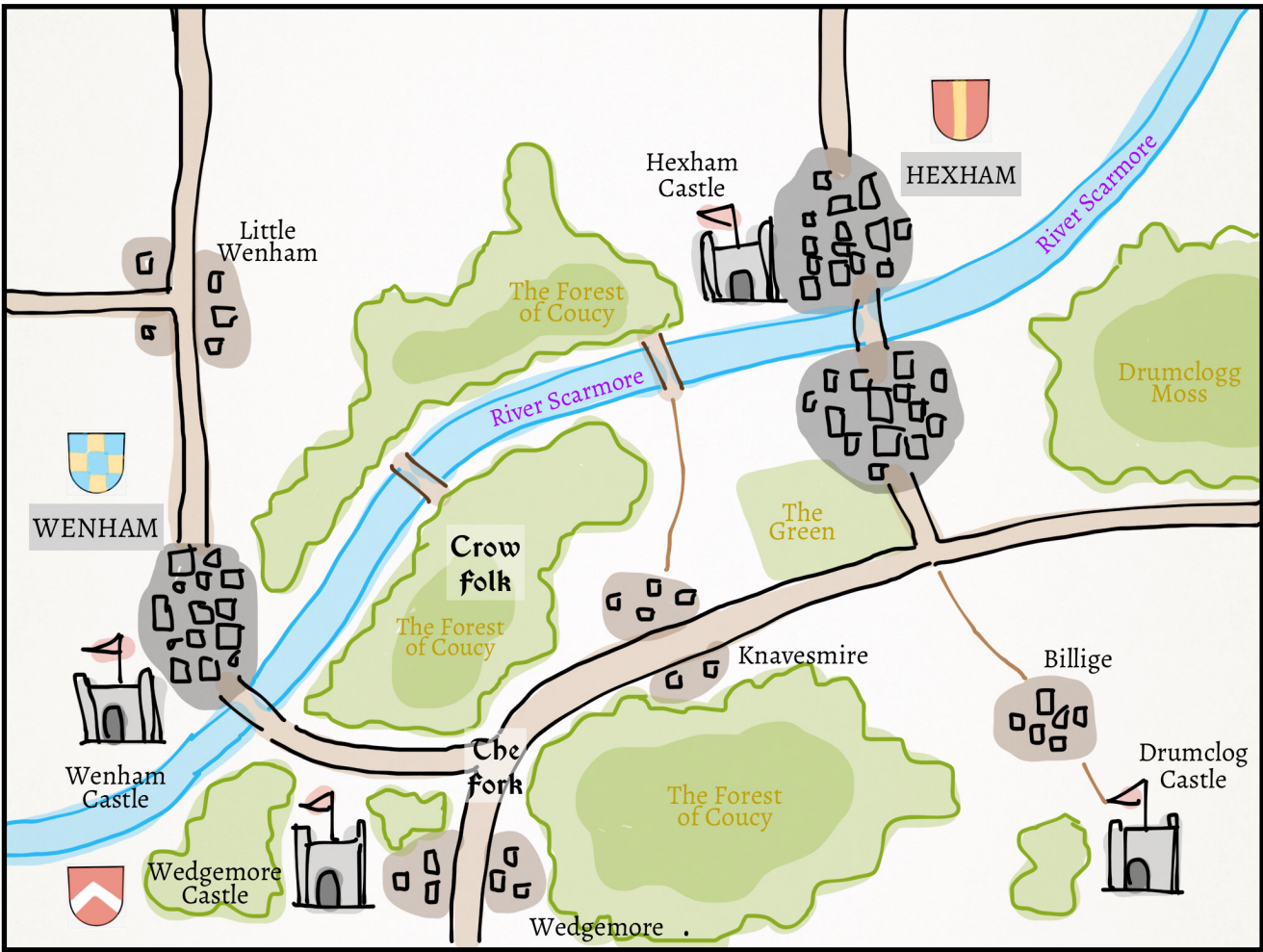
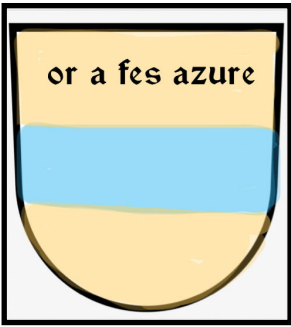
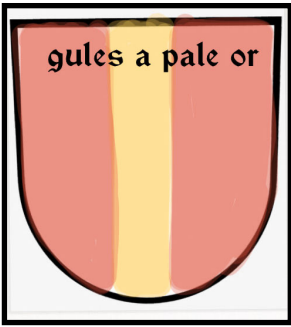


# An Adventure for **Merry Outlaws**

## Note

I've included heraldic notation for each of the mentioned coats of arms in the text.

