons, the portal has been breached.

The portal is leaky. I'm sure I haven't helped with that, sorry about that. I'm not sure it's doing my general health any good at all either.

I have documented everything I understand – a number of possible ways that The Hinge can be accessed, there may be more. In summary, they are:

- semagrams
- quantum manipulation
- rockcrust
- download
- simulation
- off-take

The first five of those, I've written about elsewhere, and I'll leave it there for now rather than repeat myself. The sixth is newer, and it deserves a word here because you're more likely to arrive this way than any of the others, if you're reading this from the off-world at all.

The off-takes are the polite name for what happens when Hellsborough runs short of jellyheads and goes looking off-world for more. It started properly in 1979: the nascenti had gone socialist a couple of decades earlier, the netherlanders wouldn't work for them, and somebody had to keep the wheels of the DPDC turning. So they reached across The Hinge instead. Officially it's a labour scheme: contract work, remote postings, paid on completion, and – they'll tell you – decent money. That's certainly what the man running it believes it is.

That man is Phil Cargill, and he's worth naming because he's the one you're most likely to meet if this is how you got here. Phil was the first through, an off-world council man from Sheffield, sent over cold before anyone – on either side – really understood what a full crossing does to a person. He came back changed, and he came back content, and convinced he'd been handed something good. He's been recruiting ever since, working a redundancy list from a desk in the off-world, ringing folk who've just been made surplus and telling them the money's good. He believes every word of it, and I've never worked out whether that's the saddest thing about him or the only thing keeping him upright.

I won't pretend I understand the mechanism as well as I'd like to – there's a fuller telling of it in Civic Unrest, the books that follow one of Phil's off-takes from the phone call onward – but I'll say this much: if a friendly voice from an old job ever rings you up about a bit of remote work that's just come available, and you've no family holding you in place, and the money sounds too good – you might want to ask a few more questions than Tom Calver did.

Some of these methods are tried and tested, some just supposition, but when you do make it through The Hinge, going from the off-world in, what do you see?

Chapter 3

A short history of Hellsborough

In Chapter 1 I took you back the best part of sixty-six million years, and I'm sorry about that, I do get carried away. That chapter finished with the ice letting go of this valley and the first people walking into it, near enough thirteen thousand years ago. This chapter is the other end of the telescope. It's the human bit. The last blink. If the whole story of The Dark Peak were that year I keep banging on about, everything I'm about to tell you happens somewhere in the final half a second, most of it after the party poppers have already popped.

I'm a folklorist by trade, so history isn't my department – I deal in the stories people tell about the past, not the past itself. But the two aren't as far apart as you'd think, and there's a reason the jellyheads don't tell this story to themselves. They can't. The hive mind in their faces keeps the past tidy, edited overnight by something under the pavement that was never asked to, and a tidy past is a forgotten one. So here's the untidy version, from an incomer who had to learn it the hard way.

Before the town, there was the Hex

Before any of that – before the charter, before the first human was walked through a gate and told this was home now – the valley already had owners, and they were already fighting over it.

Two powers, mainly. The nascenti in the east: langoustine-looking things, rarely seen, patient in a way that isn't quite patience, numberless. And the xin further out, warlike insectoid frogs who came down off the moors in raiding bands and never much cared for anyone's border. The xin have been at war with more or less everyone at one time or another – with the clowns who used to run The Dark Peak, with the nascenti who run it now – and the wars come back around like weather. The count on the calendar was reset to zero after the first of the clown-xin wars, and that was the better part of five thousand years ago. We're on the seventy-ninth sixty-year cycle since. There have been more of those wars. There'll be another.

The humans walked into the middle of this. When the little messers – the small independent metalworkers, the grinders and blade-forgers – started throwing up workshops along the banks of the Don, the Loxley and the Rivelin, they were building on ground the xin and the nascenti both counted as theirs. That went about as well as you'd expect. The feuds it lit are still burning; it's why the locals call this corner of the world the Hex, and why a folk memory of murdered grinders and burned workshops sits under every polite street name in the town. Across The Hinge they had the same decade – they call it the Sheffield Outrages over there, union men and rattening and the odd house blown up – but the off-world version stayed a labour dispute. This side, the ground itself took offence.

It starts with a slave town

What the nascenti wanted, once the messers' sprawl had turned into a proper mess of people, was to stop the humans being a loose end. So they made them a town.

Hellsborough got its charter in 1843, the same year Sheffield got one across The Hinge. And I want to be plain about what that charter was: it was a farm. The nascenti planned the place, built it with humans, and kept those humans the way you'd keep livestock you were fond of. Fed. Watered. Housed. Worked. Not free. The biofeed came later, but the principle never changed – a full trough and a shut gate. Van Hallam, the old hunter whose stories I spend my life chasing, was born here in 1905 into exactly that – a slave, in a slave town, and he'll tell you the food was good and the door was locked.

The Golden Age, and what it cost

Then, in 1936, something shifted. The nascenti loosened the leash.

Nobody's entirely sure why – I've asked – but the upshot was fifty years the locals still speak about with a wet eye. Capitalist Hellsborough. The humans were let off to run their own affairs, start businesses, make their own money, and the nascenti just fed them: every innovation, every clever notion, every bit of organic

engineering, handed down from above like weather. Nobody asked where weather that generous was grown. If Adam Smith had been handed a model village to test his theories in, this was the village.

You can still see the good years if you know where to look. The first muscle-engine cars date from this time, and some of them still run to this day. Half the bars in the town centre have a founding date from that stretch carved over the door, though check two on the same street and the numbers rarely agree with each other's arithmetic – something about the murk sits differently on stone, and nobody's ever been paid to fix it. The humidity plants went up in the boom too – the great coughing towers that thicken the murk on purpose – which tells you something about who the boom was really for. And underneath all of it, quieter, a thing called Ming Shalom set up in a vault below the Loxley in 1932 and started lending. He's still down there. Still lending. Whatever the council of the day called itself, the ¢hits ran through Ming.

In 1947 they made Boggy Lomas, the first human-nascenti hybrid, and called the project "Genesis", which tells you how pleased with themselves everyone was. Lomas is still going. A solicitor now, a revenant in a good suit, and he turns up in the Chronicles looking tired.

Here's the thing about a Golden Age, though. It's a loan. Somebody's paying the interest somewhere, and in Hellsborough it was the folk on the fringe – the crosslanders, the netherlanders, the clans out past the Wisewood who never got fed anything and watched the town get fat.

Ask three people when the Golden Age ended and you'll get three answers, which is this whole chapter's problem in one question. A nostalgic jellyhead will tell you 1990, and go misty. A netherlander will tell you it ended the day it started, because it was built on their backs and they never saw a ¢hit of it. And the DPDC poster on the tram stop will tell you it never ended, that you're standing in it, and would you like to hear about this month's civic improvements. All three are being honest. That's the trouble with doing history here.

Decline, and the Netherlander Revolts

The first crack showed in 1960.

A DPDC administration got in that fancied spending ¢hits it didn't have, the innovations from above slowed to a trickle, and out in the netherlands a clansman called Brecon Mashiesh decided he'd had enough of watching. In 1959 he raised his revolt. In 1960 he marched on Farantees – a family firm that started as a corner shop run by the first Nana Farantee and grew, by then, into half the Golden Age economy, retail to pharma to property – and sacked what he could reach of it, and that day is remembered as the Holme Lane massacre. For about a year the netherlanders had Hellsborough genuinely frightened, though the town coasted on its momentum for another thirty years after that. But 1960 is where the ground first moved.

Then 1961, and the reply. The exacids – the nascenti muscle, the ones with a licence to kill – went out into the netherlands and put the revolt down with a thoroughness that got its own name: the harrying of the netherlands. They burned the shanties back to the peat and left the corvids to sort the rest. Mashiesh himself was taken alive and flogged in public, which was the point. Not killed. Flogged, where every clan could see. Then let go, because a man limping home tells the story better than a corpse.

In 1979 them off-takes I mentioned in Chapter 2 began. The Golden Age was spent, the nascenti had gone socialist and needed bodies, the netherlanders weren't interested, so they started reaching into the off-world instead – coaxing the newly redundant across The Hinge to be the next intake of jellyheads. Phil Cargill was the first one through, that February, and he's still recruiting, still convinced he's doing people a kindness. The first face most people picture, though, is Tom Calver – a Sheffield council man who followed him over that June, aged 27, and whose whole disorienting first year is written up in Civic Unrest if you want the immigrant's-eye view of arriving here.

The Troubles, and the flags

I was born in 1992, in the off-world, in the Hicks – the flat country you'd call Lincolnshire. Sophie Hinchcliffe was born a year later, in Hellsborough. Hold both of those; they matter later.

