Magical Morthbrood and a Mythical Moon

Cheshire folklore and landscape in Alan Garner's *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* and *The Moon of Gomrath*

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Introduction

Folklore lives in landscape as landscape lives in folklore. Exploring a landscape through a story is essentially similar to exploring a story through a landscape. Alan Garner's *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* (1960) and *The Moon of Gomrath* (1963) do both these things, which is why they are intriguing and fitting texts for a deeper analysis of landscape and folklore There are many scholars that have commented on ecological awareness, magic, and folklore in literature, especially in fantasy novels. My analysis of Garner's two fantasy novels will therefore not be new to the field, though new in its comprehensiveness. Where many scholars have focused their studies on either ecocriticism, magical realism, or folklore, I intend to combine all those in my analysis of the two books in the light of locality. Thus, I hope to provide a new insight into how Garner's first two novels fit in the genre of children's fantasy, as well as in the way they are set in a local landscape that contains a magical world, filled with folklore. The two main protagonists of his books are not originally from Cheshire, and therefore both the folklore as well as the landscape are entirely new for them. In this thesis, I shall argue that the folklore is an active part of the landscape that they live in, and through exploring this landscape, the children encounter the mythical and legendary creatures from the stories with which Alan Garner grew up.

Alan Garner has set his stories in the same landscape in which they were written, that is, the area of Alderley Edge in Cheshire. This is the area in which Garner grew up, and where he returned after studying at Oxford. The folklore of the area is interwoven with the landscape, which in turn interweaves itself into Garner's first two books. The importance of place is therefore immense, as the landscape has greatly influenced both stories. Garner explains: "I find the places where the energy is available, and I lift it out. I have to understand what it is, … but then I have to pass the energy through me, like a transformer, and by using its setting and

this square mile or so of Alderley Edge … I've got to hold on to that energy until it has lost all its historical shape, … and then release it as pure energy, in a new form" ("The Edge of the Ceiling" 00:17:23-00:17:59). The mythical creatures that appear in the books in part derive from Cheshire myths and legends, part of which stem from Celtic folklore, whereas other parts originate in either Germanic, Welsh, Nordic, and even Greek mythology. *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* starts with Garner's account of one of these legends, and Garner explains that the story is how he has heard it as a child.

As both *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* as well as *The Moon of Gomrath* are filled with elements of folklore, I shall first define my usage of terminology in order to determine my approach to these folkloric elements. There are two main genres in (literary) folklore: myth and legend. Both myth and legend are widespread phenomenon, but due to this, oftentimes the meanings of these words can be hazy. The word 'legend', according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but not authenticated. In scholarly use *legend* is distinguished from *myth* as typically involving (potentially) historical figures acting within an earthly environment, though supernatural elements are frequently present" ("Legend"). It is commonly used interchangeably with 'myth'. For 'myth', however, the *OED* provides the following definition: "A traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces, which embodies and provides an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something such as the early history of a society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon" ("Myth"). As Garner's first two novels contain mostly mythical creatures rather than legendary ones, I shall concentrate on mythology for further analysis.

The history of the analysis of myth is a rather turbulent one. In the second half of the nineteenth century, folklorists and mythologists started to disagree on the interpretation of myths from ancient Greece, as they contained ideas that did not fit the nineteenth century

civilisation in Greece, they seemed too barbarous for it (think of Zeus' adultery and the virgins sacrificed to the Minotaur). The anthropological school of folklorists studied primitive civilisation in remote places, so as to see a reconstruction of the prehistoric world in which European myths were formed. Edward Clodd, a leading anthropologist in the late 19th century, sees the concept of myth as something necessary for the intellectual development of man. In his eyes, primitive cultures thus prove useful for interpreting the creation of myths. The philological school of comparative mythology, however, argued that language had altered over time, and that "the original meanings and myths of the inherited names were forgotten and barbarous new myths arose to take their place" (Dorson 282). The idea that language had started to give a different meaning to existing myths could explain the barbarous ideas in Greek mythology. Their essence and meaning were in the language, and thus may have become lost as the language evolves.

Crucially, this second, linguistic theory disappeared with the arrival of psychoanalysis. As Freud published his *Interpretation of Dreams*, suddenly symbolism became more defined and applicable. Moving on from Freud's analysis, Carl Jung argued that dreams are similar to myths in having their origin in the collective unconscious. Dreams, however, are created fully unconsciously, whereas "myths are in part consciously created, even if their meaning is unconscious. Whereas dreams are private, however recurrent their contents, myths are public, though there are also personal myths" (Segal 101). Garner explains that he links the unconscious to intuition as well: "Intelligence … takes more than one form. There is the linear, which enables us to deal with the material world; and there is the intuitive, over which we have no conscious control. It is this latter intelligence that is the source of creativity" ("Revelations").