*Gather round dear gentlefolk  
To hear a tale of woes  
A missing gown, a dreary town  
And corpses feeding crows*



## Characters

### The nobles

**Sir Roland Godfrey Earl of Hexham** (*gules a pale or*) Does not appear in this episode.

**Lady Margaret Chatsworth.**  
Betrothed to the above.

**Sir Gaston Chatsworth** (*or a fes azure*), her bother and protector on the journey.

**Sir Clugney Mannering the lord of Wedgemore castle** (*gules a chevron argent*). A minor baron under the control of his betters. Devious.

**Sir Conrad Payne, the lord of Wenham castle** (*checky or and azure*). Dislikes Roland, outranks Clugney.

### The commoners

**Engerrand Rolfe the Sheriff of Hexham.** An odious man, mentioned in passing.

**Watt Taylor.** Clothing merchant from Hexham

**Crispin and Odo**, travelling players of some renown.

**Osric of the north**, a mysterious advisor to Sir Clugney.

**Leopold, Edith** his wife, **Matthew, Morris** and **Audrey** his children. They run the inn.

**Emlyn** supplies the inn.

**Philip** the simpleton works at the inn. He is secretly a Crow brother,

**The Three Crows.** Despicable outlaw leaders.

**The Crow Folk**, a local outlaw band much feared.

## **Introduction: A cry for help**

### **The scene**

On the Wedgemore road, south of the Green, in a fallow field screened from view from the road by the hedge a man roasts slowly over an open fire. His cries for help are rising to a crescendo.

He is naked, tied to a makeshift spit with three crow's feathers stuck in his arse.

He is **Watt Taylor**, a clothes merchant.

Nearby real crows peck at the remains of his dead guards.

### **What happened**

Watt and his party were travelling to **Knavesmire** to deliver a wedding gown to **lady Margaret Chatsworth**, expected in Knavesmire this very evening.

His party was set upon by a gang of black-clad ruffians, the **Crow Folk**, his guards were killed, his wagon and possessions were stolen and he was stripped and left to die over the fire.

The ruffians made off cross country in a **north-westerly** direction not half an hour ago.



### **Watt Taylor**

Clothing merchant from Hexham  
Wants to get to Knavesmire to  
inform Lady Margaret Chatsworth  
that her wedding gown has been  
stolen.

The gown has been paid for by a  
subscription raised by the good  
people of Hexham who are anxious  
to welcome such a fine lady to  
their city.

*(Actually the money was raised with  
threats and violence by Engerrand  
Rolfe the Sheriff of Hexham hoping to  
curry favour with Sir Roland Godfrey  
Earl of Hexham. Only part of the  
extorted money was used to pay for the  
gown. Watt Taylor is unaware of this.)*

Watt was robbed by the **Three  
Crows**.