In 1995 the netherlander clans did something they'd never managed before: they agreed with each other. Sort of. They formed the netherlander alliance and raised what's called the first flag. A flag, here, isn't a country. It's a truce – a banner the clans run up when they've patched together a coalition and mean to stop knifing one another long enough to face Hellsborough instead.

The first flag went up, the first uprising followed, and that's the start of what everyone calls the Troubles: thirty years of uprisings, bombings, raids, and – because these are the netherlanders – coalitions rotting back into feuding almost as fast as they formed. They call those collapses the squabbles. The flag goes up, the flag comes down, the flag goes up again. By 2019 they were on their seventh, and that one, against the odds and most of the wagers, held. Scarp Southey of the Moors will tell you, if you can find him and survive the conversation, that the seventh flag bought the first real truce in living memory, and that it came thirty years too late to have been worth the cloth.

If you want to keep up with the flags while you're here, the Hellsborough Heretic is the clans' own paper. Assuming you can find a copy that's in date.

The vegahorn, and the Dawn of the Jellyheads

It's worth noticing what happened to the humans across these hundred and eighty years. In 1843 they were livestock. By the Golden Age they were something like citizens – running businesses, voting for a council, kidding themselves. And what the nascenti did next didn't put them back in a cage. It put the cage inside them, which is a harder thing to point at on a map.

The nascenti had watched the netherlanders creeping back toward Hellsborough through the 1990s and hadn't all drawn the same conclusion. In 1997 the hardliners split off and formed their own faction: the vegahorn. The old ones – N'Sogoth and the other elders, two hundred years on the clock, every one of them nursing the same grievance – who had never liked the Golden Age one bit. To their mind, letting humans run riot with their own money and their own council was the original sin, and the correction was overdue: humans back in harness, working for the betterment of their nascenti overlords, the way B'enderclaw intended. They spent ten years building an army down in the dykes and the mycelium while nobody important was looking.

In 2007 they used it. The vegahorn coup – the Dawn of the Jellyheads – swept out the old nascenti leadership and installed its own. The human face of the new arrangement was Sophie Hinchcliffe, who took over as CEO of the DPDC and set about rebuilding the council in her own image. That's the Hellsborough you're arriving in: the posters, the ¢hit that pays itself, the exacids on every corner, the jellyheads both more content and more distracted than they ever were. Who the vegahorn actually are, how the DPDC works under them, where Sophie's power stops and B'enderclaw's begins – that's Chapter 5's problem. This chapter just needs you to know it happened in 2007, and that the psycmask you'll be handed at the border is a much older idea wearing new clothes.

The bitter finger, and now

Which brings us more or less to me.

I first came through The Hinge in 2021 – badly, nearly fatally, a story I've told elsewhere and would rather not tell again. The same year, out in the dark, something new formed that people are still only half able to describe: the bitter finger. It's tied up with The Hinge itself going thin and unreliable, the lock Milting fitted all those eons ago starting to work loose. Loose, not broken. Loose is plenty. Dark matter weeps through the gap both ways now, a little more every year. What the bitter finger wants is Book 1 of the Chronicles' business, not this chapter's, and I'd point you at the published book rather than have me summarise it badly.

Since then

Not much, officially. The seventh flag is still up – seven years now, the longest anyone can remember. The murk is still rising, a little more each year, the way it does when the humidity plants run flat out and The Hinge won't seal, and on a quiet murknoon, if you stand still enough, you can feel it trying, or you tell yourself you can. The bitter finger is still out there and, by every account I trust, still growing. If you want

the day-to-day, I kept a diary, and the town's got its own paper for it too – Hellsborough Exposed, which is exactly as reliable as a paper called that ought to be. History here doesn't really stop. It just gets harder to tell while you're standing in it, which I suppose is true anywhere, but here it's worse.

The whole thing on one page

If your head's spinning – mine did – here it is as a list. The full canonical version, with the proper Dark Peak dates, lives at hellsborough.com/calendar.

Year	What happened
c.12,800 years ago	People first walk into the crossroads valley, as the ice draws back.
c.4,700 years ago	The calendar count resets after the first clown–xin war. The xin and the nascenti are already the valley's two great powers.
to 1843	The little messers raise their workshops along the Don, Loxley and Rivelin – xin and nascenti land. The feuds that name the Hex.
1809	The nascenti begin keeping a formal record of Hellsborough.
1843	Hellsborough is granted its charter by the nascenti – the foundation of the town. Humans are kept as fed-and-watered slaves.
1893	The Nascenti exchange raises Hellsborough from a town to a city.
1919	The Clown–xin wars – Van Hallam, aged 14. The 1919 half of Chronicles, Book 1.
1932	Ming Shalom sets up his vault below the Loxley and starts lending.
1936–1990	The Golden Age. Capitalist Hellsborough; the nascenti feed the humans every innovation.
1947	Boggy Lomas is made – the first human–nascenti hybrid ("Genesis").
1959	Decline, and the Netherlander Revolts: Brecon Mashiesh raises his revolt.
1960	The Holme Lane massacre; Mashiesh sacks Farantees.
1961	The harrying of the netherlands; Mashiesh is flogged in public.
1979	The off-takes begin – Phil Cargill crosses over in February, Tom Calver follows in June, aged 27 (see Chapter 2).
1995	The Troubles begin: the first flag, and the netherlander alliance.
1997	The vegahorn – the nascenti hardliners – form and begin building an army.
2007	The vegahorn coup – the Dawn of the Jellyheads. Sophie Hinchcliffe takes the DPDC.
2019	The seventh flag; the first truce among the clans that holds.
2021	The bitter finger forms; The Hinge weakens; I arrive.
2022	The bitter finger moves – the present-day half of Chronicles, Book 1.

So that's how the place got to be the way it is. Next question, and it's the one you'll actually be asking on day one: knowing all that, what does it feel like to stand on a street corner in Hellsborough, and what exactly is different about the one you're standing on?

Chapter 4

How is Hellsborough different from here?

So, Pip, I hear you say, what do you see? After arriving at the junction, I pass through The Hinge. It's only moments, and mostly, I feel nothing at all. But sometimes, it can feel like hours. I think that's dependent upon the murk.

The weather may be identical to that I left behind, especially on a foggy day in the off-world – the difference between the fog and the murk can be extremely subtle. On other days, on a summer day in the off-world, if the murk lies heavy in Hellsborough, it can be like walking through a swirling flood of carbonated stout.

When you arrive, you'll recognise the buildings, the shops, the bars. The ones at ground level, at least. You could easily pass through The Hinge and never know. The folk, they look like you or I, regular people doing regular things, going about their everyday business.

There is a big difference, but you'd struggle to see it. These men, women and children, pretty much all of them, unless they've come from the other side of the tracks – and by that, I don't mean your off-world, I'm referring to those that reside in the crosslands – the natives of Hellsborough, they're content in a way that you're not.

When I say content, maybe I mean distracted. Much like you might be distracted by the comings and goings of daily life, by the pressures of work and family, so the residents of Hellsborough are distracted by the chitter-chatter of the hive mind – an internal world that they carry within their faces, that services their every biological, physiological and psychological need.

Every jellyhead is fitted with a psycmask at birth now, and that's not a figure of speech – it goes in before they're old enough to object, and it doesn't come out. It grows with them. Ask a jellyhead what it's like to not wear one and you'll get a blank look, the same blank look you'd give someone who asked what it's like to not have a nervous system. It's not a device to them. It's the shape their head has always been.

What it does, besides the obvious – feed, hivemind chatter, the constant low infotainment hum – is score you. Every jellyhead carries a social score, and the mask reads it in both directions: it shows the wearer things the rest of the street can't see, doors and offers and little conveniences that light up for a well-scored jellyhead and simply aren't there for anyone below the line. And it hides just as much. Walk down a street with a native and ask them what's in a shopfront that's plainly, visibly shuttered to you, and if their score's high enough, they'll describe a going concern. I find that harder to sit with than almost anything else here, and I've sat with quite a lot.

I don't have any of that, obviously – I don't have the biological adaptations of a native, and nobody's implanting anything in me at my age, thank you. I wear a government-issue mask instead, strapped on like the rest of you would recognise from a bad flu season, and it does the bare minimum: lets me breathe, keeps me alive, marks me out at fifty paces as someone from off-world who hasn't been given anything, because I haven't. No one much stares. Wearing a mask in public isn't the oddity in the off-world it used to be either, since the pandemic, so on that narrow point at least, arriving here doesn't feel as strange as it probably should.

What else is different?

You may notice the odd street sign that differs, doesn't make sense somehow – take a walk around the park, for instance: you'll see references to barkers, smelting, ¢hits, slipping – with the accompanying signage, the wording will make sense, it's just different, that's all. Maybe like visiting a slightly foreign country.

