The Town of Allargon (Chaubrette)

(*Brock*)

On the south bank of the Garenne estuary, dominated by a high steep ridge running almost parallel to the river and on which is perched a formidable citadel, is the prosperous town of Allargon. It is the largest town in the County of Allargon, which lies within the Aurillac Region of western Chaubrette, an area noted for its wine. The lord is Count Gui d'Aurillac whose castle, with its unusual twin square keeps, stands on a rise overlooking the north bank of the Garenne estuary.

Originally a fishing town (the river and sea provide a plentiful supply), Allargon has been granted royal charters as Market Town and Port, which make it one of the most important Chaubrettan trading ports south of Quadrille (which lies about 90 miles north along the coast). The waters of the wide and navigable river Garenne teem with boats and ships of all sizes; the majority are fishing vessels, but cogs from Albion, Algandy, and other parts of Chaubrette are a common sight. It isn't unusual to see a Mercanian knarr, or trading vessels from the Coradian Sea, making port here.

The strong stone spur castle which overlooks the town is the home of the Castellan, Sir Gilbert de Trelans, who is also the Constable of the county. With Count Gui's eldest son, Sir Gaubert, away in Outremer, Sir Gilbert has been left with an inadequate garrison and he occasionally hires mercenaries to deal with the county's bandit problem.[1]

Allargon has strong, stone walls, although these are of dated construction. A notable weakness is the river front, which is unwalled. The embankment is raised (largely to protect from flooding) with about half its length topped by a stout wooden palisade.[2] The castle is the key to the town's defence. The oldest part is its 30m-tall square keep and the main entrance is along the ridge and through a new, D-shaped gate tower, although a postern gate in the square tower (known locally as the Tour Lagardère) gives access via a steep path to the town below.

The town boasts three churches, of which the most important is the cathedral of St Estan. This church has a large square tower, which dominates the town's main square, and has a roof decorated with glazed tiles forming a diamond motif. The walled church compound also houses the palace of Bishop Bernier, a notable theologian and opponent of the Tamorian Creed. Near the western gate, or Porte Des Champs, is the church of St Genou, which is notable for having a tall, slim tower with a two-storey belfry.

The main square has a covered market (a 'cohue'), the fees from which go to the Count's coffers, and a large covered well topped by a statue to Our Lady of the Waters (Notre-Dame Des Eaux).

A traveller who is not a noble (who would probably find lodgings at the citadel) will find three inns (and several drinking establishments) in the town. These are: La Salle Des Pecheurs (1), La Chope d'Étain (2) and Le Cochon Bien Gras (3) – see plan, below.

La Salle Des Pecheurs (The Fishermens' Hall) is right next to the covered market and is cheap and popular with sailors, fishermen, and less wealthy travellers. It has a number of rooms which bunk four at a time,[3] but the innkeeper can arrange a straw pallet in the loft for a few copper Sous (Pennies) or a bench in the common room. Its menu is, perhaps unsurprisingly, mainly fish.

La Chope d'Étain (The Tin Tankard) is popular with passing merchants and has average prices, while Le Cochon Bien Gras (The Lardy Pig), run by the stout bald Baudri "Le Boudin", is the best (and most

expensive) inn in town and known for serving the best food. Both these inns are built around a courtyard, with stables and storehouses to the rear; access is via an archway in the front of the building.

Allargon has a large shipyard with two slipways. Hugon, the master shipwright, is a capable man who knows his craft. His yard has a reputation for building good ships, although his prices are a little above average. Hugon's yard will also repair any damage the crew cannot manage themselves, although there is often a queue for his work.

Sir Gilbert de Trelans (Sieur de Trelans)

The Constable of Allargon is a very important man, and one that player characters adventuring in the area are likely to have to deal with, either in person or through one of his officers or knights.

Sir Gilbert (more correctly, in Beaulangue, Sieur de Trelans) is a Rank 5 Knight of average physical characteristics, but he is a literate and a capable administrator. He is in his early 30s, 5'10" tall, dark-haired, clean-shaven and straight-backed. Usually polite, he is a proud man and conscious of his station. His dealings with the town have not been unduly harsh and he has gained a reputation for being stern but fair.