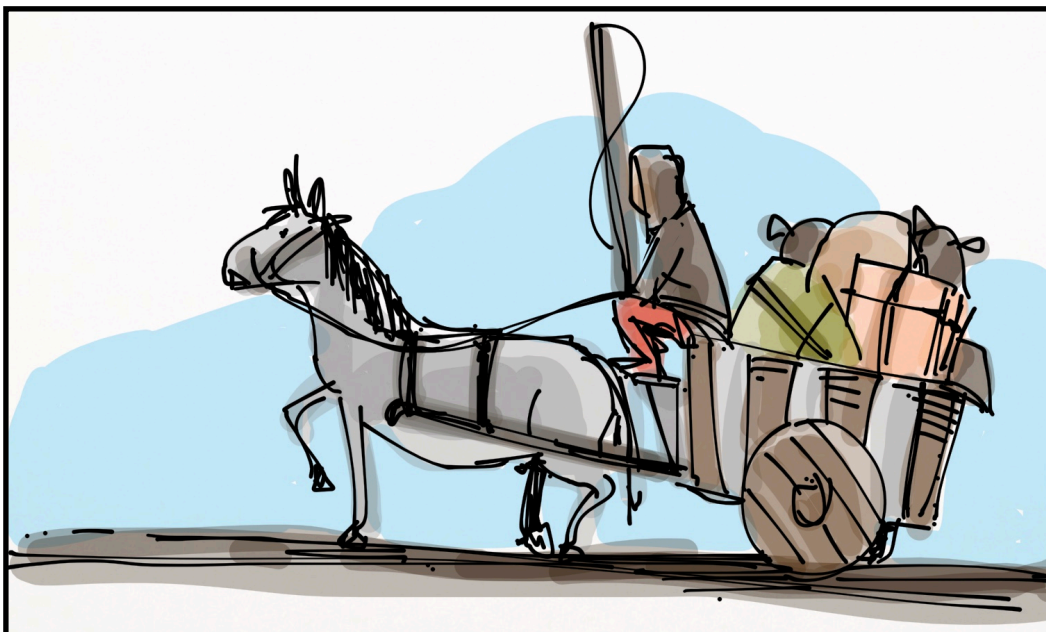
### **The Three Crows.**

**Roland, Bernard and Edward**, the  
Three Crows, are local outlaw  
leaders whose band of black-  
garbed villains, the **Crow Folk**,  
strike fear into all who meet them.

Renowned for their cruelty to their  
victims and their calling cards of  
three crow's feathers left on the  
victims. Many attribute a  
supernatural origin to the Crow  
Folk.

### **Emlyn**

May pass by with his cart of  
provisions for the **Three stoats and  
a weasel** inn in **Knavesmire** and  
be able to offer assistance.