Traffic signage is similar: speed and parking restrictions, tram gates, bus lanes – all of those things will be familiar to you. The biggest difference has always been the transport itself.

It's quiet.

The roads exist, but with the exception of the trundle of wheels, the electric cars lack noise entirely – the internal combustion engine has never made an appearance in The Dark Peak. All vehicles that you'd assume

have an engine, do have an engine. It's usually located under the bonnet (or hood, for our US visitors from the off-world), but when you pop that hood, you don't see a gas-guzzling 4, 6 or 8-cylinder petrol-burning engine, you see a smooth, sleek bundle of muscle – a bioengineered locomotor muscle engine.

Locomotor muscle fibres resemble bundles of thick electric cables, but when injected with nutrient solution (found in filling stations, naturally), they expand and contract at different frequencies to generate power, not dissimilar to the pistons in a conventional engine that you're used to in the off-world.

Coal has been mined and is used to fuel the most important of industrial needs, the humidity plants, which contribute to the filth of the murk, but oil has never been processed, so that noisy, messy machine, the motorcar (or bike), wasn't ever conceived. In The Dark Peak they have solar, wind, water and muscle-flex energy sources: power generated from the great goodness of Dunlockslyn.

From that point of view, you could say that Hellsborough is more advanced than the off-world. The design ethic of these vehicles doesn't share the boxy Eurocar design that you're used to. They are streamlined, modelled on the sleek shapes of birds and fish, with armoured panels like the exoskeletons of insects or the bark of trees. The aesthetic is very organic. They're known as gruizers and sportsters.

The trolley buses (trams) exist, follow the same routes as the supertrams in the off-world, and are powered by electricity (locomotor muscle generated), but these versions are as sleek as eels, the same organic design aesthetic as the cars. Skateboards, scooters – electrically and mechanically powered, bicycles, tricycles, mobility scooters, pushchairs and prams, they're all here.

So the hustle and bustle really does seem very familiar.

What about laws and public services? They're enforced by more than one organisation, like in the off-world, but here, there are really only two classes of enforcer: the Dark Peak District Council (DPDC), who deal with the municipal laws, and the Nascenti enforcers known as exacids.

The former roughly equates to your off-world city council – they deal with fixing broken benches, installing new ones, emptying rubbish bins, traffic management, slipping permits and all that sort of thing. Their role is subservient, or at least that's how it's meant to be understood; their job is to keep the wheels of industry running, nothing more. Unlike in the off-world, the removal of bureaucracy is their remit, not the creation of it.

The latter are the equivalent of your off-world police service, but with a wider remit and a licence to kill and destroy where necessary; that tends to keep folk in line in this otherwise largely lawless world. A lot of things go here – there are no rules imposed on enjoyment or making an income for oneself, and if the Nascenti don't disagree with it, anything goes – yet woe betide anyone who attempts to do anything disagreeable. The Nascenti consider jellyheads valuable slaves, and don't tolerate any form of abuse.

It's a company town in the oldest sense of the phrase, if you want one clean comparison – early-twentieth-century Hong Kong gets you closer than anywhere else I can think of: dense, mercantile, largely left to get on with it, so long as nobody threatens the people actually in charge.

The unit of currency is the ¢hit. Most payments are fully automated by the DPDC, parking, fines, that sort of thing – which can make it very difficult for a new incomer. Without a source of ¢hits you are a nothing, and nothings are not tolerated by the exacids.

The first time I breached The Hinge, I nearly died. I didn't, obviously, and I'm not going to go into detail here, it's a bit depressing to think about, but I did write a diary entry about it; that was me trying to come to terms with it – you can read it if you want.

In The Dark Peak, there is nothing like you have in the off-world – fire brigades or ambulance services. A health service is an unknown phenomenon here, or hereabouts. There are GPs for hire, witchdoctors. The murk is the equivalent, if you can call it that. Denizens, of course, being children of the murk, have regenerative abilities, as well as thousands of years' experience in the preparation and working with natural remedies and rockcrust, but jellyheads and netherlanders – being human – have no such regenerative ability, and where rockcrust is unavailable, or natural resources scarce, or skills not available, entering the murk and

taking your chances in the sink-or-swim is sometimes the only available option, especially for the old and infirm, which makes for a young average age of the population.

Want to know what's going on when you're here?

Apart from the ever-popular chatting-in-a-bar approach, which can yield wildly varying results depending on who you choose to talk to, there are four main sources of news in Hellsborough and The Dark Peak.

If you are a denizen or jellyhead, then all of your informational requirements are served by the hive mind. Unless you wear a psycmask out of choice, or because you're compelled to (like me), the hive mind will remain silent to you. I have to admit that I find it a constant drawl which I struggle to decipher, but I'm sure that's me, as I hear no complaints from anyone else; as I've noted before, your average jellyhead seems content yet distracted.

Secondly, there are the Dark Peak District Council information posters – referred to by some as the propaganda of the fungal network, but the examples I've seen are mostly functional public-information do's and don'ts, pretty tame and lacking in any political message. You'll also see DPDC posters advertising events in the area. I guess that's a belt-and-braces approach by the DPDC's marketing department, in case you (as a jellyhead) miss announcements released via the hive mind.

The third source of news and information is the informal network of individuals known as the clowns. The clowns are denizens, so they too have indigenous access to the hive mind, but they're also the couriers and spies of The Dark Peak. This method of finding out what you need to know is more direct, and will involve the expenditure of ¢hits, but if you need your information fast, this is likely the best route.

Finally, the Hellsborough Heretic is a subversive publication by the crosslander resistance / netherlander alliance, and is therefore the main communications medium for the disparate clans of the nethermen who reside on the fringes of Hellsborough. Often hard to find, and always involving venturing out of Hellsborough, the Heretic will advise you on developments within the resistance, usually without giving anything tangible away. If the copy you find is in date (about a 50/50 chance, in my experience), you might then be able to track down details of a resistance meeting or some other gathering, if that's your thing; good luck with that.

Language here. It's kind of the same, but different, like everything else. A lot of my research (diary) notes are interpretations of the original, so it's not the same, but similar enough to get by. The nouns are very much functional – take slipper, for instance, for fish, or barker for dog, or scratcher for your domestic cat. Of course there are some exceptions, but they're usually easy enough to work out – wooltard, for instance. Demonspawn is a strange one, until you listen to the context, and that particular animal's predilection to violence at certain times. But both of those, to give their full name, are clovenfeet, which details their two-toed evolution. Ripperthroat and Ripperwing are self-explanatory. Corvids – strangely – share the same Latin name as the same creature in the off-world (which is a pretty strange phenomenon, when you think about it – I mean, are these creatures so old that they predate the illimitable cleavage? It could be a possibility, especially considering that Milting have close associations with corvids).

Outside of the standard canon of the bestiary, ripperthroats are the one exception to the standard off-world flora and fauna that I've come across so far. Barker, scratcher, honker, ripperwing, quacker, demonspawn, wooltard, skewerwing, screachwing, scrufftail, slyfluff, flatface are all commonplace in both the off-world and Hellsborough and The Dark Peak, and the majority of them, as with the local dialect and nomenclature here, usually pretty much make sense without too much explanation.

Finally, the date system. The Dark Peak calendar doesn't count years in an infinite sequence – instead, year names are repeated every 60 years, with the name being a weather-beast amalgam. In The Dark Peak, because of the murk and the lack of penetration of either sun or moonlight, the calendar – although still the length of a year of 365 days – has months that differ. There are 18 months in The Dark Peak (0-17), with each month consisting of 20 days (0 to 19), with 5 days at the end of the year for celebrations.

That's what you notice when you arrive, maybe. Next, let's talk about how the place got to be this way, before we come back and look at how it's very different from the off-world in ways you can't just walk past on the street.

Chapter 5

Factions and power

I keep telling you who runs things without actually telling you who runs things, and that's not fair on you. So here it is, properly.

There are five of them, more or less, and they don't get on. The nascenti sit on top of the whole arrangement and always have, though which nascenti, exactly, is a question I'll come back to. The DPDC does the actual admin, in Sophie Hinchcliffe's name. The netherlanders live outside all of it and have never once been asked to agree to any of it. The clowns move between everyone else for a fee. And the bitter finger is the newest of the lot, barely old enough to have a settled shape yet, which is also why I'm best placed to tell you about it – I'm in it.

The nascenti, and the vegahorn underneath them

Everything in Hellsborough answers, eventually, to the nascenti. What I didn't understand for a long time is that "the nascenti" isn't one thing with one mind, any more than "the government" is, back where you're from.