Characters are only likely to come directly to Sir Gilbert's attention if they do something noteworthy or perform particularly well at a task. He may prove a useful ally for player characters who are able to impress him. Rude, uncouth, and disruptive characters he will regard as riff-raff and have them removed from his sight.

Befitting the rank of Constable, Sir Gilbert is a rich knight and has access to a suit of plate armour, a fine warhorse and all knightly weapons. He owns a +1 magical sword called "Taillefer" (iron-trimmer).

Three Adventure Hooks in Allargon

Bandits and brigands plague the County of Allargon and some are bold enough to come close to the town itself. The Constable, Sir Gilbert de Trelans, short of troops and reluctant to spare his own knights, is hiring mercenaries to deal with the problem. Pay is weekly in arrears. A silver Denier is equivalent to an Elleslandic Florin.

- Footman (archer or light infantry): 14 Deniers/week
- Horseman: 28 Deniers/week

- Knight mercenary: 35 Deniers/week

One particularly awkward group of brigands is led by Ganix "le Borgne" ("One-Eye") and they make their lair in an Old Selentine fane within the Menard Forest, the eaves of which start some 10 miles east of Allargon. These brigands are unemployed mercenaries, equipped with armour (AF 3), crossbows, swords, and shields. Experienced in combat, they are unlikely to be easily panicked. Ganix also uses a crossbow, wears a padded hauberk (AF 2), but is a Sorcerer. They know all the paths and trails around their lair and have placed barriers and traps along likely avenues of attack.

Smugglers are a problem for any coastal region and Allargon is no exception. Player characters may be tasked with routing out the most obvious culprits and bringing them to justice.

One enterprising band of smugglers uses Hugon's shipyard as the point of entry for their contraband, the stacks of wood and ships being built or under repair make great cover. Hugon is not part of the band, but takes a cut to look the other way.

Problem: Hugon is a skilled and valued master and shipwright. Exposing Hugon and bringing him to justice might be doing the right thing, but it would earn them few friends in town. Sir Gilbert de Trelans might even hint to the player characters before they embark on their investigations that Hugon is "above suspicion". Can the player characters put a stop to the smuggling, or catch some smugglers without implicating the master shipwright?

Selentine ruins can be found among the marshes just a couple of miles east of Allargon. Deep within the swamp, they are hard to get to and have probably been plundered so are of little interest to most. The ruins are actually an old necropolis for a Selentine town which vanished centuries ago; there could be all sorts lying in wait in there...

1. Someone has ventured into the ruins and has disturbed something dangerous. The player characters are tasked with sorting out the problem.
2. The player characters are "befriended" by a local who lets them know about the ruins and the rumours there is treasure to be found. The characters may decide to take a look... The "local" is actually the head of a group of bandits who will lie in wait at the edge of the swamp for the surviving characters to emerge and relieve them of all their valuables.

Remember: all treasure found in the County is the property of the lord and must be declared to the lord or his officers. Do the player characters declare the treasure (and risk losing it) or do they keep it and risk being caught as thieves? (Sir Gilbert de Trelans will usually return most magical items – unless something takes his fancy – and about one third of any coin.)

Random Encounter: Performing Bear

A performing bear is attacked in the middle of its act by stray dogs, breaks free, and goes wild. The crowd scatters as the beast runs amok.