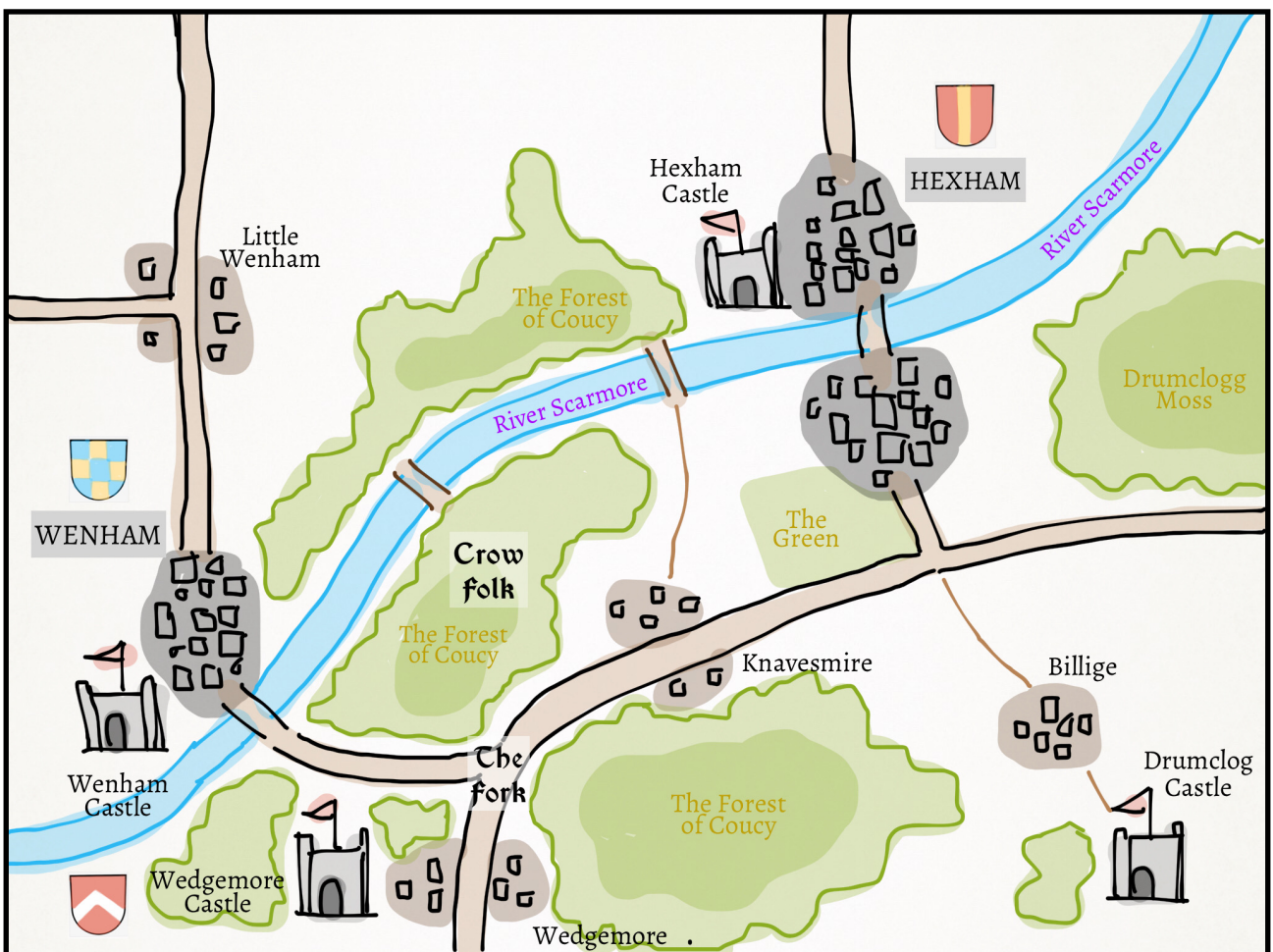




## Pursuit

**The Three Crows** make for the northern path out of **Knivesmire**, across the ford where they dump the wagon, setting it on fire, and then travel by the secret paths to the second ford and from there into the deep heart of **Coucy Forest**.

Eight men will be left as a rearguard hidden in the trees just after the first ford to deter and delay pursuit. The burning wagon is designed to draw pursuers in and distract them so the Crow Folk can shoot from ambush with advantage.



## The Three Crows and the Crow

### Folk

Dressed all in black, **Roland**, **Bernard** and **Edward** wear masks with beaks.

Their arrows, like all of the Crow Folk's are fletched in black.

**Roland Crow** stamina 8 Sword and bow 160 coins

**Bernard Crow** stamina 8 Sword and bow 200 coins

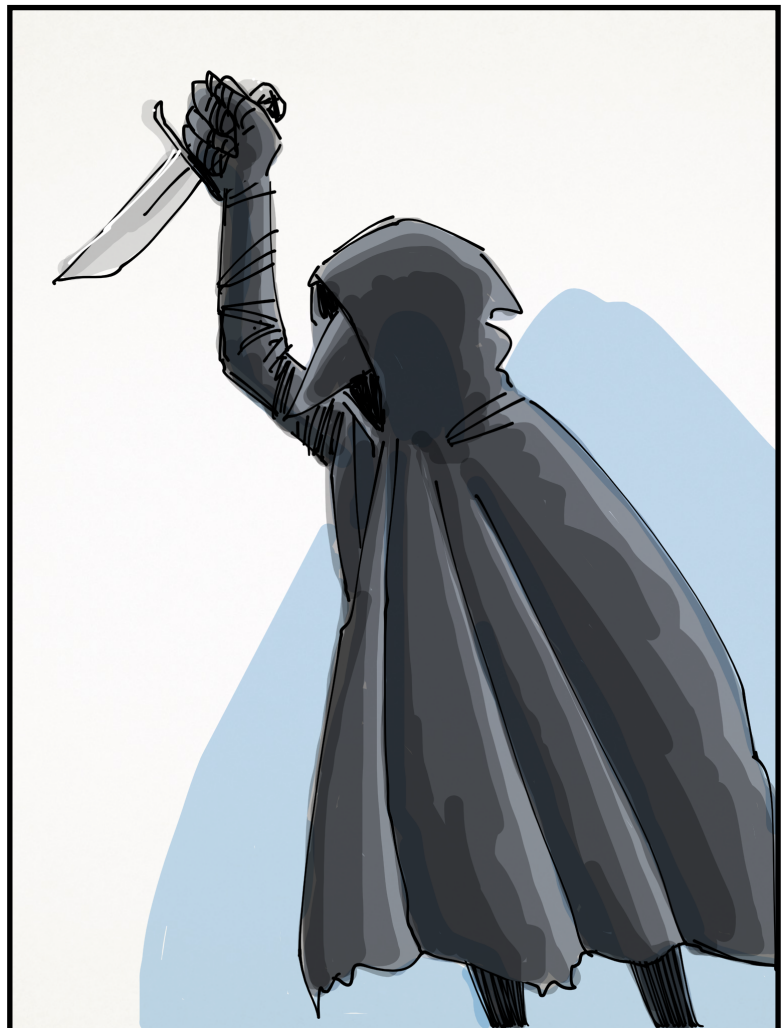
**Edward Crow** stamina 8 Staff and bow 90 coins

**Crow Folk** stamina 2

Daggers and bow 1-10 coins

Their camp is hard to find and very well guarded. The paths leading to it are booby trapped with pits and trip wires.