There's B'enderclaw, first of all: their revered lord, ancient beyond any dating I've been able to do, worshipped rather than governed by. I've told you what little I know about B'enderclaw already, which is almost nothing – but hold that name, because it comes back later in this chapter in a way I didn't see coming myself.

Underneath B'enderclaw, in the ordinary run of things, are the nascenti who quietly built and ran the Golden Age – the ones who fed the humans every innovation and let them believe the money was their own idea. And underneath them, or rather alongside them, glowering, are the vegahorn: the hardliners, old as sin, who split off in 1997 because they'd never forgiven the Golden Age for happening at all. N'Sogoth and the rest of that generation, two hundred years on the clock and every one of them nursing the same grievance, believe letting humans run their own affairs was the original sin, and that the correction – humans back in harness, working for the betterment of their nascenti overlords – was overdue the day it started being paid out. In 2007 they got their correction. I told you about the coup in Chapter 3. What I didn't tell you is what they built to run it.

The DPDC, and Sophie Hinchcliffe

The Dark Peak District Council is the visible face of all this – the posters, the ¢hits, the exacids on every corner, the belt-and-braces announcements in case you missed the hive mind saying the same thing more quietly. It looks, from a jellyhead's chair, like ordinary municipal government: bins, benches, permits, a CEO with an office on the park. Sophie Hinchcliffe has been that CEO since 2007, and everyone in Hellsborough will tell you the same broad-strokes story about her – local girl, shop worker, killed by a pack of gabbleratchets on the towpath at Loxley Bottom, and somehow, against everything anyone understands about death, walking again not long after.

Here's the part most people don't say out loud, or don't know to. Sophie wasn't just brought back. She was built, from the ground up, by nascenti scientists working under the vegahorn's own instruction, out of her own recovered cells and one other ingredient the vegahorn had apparently been keeping in reserve for exactly this kind of occasion: DNA belonging to B'enderclaw. She grew up twice, once as a shop girl and once again in a matter of days, with a bigger brain, bigger lungs, a body that heals like a denizen's, and – I don't know a gentler way to put this – more than one heart. When she walked into the CEO's office and told the sitting incumbent his services were no longer required, she wasn't bluffing about the authority behind her. She had it in her blood, literally, and the vegahorn had put it there on purpose.

So when Chapter 3 told you the vegahorn coup put a human face on the new arrangement, that was true, but it undersold it. The vegahorn didn't just install a sympathetic CEO. They grew their own god's grandchild and gave her a desk. Whatever the DPDC's posters say about civic improvements, that's who's actually signing off on them.

The netherlanders

Outside the town, and mostly ignored by everyone inside it until they stop being ignorable, are the netherlanders – crosslanders, netherfolk, same people, different mouths saying it. Four clans, traditionally at each other's throats as much as anyone else's: the Leys, the Woods, the Marshes, and the Moors.

I've told you about the flags already – the alliance, the Troubles, the seventh flag holding since 2019. What I haven't told you is who's actually in charge of holding it, and the honest answer is: nobody, permanently. Each flag is a coalition, and coalitions have leaders the way weather has a direction – for now, in this instance, subject to change. The name that comes up most often, if you're asking around the Moors, is Scarp Southey: gnarly, blunt, alive a lot longer than seems fair given how he's chosen to live, and about as close as the netherlanders currently have to a face for the alliance. Ask him about the seventh flag and, if you survive the conversation, he'll tell you it was thirty years too late to have been worth the cloth. I mentioned that in Chapter 3 too. He says it to everyone. I don't think that makes it less true.

The clowns

Somewhere between all of the above sit the clowns, and I mean that literally – they're denizens, so they have the same hive-mind access as everyone born into it, but they've never fully belonged to any one faction's payroll. They were the ones running The Dark Peak, generations back, before their number was decimated by a vicious pandemic, and the nascenti and the xin between them squeezed that arrangement out of existence. Now they're couriers and spies, mostly, and I don't say that as an insult; it's just the job that was left once the empire wasn't. If you need to know something fast – what the DPDC is planning, what the netherlanders are saying about it, what a particular exacid patrol is actually looking for – a clown will sell it to you for ¢hits, and won't much care which side of the argument you're on when you ask. It's not loyalty, particularly. It's just where the work is, and I've stopped expecting it to be anything grander than that.

The bitter finger

Which brings me to the newest of the five, and the one I'm least qualified to describe from a proper distance, because I helped make it.

The bitter finger isn't a faction in the way the others are – it doesn't have territory, or a flag, or a CEO with a desk. It's seven of us: Van Hallam, who's been fighting one version of this arrangement or another since before most of the people reading this were born; Dirty Leaves, a xaexs – eight feet of four-armed killing ability with a gentler streak than her CV suggests; Pandora III, Van's own granddaughter, clown-born; Scraith, of the Leys, whose father signed the netherlander treaty that Scraith has spent his adult life quietly not trusting; Shad, Van's barghest, who used to just be Van's dog and isn't only that any more, though nobody in the group – Van included – will quite say out loud when that changed; Mold, a netherlander bounty hunter who was on milting's payroll and hunting me when Dirty Leaves took him captive, and who's since settled into something closer to the group's own private investigator than anyone's prisoner; and me. What ties us together isn't ideology, particularly – ask the seven of us separately what we think should happen to the nascenti and you'd get seven different answers – it's a shared conviction that whatever's coming through the weakening Hinge is bigger than any of the existing arrangements were built to handle, and that somebody ought to be watching it who isn't already answering to B'enderclaw, the vegahorn, or a flag.

Whether that adds up to a faction in the way this chapter's title promises, I genuinely don't know yet. Ask me again once I've worked out what the bitter finger actually wants, as opposed to what it's against.

Chapter 6

The denizens of the hex

After the illimitable cleavage of 66 Ma, the creatures that survived after the dinosaurs and much other life had been eliminated from the planet, fought for supremacy. As Milting observed and later recorded, many species developed in powerful and warlike ways, some establishing great empires.

The Dark Peak is a great wilderness situated on the island of Great Britain, part of the British Isles. Surrounded by ocean, or sea, salty water in any case, the ancient Dark Peak covers the majority of the island, a wild and inhospitable place. Until the advent of mankind, the denizens ruled the entire land, after the demise of the wasps, but as primates came to prominence, so the Dark Peak shrank in the off-world and this side of the Hinge to compensate, and the current area encompasses the upland area in England at the southern end of the Pennines, where moorland is found and the geology is dominated by gritstone. It's still a wild and rugged place. Hellsborough is a frontier town on the edge of The Dark Peak, but separated by the Wisewood and surrounded by the greater Barnsdale forest.

The insects, being a much older genus than other land dwellers and possessing an adolescent hive mind, took an early strangle-hold on the world, with the wasps in particular becoming highly dominant. The wasps built great cities of corrugated bark which offered refuge from the worst excesses of the murk, and they became adept at conquering and enslaving other, lesser species, to carry out their labour, toil and soldiery.

The wasps were intelligent and ruthless, had grown in physical size from skinny bees to tank-like creatures, and armed with their natural weaponry – gusting wings and rapier-like reusable stings – had become a truly formidable opponent; in fact, by the zenith of their reign, there was no opponent capable of challenging their might. As a species, the wasps looked set to rule the world for a millennium. And they did.

The wasp empire was the largest contiguous land empire in the history of The Dark Peak. They ruled without mercy, but strangely, fairly; encouraging trade routes, like establishing the long causeway between the embryonic (pre-ape) settlements at Sheffield and Hathersage. They shared their technology for the greater good of all, they fostered community amongst their slave species, eventually releasing all with full "freedoms". They admitted to past wrongs, and paid for those wrongs honourably.

But such altruism eventually led to splits within the wasp hierarchy and civil war – those that cared, and those that didn't. A racist element that the hive mind was unable to comprehend, a dichotomy at odds with their altruism. The wasps died of their own stupidity, which left a massive gap in the ecosystem, and the denizens evolved to compete in that gap (and what a gap – one species becomes extinct, and it leads to the development of six others). The empire fractured, and the world entered another period of prolonged technological dark ages.

A New World Order

Around 50 hours before the divergence of humans from apes, in our aforementioned history of the Earth in a year – something like 32 million years ago – a new world order started establishing itself.

Originally, there were six* – the denizens of the hex – cultivated and nurtured by Milting, but given no favouritism, just monitored, their progress recorded. In the dark ages, Milting accelerated their development and gave each their own territory to restore world order.

Milting themselves aren't on the list. They predate the hex by millions of years – you met them in Chapter 1 – and they did the cultivating rather than being cultivated. Think of them as standing outside the frame of this chapter, holding the pen. Everything else here is something they made room for.

Why did Milting do this? There's no answer that I've found. The only thing of relevance that I've uncovered was a partial scripture – or semagram – that hinted that one day the wasps would return; a prophecy well understood in The Dark Peak.