Bear: Attack 17, Defence 7, Claws (d8, 5), Magical Defence 3, Evasion 4, Health Points 2d6+20, AF 1, Rank Equivalent: 6 (see Bestiary, page 26)
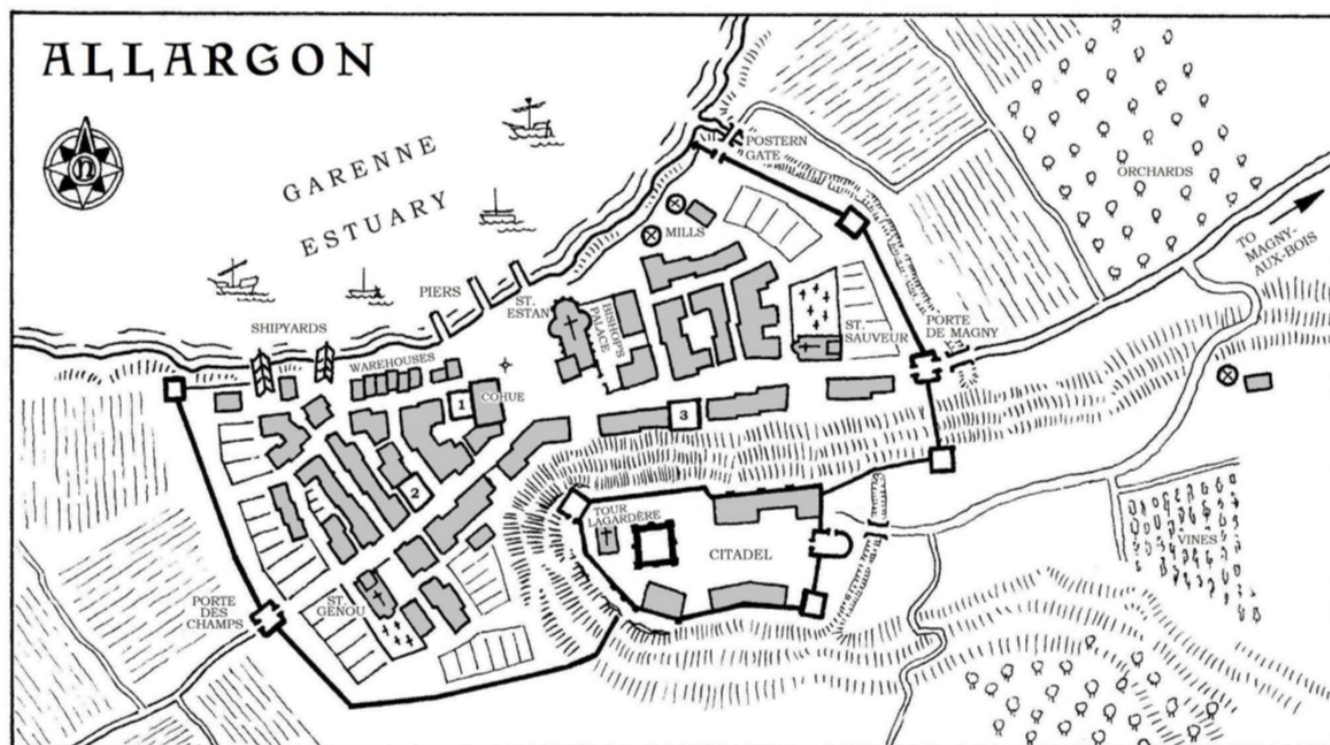
Can the PCs stop the bear without killing it?

If they do, they will be treated to a bottle of fine Chaubrettan wine and a good quality meal by Guibert, the bear's trainer and owner. He travels widely and may be a good source of information or

gossip.

If they kill the bear, the crowd will approve but they get nothing more than the experience points for the fight. Guibert will try to get the player characters to pay for the bear (1,000+ Deniers/Florins) and, if that fails, will try to get the "foreign riff-raff" arrested for killing his livelihood. (The town guards may be open to "negotiation"…).

Note: if just wandering about town, will the PCs be in armour? What weapons will they have with them? Will they take time to run back and arm themselves? Will the bear have been dealt with by someone else if they do?

This article first appeared in *Casket of Fays 5.*

1)

The last few years of peace have left unemployed men-at-arms with little else to do than make a nuisance of themselves.

2)

There has been a long-running dispute between the Count and the Bishop regarding funding to improve the town's defences. With the area becoming more peaceful over the last few years, this has lost its sense of urgency.

3)

You need to pay the cost of all four bunks if you want a private room.