The Crow Folk will return **Lady Chatsworth's gown** for 300 coins.



## **Knavesmire**

Knavesmire is hemmed in on three sides by the brooding depths of the **Forest of Coucy** but the main **Hexham** road runs through it.

There is a clash of cultures here as the frequent cosmopolitan travellers brush shoulders uncomfortably with the particularly insular locals.

The path out of Knavesmire to the north links with a **ford** across the **Scarmore river** that leads nowhere other than into the forest. No one knows why this path has come to be or who might have traveled it in days long ago.

The ford leads, by hidden paths not easily discovered to the **other ford** across the Scarmore river to the west.

This ford in turn allows access to the densest part of the Forest where several outlaw bands make their homes.

### **Three stoats and a weasel**

There is a large inn with stabling called the Three Stoats and a weasel.

It is run by **Leopold** and his family, **Edith** his wife, **Matthew** and **Morris** his two sons and **Audrey** his daughter. He also employs **Philip** for some reason, who is simple and seems to be used just to fetch and carry.

**Philip** is often the butt of cruel jests and comments from the inn's patrons.

**Philip** is another **Crow** brother and supplies food and information about guests to his kin in the forest. Guests that are particularly unkind to him tend to suffer violent attacks on the road.

### **The Fork**

To the west of Knavesmire is the 'Fork' where the road splits south to **Wedgemore** and west to **Wenham**. The fork is a known haunt of witches and necromancers.

There is a gibbet there where outlaw bodies are displayed, a fine location for dark rituals and unholy pacts.

### **The locals**

There is little room for farming around Knavesmire because the forest encroaches so closely. The few locals eek out a living on small allotments and by gathering forest fruits and fungi. Generally Knavesmire has an air of poverty and desolation about it.





## Visitors

Once a week the inn is supplied by a delivery from Hexham. **Emlyn** brings provisions, linen and utensils in his cart from the town and makes a few coins by offering weary travellers a lift back the other way.

**Edith** never fails to send him off with a packed lunch and a long list of next week's requirements.

**Emlyn** and **Philip** get on well. Philip uses Emlyn as a source of news which he passes on to his brothers (*the **Three Crows***) but also ensures Emlyn is not robbed by the CrowFolk.

**Crispin** and **Odo** are a pair of twins, travelling minstrels and performers. They are often staying at the inn as they journey between Hexham, Wenham and, less frequently, Wedgemore. They will perform ballads and acrobatics in the evening.

Crispin and Odo have a ballad about **Engerrand Rolfe the Sheriff of Hexham** and his 'subscription' for the wedding gown.

*Engerrand Rolfe the Sheriff of  
Hexham  
Rode round extolling all folk in the  
town  
To part with their coin on peril of harm  
For to gift a lady a brand new gown*

*He collected a princely chest of coins  
With blows and threats and belligerent  
curses  
Some he spent on a dress full worthy  
Most he kept in his own closed purses*

They have a ballad about **the Crow Folk** too

*Dark as night and black as sin  
Led by brothers three  
The Crow Folk lurk around this inn  
They'll prey on you and me*

*Beware the deadly sable knaves  
Who lurk among the trees  
They send the low to an early grave  
And bring the high to their knees*

*They care not a fig for weak and poor  
They steal and maim and kill  
They're here right now, beyond that  
door*

*They mean you naught but ill*

**Lady Margaret Chatsworth** is going north to be married in **Hexham** to **Sir Roland Godfrey Earl of Hexham** (*gules a pale or*). She is accompanied by her brother **Sir Gaston Chatsworth** (*or a fes azure*) and a party of guards. Her dowry of 5000 coins is in a strongbox in her carriage amongst her luggage.