There are now eleven denizens of The Dark Peak. The next five were domesticated by the original six as helper species, in much the same way that a barker or a onetoe is a helper species of us humans. Of

course, like there are wild barkers, there are also wild dyapnid. Similarly, wooltards and demonspawn were selectively bred, as they were in the off-world, producing similar results to sheep and cows respectively.

The Nascenti.* Rarely seen but vast in number, the nascenti are a highly intelligent race of langoustine-type creatures that own Hellsborough and the Eastern part of The Dark Peak. They answer, in the way any devout thing answers to something older than itself, to B'enderclaw – their revered lord, worshipped rather than seen, and about whom I've been able to learn almost nothing beyond the fact that the nascenti take the name very seriously indeed.

Exacid. Law enforcers of The Dark Peak, with a licence to use deadly force.

Hexikid. Genetically engineered, heavy-duty street cleaners and road clearers.

The Xin.* Nomadic tribes, several thousand strong, of warlike insectoid frogs with a strong set of hind legs and two pairs of forearms; they spend their time in the farther reaches of The Dark Peak.

Mentiloth. Death-winged steeds of the xin, used for high-speed transport and dexterity during battle.

Cryptobite. Heavy dray animals used by the xin.

Dyapnid. Domesticated by the xin as hunting animals, or wandering wild in intimidating packs throughout The Dark Peak; their collective intelligence is much like buzzers and biters.

Xaexs.* Solitary female mercenary warriors, specialising in technology and warfare; often described as being like a ruthless samurai cockroach.

Clown.* Physically identical to humans, but with highly decorated bodies, the clowns once ruled The Dark Peak. Now, they're frequently seen in Hellsborough, but are known for being spies and couriers.

Morivarid* and Syncarid* – both denizens of the murk, both easy to walk straight past without ever knowing they were there. I'll come back to them properly in Chapter 8, because what they actually do only makes sense once you've got your head round the murk itself.

None of the denizens exist in the off-world, and all are the result of the extinction of the wasps. They're all classed as intelligent species and all have access to the hive mind (as do some cryptids and dwellers of the murk, which I'll get to). All denizens are hatched from eggs, and the evolution of all of them is pre-mammalian. The Nascenti and Exacid are descendants of crustaceans, the Xin were originally amphibian, Morivarid and Syncarid of fish, and the rest of various strains of insect. All succeeded in the place of the extinct wasps as scavengers and recyclers in the circle of life, and in the absence of wasps were able to progress over the eons, developing consciousness and establishing various levels of society.

Saying that these denizens are intelligent doesn't mean that other residents of Hellsborough and The Dark Peak don't share that ability. It's well known that the corvid, barker, rooter, scrufftail and even gnawmard and many other species are all known to show signs of exceptional intelligence and able to solve many problems. Likewise, the lesser denizens, although they have access to the hive mind, don't show the same levels of intelligence as the "denizens of the hex".

That's the family, more or less – the six that were given the run of the place, and the five they raised up under them. It's not the whole bestiary by a long way, though; there's a lot more out in the murk that never got invited to this particular table, and I've given twelve of them their own proper introduction later in this book, in the field notebook that makes up Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

The bestiary – a field notebook

Twelve of them, in the end – the ones I keep coming back to, the ones that turn up in enough stories that they earned a proper page rather than a line in a list. I've grouped them my own way, which won't match anyone else's textbook, because I'm not writing a textbook.

If you're playing this out with the Foked rules rather than just reading about it, each entry closes with the one line you actually need at the table.

The owners

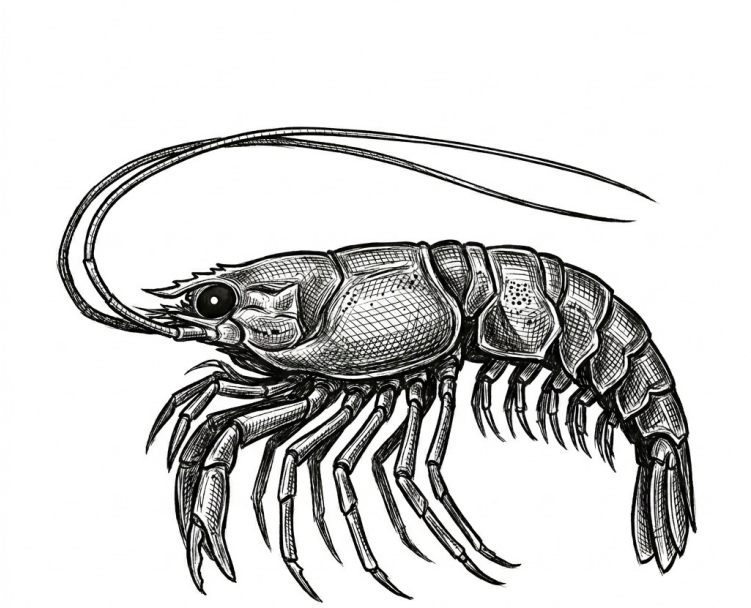

Figure 1: The Nascenti

The Nascenti. You will almost certainly never see one, and that's rather the point. Langoustine-shaped, ancient, and vast in number under every reservoir in the area – Damflask, Ladybower, the lot – the nascenti own Hellsborough the way a landlord owns a building they've never set foot in. They read ambient thought whether they mean to or not, which makes lying to one nearly impossible and reasoning with one entirely optional, since your own thoughts tend to get folded into whatever they already believed. If you meet an exacid, a nascenti already knows you're there. *Foked: Listener.*

Figure 2: Exacid

Exacid. The nascenti's own muscle – bioengineered crab-things, armoured, pincered, occasionally walking around upright and passing as unremarkable in a crowd. They're not clever, and nobody's worked out whether that's by design or by consequence of the job. They hold ground well and hit hard in a straight line, and they'll try the same approach three times before it occurs to them to try something else. That pause is yours. The actual problem is never the exacid in front of you – it's whichever nascenti sent it. *Foked: Lurker.*

The old guard

Figure 3: The Xin

The Xin. Six-legged, frog-built, deceptively armed – swords and spears in a world that's mostly moved on from them, which tells you something about how little the Xin need to keep up. Nomadic, warlike, and older in their grievances than anyone currently alive can settle. Don't make eye contact; they read intent through it and adjust. They've been at war with the nascenti longer than either side keeps records of, and Hellsborough exists, more or less, in the gap between two powers too evenly matched to finish the argument. *Foked: Hunter.*

Figure 4: Clown

Clown. Human-shaped, decorated, unreadable – the clowns used to run the whole of The Dark Peak before a plague thinned them down to Hathersage and a travelling trade. Now they're couriers and spies, hatched from eggs but raised like humans are, and comfortable enough moving through Hellsborough that you'll likely mistake one for a person before you clock the geometric scarring on the forearms. They'll sell you anything they know, to anyone who pays, and feel no particular loyalty to any side of whatever you're asking about. *Foked: Hunter.*

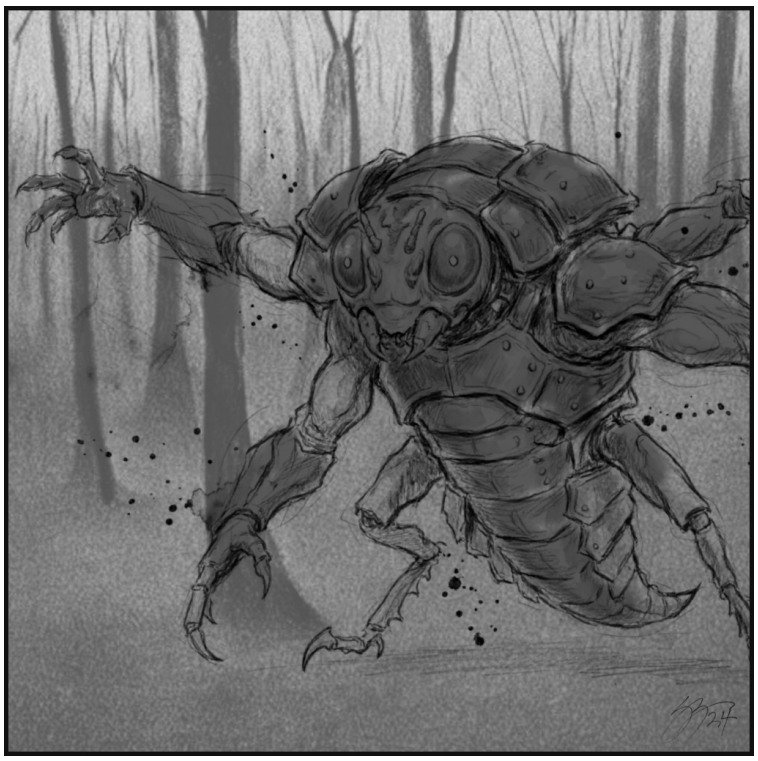

Figure 5: Xaexs

Xaexs. There is only ever one, in any given place, and I mean that as a documented fact rather than a turn of phrase – eight feet of muscle and blade discipline, working three layers of a fight at once (body, mind, and soul) where everyone else manages one. Solitary by choice, silent, terrifyingly economical. If you meet one that hasn't engaged you yet, the correct move is to leave, calmly, at exactly the pace you were already walking. Every documented account agrees on that much, and I'm grateful for it. *Foked: Warden.*

