

The Barrowmaze

Session 51 02-01-25 Ironguard Motte

Next Session 09/01/25 19.00

Wednesday the 11th day of Setherius, 07:00

The Brazen Strumpet, Helix

After a good breakfast and a final settling of accounts with the various tradespeople of Helix, The Hammers head to the stables to collect their horses.

Warhorses: Rampage - Gerald, Nancy - Sir Leo

Riding horses: Fenella, Reme, Shadwell

Riding Pony (same stats as riding horse): Arnd

Bidding farewell to a tearful Bella, The Hammers ride out of town, travelling east to the city of Ironguard Motte. Riding along the packed earth eastern road they make their way until in the late afternoon they encounter the main north/south road and turn north, heading uphill on the way to Ironguard Motte.

The gates of Ironguard Motte

The relief of the land conceals a distant view of the city but as they head further north they note the increasing density of habitation along the road, with worked fields visible behind the buildings and the impressive castle towers and walls gradually becoming visible to the north. They realise they are entering the outskirts of Ironguard Motte as the main road, "The Main" splits into two parallel northern roads. Choosing the wider westernmost, they pass a large and seemingly manually excavated body of water to their west and note the signs marking this thoroughfare as "Mill Pond Road". Making their way, they notice the folk of the city going about their business but the sight of a mounted armed party led by an armoured knight draws the attention of gawkers and idlers and soon a gang of children run along behind the party laughing and playing at their own games of fantastic adventure in imitation of the impressive visitors.

Reaching the end of Mill Pond Road they emerge onto Gate Square, noting a busy market area to the west. Crossing a wooden board bridge over the small river leads them to the defensive ditch at the castle outer wall where they cross another wooden bridge, before coming to the impressive gate house of the outer wall with the arms of the Ironguard family boldly emblazoned at the top of the archway. Traders and citizenry mill around the area with guards inspecting carts and managing the commerce in and out of the city. As they draw up to the gatehouse they notice the two heavy crossbows atop the towers slowly pivot around to cover them as they are greeted politely by the efficient and well equipped gate guards.

It is clear that the guards assume Sir Leo leads the group and address themselves to him respectfully, as Sir Knight, requesting that the party dismount and follow the formalities of registering before entering the city. They ask the Hammers to wait a moment until the official concerned with this business can deal with them. After five minutes or so a tall smartly dressed woman with a cheerful expression gestures them over to a trestle table and pile of ledgers which she frequently refers to. She introduces herself as Beryl Pizzak, a customs and trade official of the castle. After questioning them regarding their intentions... coming in peace, not overthrowing society, not conquering the castle, not subverting "The Ironguard way" etc she registers their names and charges Sir Leo one gold piece for registration and the others one silver piece each. With this completed she explains the basic rules of law and conduct and some general information regarding the city.

Laws and procedures explained at the Gate

One must dismount at the gate and lead mounts on foot. Mounted travel within the city walls is against the law.

Long weaponry and armour must be removed whilst within the city walls although armour may be worn whilst entering or leaving the city providing one is travelling directly to or from one's place of residence upon arrival or departure from the city. This means all weapons above daggers should be removed and stowed upon entry to the gates. A single sidearm melee weapon and at most a light leather armour is permissible within the city walls, concealed armour such as a chain mail shirt worn below normal garments is likewise illegal. Missile weapons such as bows and crossbows are not permitted. These rules are in practice slightly more relaxed outside of the city walls but the wearing of battle armour and the bearing of long weapons remains against the law and Beryl advises you to err on the side of compliance.

The portcullis is closed from dusk to dawn although access in and out of the city is possible for foot traffic using the (single file) pedestrian gate. One should be aware that the guards will carefully scrutinise those passing through during these hours. There is of course the final clause which explains by entering the district of Ironguard Motte that one is assumed to be fully conversant with these laws and will comply with them.

Beryl Pizzak gives you a brief idea of where you might like to stay, mentioning the top establishment in the city, "Jason's Arms", which has the sort of eye-watering prices that only the truly wealthy would consider, apparently some residents of Ironguard Motte save for months to dine in its splendid restaurant. At a more sensible tariff she mentions a few places within and outside the city walls and they settle on, "The Golden Lion", a good quality establishment run by retired sea captain Nelson Trumm with some of his old crew amongst the staff, it is conveniently close to the inner castle wall too.

In response to his enquiry regarding religions, Gerald is informed that there is a large Temple to St Ygg in the city plus a smaller one dedicated to Crom, also known as Cromm Cruach, the god of fighting prowess, and a shrine to Arcantryl, goddess of magic and knowledge. Apparently a larger Ancantryl temple is under construction and intended to replace the small shrine. St Ygg is however the official god of the Ironguards and the primary religion of the city.

As you pass through the gate, heading north along the bustling Gates Road, Beryl whispers something discreetly to Fenella, causing the Druid to smile as the official returns to her business.

The Golden Lion Inn

You lead your horses through the city, taking note that the arrival of an armoured Knight and his entourage has not gone unnoticed and you are generally greeted with favourable looks and glances albeit tinged with curiosity too. You pass over two large crossroads in the busy streets enroute to your destination, the large building on the corner of Gates Road and Backfields, The Golden Lion. It is very clear from the sign that the Golden Lion in question was indeed a sailing ship and as you enter you are pleased to find the spotlessly clean and scrubbed establishment, mostly tastefully themed in a nautical fashion.

You are greeted by Priscilla Trumm, Nelson's quite lovely daughter who quickly and efficiently gets you sorted with a first-floor corner suite overlooking the crossroads. The suite is similar in fashion to your rooms at The Brazen Strumpet in Helix but more spacious and well-appointed in its fixtures and fittings. Your horses are led away to stables just across the Gates Road. All charges will be consolidated to your suite so there will be a single payment per night. The daily living expenses at this location will be approximately twice that of Helix.

Taking the evening meal at the Inn's restaurant and whilst enjoying the excellent dining a message is delivered bearing the Ironguard seal. The message is from Lord Ironguard's secretary and herald, Dalen. He requests a brief meeting in order to arrange an invitation to dine with Lord Ironguard. He suggests meeting tomorrow morning over breakfast, here at The Golden Lion. The Hammers agree to this and the messenger returns to the castle with their acceptance.

Wednesday the 11th day of Setherius, 22:00, The Golden Lion Inn