She is staying at the inn awaiting **Watt Taylor** with her wedding gown. The gown has been paid for by a subscription raised by the good people of Hexham who are anxious to welcome such a fine lady to their city.

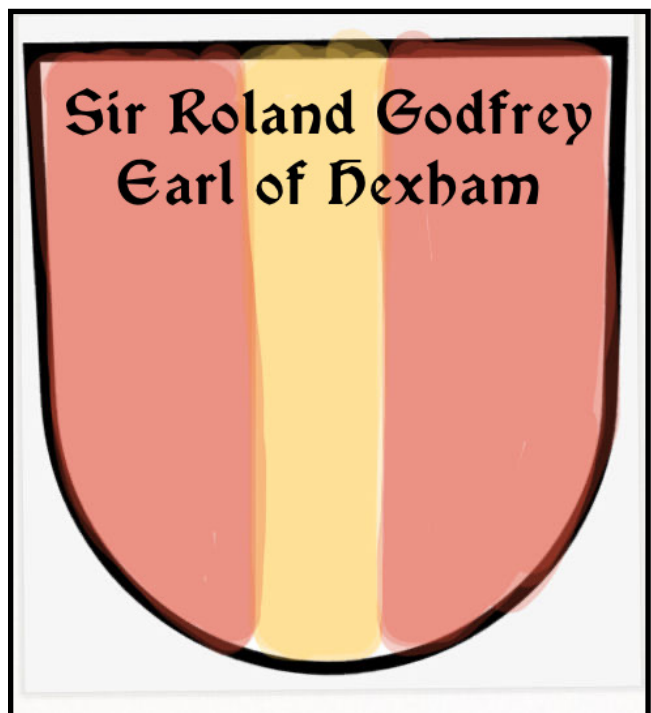
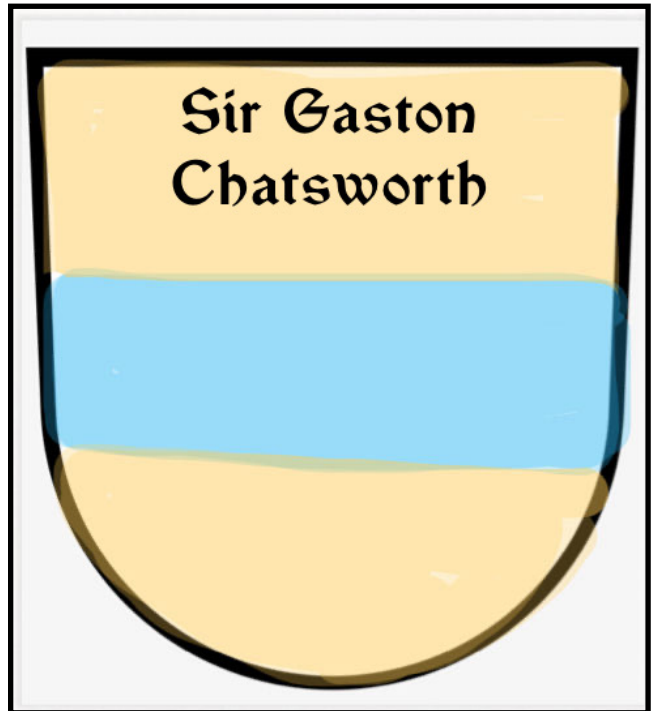
*(Actually the money was raised with threats and violence by Engerrand Rolfe the Sheriff of Hexham hoping to curry favour with Sir Roland. Only part of the extorted money was used to pay for the gown. Watt Taylor is unaware of this.)*

**Sir Gaston Chatsworth** (*or a fes azure*).

Stamina 12 Sword and lance

**Sergeant Tyler** stamina 5 sword

**Armed retainers** stamina 3 swords, clubs, bows, spears



**Sir Conrad Payne, the lord of Wenham castle** (*checky or and azure*).

Stamina 12 Sword and lance

**Sergeant Martin** stamina 5 sword

**Armed retainers** stamina 3

swords, clubs, bows, spears

Accompanied by a retinue of guards and servants. Sir Conrad travels to Hexham and points further east regularly.