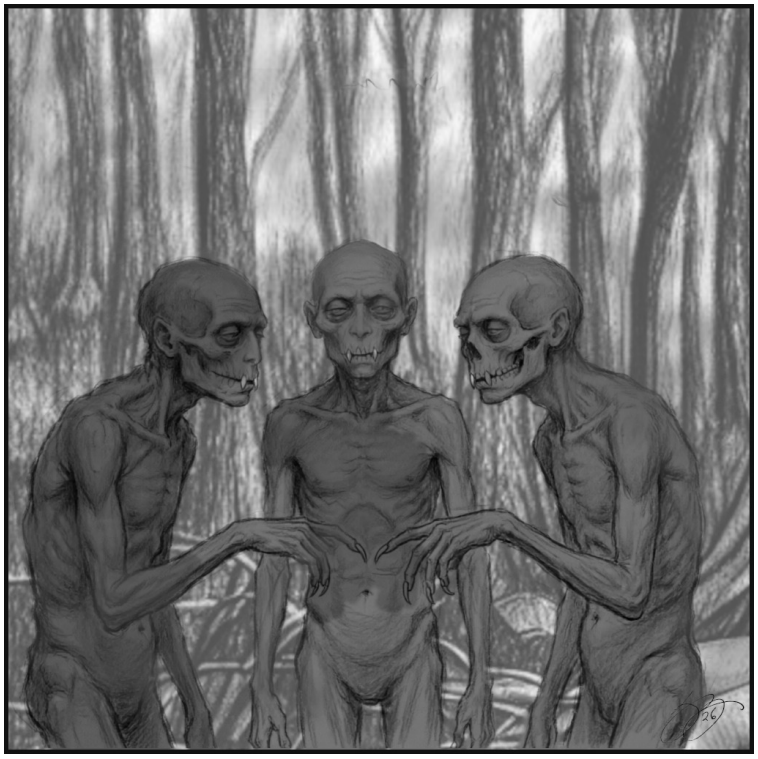

Figure 6: Milting

Milting. The oldest of the lot, and the strangest for it – leathery, gaunt, almost human in silhouette but for the small pointed teeth and the talons where fingernails should be. Milting built The Hinge, keep watch on it still, and have foreknowledge of crossings that nobody's ever fully explained to my satisfaction. They gather near elder trees and say very little. When they do speak, it's worth writing down. *Foked: Listener.*

The wild thing

Figure 7: Ripperthroat

Ripperthroat. Not a monster, exactly, though it'll kill you exactly like one. A large banded canine, pack-hunting, family-structured, and – this is the detail that unsettled me most when I learned it – the acknowledged ancestor of the domestic barker curled up by half the hearths in Hellsborough. Whatever got bred out of the barker over the generations is still fully switched on in the ripperthroat, and packs coordinate their attacks with a precision that reads as almost tactical. Respected, oddly, by some of the remoter Moors clans. Feared by absolutely everyone else. *Foked: Hunter.*

Cryptids of the murk

Figure 8: Barghest

Barghest. A dead barker that didn't stay dead – the murk thickens, the eyes go the colour and size of the moon, and it gets back up, larger and shaggier than it was. If it's bonded to you, formed properly in a place like the Wisewood, you have an ally with genuine ferocity. If it isn't bonded to anyone living, it's the thing standing too still at the edge of a graveyard, and some of what it takes from you doesn't come back. Most active at murkneet. Never look back to check which kind is following you. *Foked: Hunter.*

Figure 9: Murk Wraith

Murk Wraith. The revenant residue of the pained dead, condemned to whatever fog happens to be handy. It doesn't chase you. It waits, and it asks one question – usually something about the Hinge, or the dark matter leaking through it – and if you answer, or even hold its gaze too long, your luck turns badly and quickly. Nigel the Librarian, of Outibridge – a friend of mine – is the one the stories name. He answered one the year I arrived, they say, and was beatified for a martyr not long after. Whether it was the wraith that did for him or what came next, I'll leave to the Chronicles. *Foked: Lurker.*

Figure 10: Boggart, or Hob

Boggart, or Hob. The smallest-scale haunting on this list, and in some ways the most human – knuckle-dragging, squat, tied to a single location rather than a person. Domestic mischief mostly: thrown objects, disrupted sleep, doors that won't stay shut. It can't follow you past the edge of its haunt, which makes it the rare Dark Peak threat you can simply walk away from, once you work out where the edge is. Leaving milk out is said to buy you a round's grace. I have not tested this personally. *Foked: Lurker.*

The named horrors

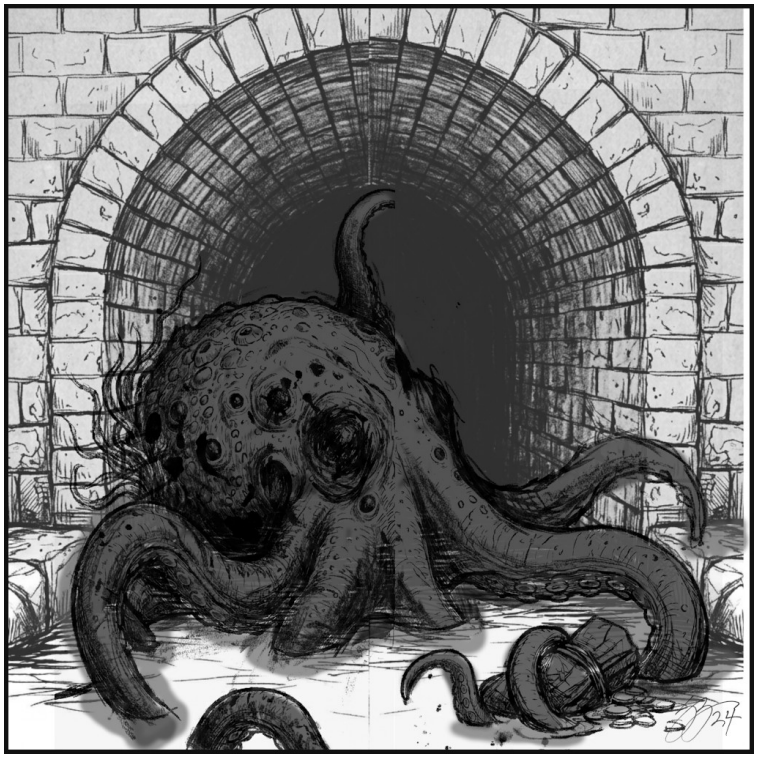

Figure 11: The Loxley Kraken

The Loxley Kraken. Wedged under an arched stone bridge for longer than anyone's kept count, a single bloated mass of tentacle and waterlogged hide, ringed with eyes that don't obviously belong to a head. It doesn't range far from its bridge, which is the only mercy attached to it. Everything else about it is exactly as bad as it looks. *Foked: Hungry (treated as Hunter for reward purposes).*

Figure 12: Yar Viranna

Yar Viranna. I have never seen her, and I intend to keep it that way. She keeps the deep cold sinks under the moors – the drowned pits, the sealed water where the murk pools and goes still – and she's the sovereign every murk wraith answers to. She cannot, by any account I trust, be killed. Only subdued: the sink collapsed, the hivemind channel she's climbing severed, her cold met and driven back under. She remembers who does it to her. If you're on the hivemind and the moor goes quiet and the murk reads thinner than it should over a sink, you are already standing over her draw, and the correct response is to leave before she notices you noticing. *Foked: Boss.*

That's twelve, and it's nowhere near everything. The full bestiary runs to dozens more entries than I've had room for here – consider this chapter the highlights reel, and the website the whole reel uncut.

Chapter 8

The Inconceivable

In the previous chapters I've talked about how the world developed, about how you can get to this place of dark matter, of the differences and similarities between here and where you are, in the off-world, and about how the place got its history. Now I'm going to introduce you to the most fantastical of concepts: technology so advanced that it's literally inconceivable.