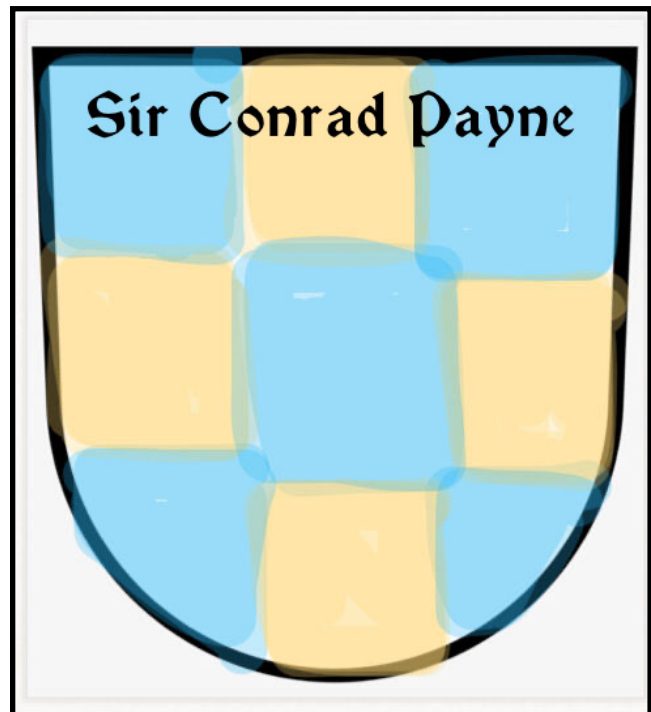
Sir Conrad is on his way to the wedding and will expect refreshments for his party. He will take every opportunity to belittle **Sir Clugney** in front of **Lady Chatsworth** and her brother **Sir Gaston** to impress on them his superiority.

**Sir Conrad** doesn't like **Sir Roland Godfrey Earl of Hexham** and is always happy when events make him look bad. He will make effusive promises to help return the gown, or replace it at his expense but will actually do very little. He will be happy to order **Sir Clugney** about though.

He will be eager to speed ahead so he gets to break the bad news

about the missing gown to **Sir Roland**.

Whoever returns the wedding gown will have the friendship of **Lady Chatsworth** and **Sir Gaston** (*and Watt Taylor*). Her influence over her new husband will be beneficial. **Conrad** would like it to be him.



**Sir Clugney Mannering the lord of Wedgemore castle** (*gules a chevron argent*).

Stamina 12 Sword and lance

**Sergeant a'Wood** stamina 5 sword

**Armed retainers** stamina 3  
swords, clubs, bows, spears

Accompanied by a retinue of guards and servants. **Sir Clugney** rarely passes through Knavesmire on his way to Hexham having his business generally to the south.

However, he's on his way to the wedding. He does not expect to stay at the inn but will demand refreshments for his party.

Sir Clugney is ostensibly allied to **Sir Conrad** although this is mostly through fear of having his position usurped by that more powerful and influential baron.

He is working with **Sir Roland** to undermine Sir Conrad's influence in the area with an eye to eventually replacing him.

If ordered to do things by **Sir Conrad** he will assent with good grace but not carry out the tasks.

Clugney is accompanied by an advisor, **Osric of the north**, a tall, robed and hooded man who has the look of a priest but displays no religious symbols. **Osric** is treated with deference by everyone, even **Conrad**.





## Events to inform the narrative

### **Concerning Conrad:**

Two retainers from Conrad's entourage are particularly unpleasant to **Philip**. Later they're found dead, their bodies pierced with black fletched arrows. This affront to Conrad's dignity angers him.

An old woman from the village accosts Conrad in the street intoning '*Poor lord Conrad, cursed you be, I see an early death for you, beneath a tree*'

Conrad retorts with '*for you, not me, Hag!*' And orders her hanged from a nearby tree and her body displayed at **the Fork**. Despite his bravado he avoids the forest from now on.

If the old hag is killed the men taking her body to the fork never return. Neither they, nor the woman's body are seen again.

### **Concerning Clugney:**

Clugney's men are the butt of jests from the other armed retainers. Their equipment is poorly maintained and cheaply made. They are referred to as '*Mannering's dregs*' but the villagers bring them food even though they are clearly on the verge of starvation themselves.

**Osric of the north** spends time amongst the villagers of Knavesmire. He enters their houses and treats them with dignity. Many of the villagers make a reverential hand gesture as he passes. None will explain if asked