The murk is the persistent fog and cold dampness that constantly covers Hellsborough and The Dark Peak, blocking out most sun and moonlight. Organic in large part, due to the general drizzly bleakness of the weather in the area, it's supplemented by the Nascenti-constructed humidity plants dotted across The Dark Peak, and exists for their benefit, but also for all of the denizens of The Dark Peak, because of the additional moisture in the air. It's thicker than it used to be, if you ask anyone who's been here longer than a decade or two – the plants running flatter out, the Hinge not sealing the way it once did, more of it every year, and nobody in a position to say why with any confidence.

I'm a folklorist and anthropologist, so cryptids and creatures of the murk are my stock in trade, and I've given a proper accounting of twelve of them their own chapter – see Chapter 7, if that's what brought you here. What I want to do in this chapter instead is enter territory that isn't really mine at all, because tech ain't my thing in the off-world, never mind this mind-bending stuff – but I'll try my best to explain it. Chapter 9 of this guide has links to resources that have helped me understand some of what follows.

The advanced technology of The Dark Peak

The murk. It all starts with the murk. Think of the murk as like memory in a conventional computer – RAM. Except the murk is nothing like RAM at all. If you reboot your computer, it wipes the RAM. You can't reboot the murk. But the murk is like working memory, maybe more like your consciousness. You can't reboot your consciousness either.

If the murk is working memory, then something needs to happen in that space, otherwise it's nought but a sterile void. In your conventional computer, you run code in RAM. The murk has scerm. Scerm is ideas, combinations of ideas, thoughts, combinations of thoughts and ideas. Fear of those entering The Hinge, the souls of the dead, the undead and the wanting-to-be-dead travelling down the long and precipitous Dun. Scerm is the prayers and worship of Dunlockslyn. Scerm is the missing ingredient of dark matter, the embodiment of the murk; the holy ghost – the ethereal embodiment of Dunlockslyn, experienced when the slime is slurped. Scerm is a greater power. Scerm is quantum code.

I should say something here I didn't understand when I first wrote about this: scerm doesn't just sit out in the murk waiting to be found. It has a way in, and the way in is the psycmask. Every native wears one, most from birth now, and the mask isn't only a filter keeping the worst of the murk out of a person's lungs – it's a door the murk uses to let itself in, when it wants to. I don't fully understand the mechanism, and I'm not sure anyone off-world does either, but I know it's real, because I know what a person looks like on the other side of a bad crossing, and it isn't the face they went under with.

If the murk is working memory, and scerm the code that runs within it, then The Dark Peak itself, to continue with this conventional-computing-biological metaphor, is long-term memory, or storage. Every thought you have, every experience your mind captures, is recorded in your brain. Before you doubt this, believe me: it's true. It's not storage that's the problem with your head, it's recall. It's the same with the murk – everything is written to the hardware of The Dark Peak; if recall isn't instantaneous, it's not because it wasn't written, it's because retrieval mechanisms are faulty.

Every computer needs input; without a way of getting data into a computer there's nothing more than the code in RAM to work upon. The organic network serves this purpose in The Dark Peak. Every plant – tree, flower, grass, moss – in Hellsborough and The Dark Peak reports a heat signature back to its nearest sub-station. This data monitors all movement in Hellsborough and The Dark Peak. All humans in Hellsborough – the jellyheads – wear psycmasks, which provide them with their infotainment, but also provide valuable data on the location and activities of the human population.

All of this inflowing data is processed by the fungal network. The fungal network – a vast, interconnected system below ground, covering the entire expanse of The Dark Peak. The fungal network, hence known as the fungal AI, or more succinctly, the fungai, connects all of the plants and people together below ground and is the communications medium of the organic network. The fungai is the decision-making organ, the quantum brain of The Dark Peak. The fungai is the processor, the CPU of a conventional computer.

Here's the thing I need to be honest about, though: the fungai isn't the nascenti's tool the way a CPU is a programmer's tool. Ask around long enough and you'll hear it put differently by different people, but the shape that keeps recurring is that the fungai has become semi-autonomous. It makes its own decisions now, and they don't always line up with what the nascenti would have chosen, and there isn't, as far as I can tell, anyone in a position to switch it off and start again if they didn't. Whether it was always going to end up that way, or whether something changed, I couldn't tell you. I'm not sure the nascenti could either, and I don't think they'd thank me for saying so.

From what I understand (which isn't much), I'm now stretching the conventional-computer analogy a bit far, since consciousness – human or otherwise – is non-algorithmic, and thus isn't capable of being modelled by a conventional computer.

What does that mean?

What it means is that advanced consciousness – superior to human consciousness – as enacted by the fungai, requires massive networks of organic neurons, the mycelium of the fungus, and because organic matter operates in accordance with quantum gravity, the fungai is the most brilliant intelligence ever conceived.

There are two original denizens I haven't properly explained yet, and they matter more to this chapter than anywhere else in the book. Both are found (if you find them) exclusively in the murk: Morivarid and Syncarid.

Big-eyed and friendly-looking, the morivarid are found in shoals, just like fish. In the murk itself, they're the cleaners – they'll suck out your eyeballs and eat your tongue before picking the flesh from your bones if you meet them in the wild, but within the fungai's own architecture, that same instinct does something closer to housekeeping: they're the administrators, the code cleaners, sweeping up the dead ends and the corrupted threads before they can foul anything downstream. I think of them as the fungai's own immune system, though I'm not sure that quite captures it either.

Syncarid are variably-sized, stingray-type creatures capable of enveloping and stinging anyone to death, but within the system they fulfil the role of programmers and synchronisers of the code that runs – handling event queueing and ensuring communication across the entire network. If the morivarid keep the place clean, the syncarid keep it moving in the right order, which I'm told is the harder job.

The fungai has no integrated circuits, no silicon at all. Entirely carbon-based. All computations are performed using organic chemical and quantum reactions. Conventional computers only operate in binary, but the fungai, being composed of cells, mycelium and neurons, is in millions of different states at any moment in time. This means far more information is stored and processed than a silicon transistor could ever manage, negating the space limitations of conventional computers, while also being geographically enormous.

This is the hardest to get your head around, since it's the most advanced, and why I saved it until last; this is far more advanced technology than you've ever experienced. Combined, The Dark Peak, the murk, the organic network, scerm and fungai comprise a massive quantum-organic computer.

And if you want to hack it, rockcrust is your gateway.

Quantum-organic computing – there's a word for it: quantanic (some call it quorgantum) computing – the name's still under debate. Whatever it ends up being called, remember you heard both here first.

Chapter 9

How can I learn more?

In trying to understand Hellsborough and The Dark Peak, I've read and watched a lot of things: books, articles, films, documentaries, blog posts, newsletters. Sometimes, you get an "oh yeah!" moment, when things eventually, finally, fall into place.

Read Hellsborough's own material first

Before I send you off to my off-world reading pile, I should say the obvious thing, which is that a lot of what I've spent years piecing together secondhand now exists first-hand, if you know where to look. I didn't have any of this when I started, so forgive me if I sound pleased about it.

The Hellsborough Chronicles, Book One is Van Hallam's own story, or as close to it as I've managed to get down, told properly rather than in the scattered diary entries I've been pointing you at throughout this guide. If you've read Chapter 3, you already know the shape of it – the Clown-xin wars of 1919 running alongside the present-day thread I'm living through myself. I'm not going to pretend I'm impartial about it.

The Legend of Loxley Bottom comes after Chronicles, Book One, but before Book Two, and is the story of Sophie Hinchcliffe's rise to power as the CEO of The Dark Peak District Council.

If it's the incomer's view you want – what it's actually like to be talked across The Hinge and dropped into a job in Hellsborough with no idea what you've agreed to – that's Civic Unrest, which follows Tom Calver, one of Phil Cargill's off-takes, from the phone call onward. I mention it back in Chapter 2, and it's the closest thing to a manual for arriving here that anyone's written.

If you'd rather learn Hellsborough by surviving it than by reading about it, Foked is the solo tabletop game set in The Dark Peak, and it'll teach you the Murk Clock faster than I ever could – painfully, if my one playthrough is anything to go by.

For the day-to-day, there's my own diary, unfiltered in a way this guide isn't, but now somewhat neglected, and only surviving as a relic of yesteryear. And there's Hellsborough Exposed, the town's own paper – I check it most mornings, out of habit more than trust, and I'll let you form your own opinion of it once you've read a few editions.

The Postcard Adventures are short, self-contained trips into corners of The Dark Peak I haven't had room for here – new ones most months, each built around a different denizen or cryptid.

And if it's the netherlander side of things you want, the Hellsborough Heretic back-issues are still your best route in – see Chapter 4 for how to actually get your hands on a copy.

Further reading and watching, off-world

Here are the things that have helped in my research. Where I could, I've leaned on material that's freely available. Rather than group titles by genre, I've chosen to categorise them by topics relevant to Hellsborough and The Dark Peak.

You'll notice none of it's linked. That's deliberate. Links in a book you've downloaded go out of date faster than the Heretic does, and I'd rather send you to one place that gets kept current than eighty-odd that don't. The live list, with every edition and format linked up properly, sits on the website at hellsborough.com/chronicles/4/6.

Culture in Hellsborough

Motorman, David Ohle Disturbing and unsettling glimpses into an improbable world, where omniscience, queer weather, synthetic jellyheads, bug eating and multiple organ implants are the everyday – a familiar tune to Hellsborough. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

1984, George Orwell Winston Smith was a diary writer too. His insights into his circumstances have been insightful when considering dystopian aspects of the Dark Peak District Council (DPDC), exacids and the Nascenti. Available from Planet eBooks in PDF, ePUB, MOBI, or as a Paperback, or on CD

Erewhon, Samuel Butler A distant mountain range and an entirely new civilisation, where the author explores the culture, describing as best he can thoughts on birth, death, machines, food and money. Available from Standard eBooks in ePUB and for Kindle or Kobo, or as a Paperback

The Violent Century, Lavie Tidhar A slightly alternate world set during the Cold War, full of the murk and strange powers. Available from Amazon on Kindle.

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley Developments in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning combine to bring about profound societal changes; similar to Hellsborough, and insightful. Available from Faded Page as an ePUB, Mobi or PDF, or as a Paperback, or as an Audiobook

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Fungal AI, the organic network, the hive mind, the humidity plant and psycmasks

How to Speak Machine, John Maeda AI learns from past data, and can only perpetuate and amplify previous behaviour – or in other words, if AI's masters are bad, AI will be too. Available from Amazon on Kindle (other versions are available, e.g. Paperback, but they don't feel like very good value)

Entangled Life, Merlin Sheldrake Fungi allowed plants to colonise the Earth, and all life grew from these fascinating and intoxicating extremophiles: "the divine within". Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback, or as an Audiobook

Evolve, Patrick Aryee A deep dive into the world of biomimicry – unique adaptations in the animal world that solve problems and help explain some of the technological developments in Hellsborough and The Dark Peak. Available on Amazon Prime Video

Stand on Zanzibar, John Brunner An amalgam of slogans, bits of conversation, advertising text, slices of songs, extracts from newspapers and general cultural detritus – an insight into the world of the hive mind and wearing a psycmask. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

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Evolution, extinction and the denizens of the hex

Of Ants and Dinosaurs, Cixin Liu Observations of ant technology developed during the Cretaceous have been fundamental to my understanding of the technology of vehicles in Hellsborough, and the evolution of the world and species equally so. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback, or as an Audiobook

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, Elizabeth Kolbert There have been five mass extinctions of life on Earth over the last 500 million years. As well as predicting that we're currently in the sixth, this book explores some fascinating evolutionary topics. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

Ancient Aliens Prepare to go down the rabbit hole. According to this series, aliens have been visiting Earth for millions of years. It's certainly helped me understand Milting. Judge for yourself. Available on Amazon Prime Video

Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future, Olaf Stapledon A far-reaching account of the evolution of humankind over the millennia: two billion years and eighteen distinct human species, of which we're the first and most primitive. Available from FeedBooks as an ePUB, or as a Paperback

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Environment of The Dark Peak

A Princess of Mars, Edgar Rice Burroughs The Barsoom series has been instrumental in my understanding of the world of The Dark Peak – from an environmental point of view, as well as that of the denizens – there are certain similarities which have helped me enormously. Available from Project Gutenberg in various formats

Prospect Analogue technology, poisonous spores in the atmosphere and a treasure trove of wealth known as The Queen's Lair; this film breathes The Dark Peak. Available on Amazon Prime Video

Stranger in a Strange Land, Robert Heinlein Maybe Valentine Michael Smith was a little like me, I think maybe he was. Whatever, this book has always helped me to grok the environment. Note that this is the unabridged version – the original release cut about a third of the content. Try and pick up the original version from a charity shop, or available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

Red Mars, Kim Stanley Robinson Rather than the story itself, it's realising that the geographical and technical detail of the red planet makes it the primary character – much like The Dark Peak is the primary character in this world. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

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The Hinge and the illimitable cleavage

Reality Is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity, Carlo Rovelli I'll have to admit that my knowledge of physics is woefully inadequate, quantum physics in particular – and quantum gravity, I hadn't ever heard of, yet this book helped with explaining the mechanisms underlying the illimitable cleavage. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

The City & The City, China Miéville Neighbouring cities occupying the same geographical space, unseeable and reachable only via political visa, international airspace, or breach. Beszel and Ul Qoma, as different and related as Hillsborough and Hellsborough. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback, or as an Audiobook

Snow Crash, Neal Stephenson The metaverse and a mind-infecting neuro-linguistic virus could put this book in the fungal AI section above, but for me it was the realisation that the nam-shub of Enki was an ancient artefact not so dissimilar to the semagram of Milting. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback, or as an Audiobook

Stories of Your Life and Others, Ted Chiang The title short story of this anthology really helped me understand what the semagrams of Milting were, and indeed it's from that story that I purloined the name semagram – an ancient method of communication and linguistics. The story was also made into the film Arrival. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

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The Netherlands

A Scanner Darkly, Philip K. Dick Substance D causes irreversible brain damage, which helped me understand the power and sway that rockcrust has in The Dark Peak. PKD has always been a favourite author of mine, and his story Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep was adapted to become the seminal classic film Bladerunner – both of which help me relate to the crosslands and the clowns. His story Second Variety (available as a free ebook from Project Gutenberg) is also something that always lurks at the back of my mind and has helped inform some of the stranger things here or hereabouts, symbiots in particular. A Scanner Darkly is available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

A Clockwork Orange, Anthony Burgess Nadsat isn't the language of the netherlanders, but their language is different to yours (most of what you read from me is translated), but that aside, the general feel of the novel isn't dissimilar to what you'd feel if you visited the crosslands. Like the film Prospect, this book could appear in multiple categories, especially the culture of Hellsborough. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

The Stars My Destination, Alfred Bester In the crosslands, the leader of the Moors clan is a gnarly individual who goes by the name of Scarp Southey – when I read this novel, the protagonist Gully Foyle, pretty much a disgusting savage, made me think of Scarp. Available from Amazon on Kindle, or as a Paperback

The Road, Cormac McCarthy The earth is covered with ash, it clogs the rivers and hides the sun. It's difficult to breathe and often impossible to see. Nights are dark beyond darkness and the days more grey than the one that came before. Available from Amazon on Kindle, as a Paperback, or as a film of the same name

The Hacker Crackdown: Law and Disorder on the Electronic Frontier, Bruce Sterling Early cyberspace (as it's now known) during one of the fastest technological transformations in human history, a peek into the parallel world of the crosslanders. Available from Project Gutenberg in various formats, or as a Paperback

Prospect I've already mentioned Prospect, but the analogue technology used in the film has very definite parallels to devices I've seen out in the netherlands, and the general feel of the film is almost like being there. Available on Amazon Prime Video

The Peripheral, William Gibson Like Chapter 8 of this guide, the Inconceivable, this final insight into my understanding of the world of Hellsborough and The Dark Peak is, indeed, inconceivable. The netherlands are poor, desperate and struggling, yet advanced technology is evident – this title (both the book and the dramatisation) has helped me understand the relationship of the crosslands with the fungai. Available from Amazon on Kindle, as a Paperback, Audiobook, or as a dramatised serialisation on Amazon Prime

About Pip Rippon

Pip Rippon is an anthropologist and folklorist, who started learning about people and their stories at the University of Oxford, and later got a PhD from the University of Hallamshire, focusing on folklore.

Pip's career has been spent exploring how cultures and their stories affect us. Research has helped the understanding of different communities and how their stories can shape their world.

Outside of school, Pip wanted to connect what had been learnt in research with real life, to share stories that aren't often heard, and preserve cultural traditions. Pip aims to work with others to make the world a more connected and friendly place.

Pip's other main project used to be described here as a work in progress – trying to get the bones out of the stories of a local character called Van Hallam, an impossibly old hunter who has been crossing paths with the denizens of The Dark Peak since he was a boy, and is still at it now. That project has a name now, and an ending of sorts: The Hellsborough Chronicles, Book One is finished and out in the world. It runs on two timelines at once – Van at fourteen, in the clown-xin wars of 1919, and Van in the present-day trouble Pip is living through alongside him – and Pip would rather you read it than read about it here. Books Two and Three are coming, in their own time, in whatever way a story about Van Hallam is ever really finished.

Cover and interior artwork by Bull Stuart.

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