The creativity of a civilisation is where myths are formed. Jung sees mythology as something connected to the unconscious and, essentially, therefore timeless in its existence since their creation. Jung explains:

> The suprapersonal unconscious, being distributed throughout the brain-structure, is like an all-pervading, omnipresent, omniscient spirit. It knows man as he always was, and not as he is at this moment; it knows him as myth. For this reason, also, the connection with the suprapersonal or *collective* unconscious means an extension of man beyond himself. (Jung par. 13)

From this follows Jung's definition of myth: "a myth is a historical document. It is told, it is recorded ... It is the product of an unconscious process in a particular social group, at a particular time, at a particular place" (Segal 107). This particularity of myths is further explained by Claude Levi-Strauss:

> Their principal value is indeed to preserve until the present time the remains of methods of observation and reflection which … precisely adapted to discoveries of a certain type: those which nature authorized from a starting point of a speculative organization and exploitation of the sensible world in sensible terms. (Levi-Strauss 16)

Both Jung and Levi-Strauss suggest that myths are not only related to the human culture and unconscious, but also to the place and time in which the specific civilisation exists. The idea that place influences the creation of myths is shared by Robert Macfarlane, who sees landscape as something that helps shape the mind. Macfarlane argues that "cognition is site-specific, or motion-sensitive: that we can think differently in different landscapes" ("Foreword" ix). Additionally, he claims that the experience of landscape is mediated by cultural associations:

> When we look at a landscape, we do not see what is there, but largely what we think is there. We attribute qualities to a landscape which it does not intrinsically possess … and we value it accordingly. We *read* landscapes, in other words, we interpret their forms in the light of our own experience and memory, and that of our shared cultural memory. (*Mountains* 18)

The link between landscape and cultural memory is one that Macfarlane often refers to. In a broader sense, the connection between landscape and literature or storytelling is known as ecocriticism. Ecocriticism places nature in the centre of the physical world, rather than humans; humans are merely a part of the world around them. It is defined by Cheryll Glotfelty in *The*

Ecocriticism Reader (1996) as "the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature" (Glotfelty xix). This sense of interconnectedness of nature and culture is further explained by Macfarlane in his book *The Old Ways*, in which he argues that paths are the most traceable landmarks of culture: "Paths are the habits of a landscape. They are acts of consensual making" (*The Old Ways* 47). He explains why paths fascinate him: "The eye is enticed by a path, and the mind's eye also. The imagination cannot help but pursue a line in the land – onwards in space, but also backwards in time to the histories of a route and its previous followers" (*The Old Ways* 44). It is our imagination that 'reads' the stories that emerge from the paths and the landscape. 'Imagination' as defined by the *OED* is "the power or capacity to form internal images or ideas of objects and situations not actually present to the senses, … Also: the power or capacity by which the mind integrates sensory data in the process of perception" ("Imagination"). According to Macfarlane, the sensory data that our imagination processes comes from the history of the area. By travelling along a path, he argues, one travels through space as well as time. Every journey is a potential story: "The compact between writing and walking is almost as old as literature – a walk is only a step away from a story, and every path *tells*" (*The Old Ways* 50).

As our imagination is activated by travelling through a landscape, it is no wonder that fantastical stories emerge. The word 'fantasy', according to the *OED,* is directly related to the imagination: "the process or the faculty of forming mental representations of things not actually present" ("Fantasy"). The problem with this definition is that it focuses on imagination never being true. In Garner's books, however, this is exactly the thing that is questioned. The protagonists are children, because children are considered to have a greater imagination than adults. This imagination in particular is what allows the children to experience their adventures in the very real landscape of Cheshire. The literary term 'magical realism' covers this issue most accurately. Magical realism ties in with the ecocritical approach to literature and nature,

for like ecocriticism, it is based on "the interconnectedness of all ecosystems" (Samal 213). This interconnectedness is represented in literature by the use of imaginative forms, which create a space between the real and the unreal in which humans are not central, but the real world still exists. This approach is often used in the fantasy genre, or, more specifically, in 'intrusion fantasy'. Intrusion fantasy is a sub-genre of fantasy, and "has as its base the assumption that normality is organized, and that when the fantastic retreats the world, while not necessarily unchanged, returns to predictability" (Mendlesohn xxii). Rhetorically, intrusive fantasy depends on the protagonist's "distrust of what is known in favour of what is sensed" (Mendlesohn 115). The protagonist thus becomes a "privileged observer with an inherently more sensitive awareness of the true landscape than its desensitized citizens have" (Mendlesohn 136). As in Garner's first two novels the protagonists are indeed not originally citizens of the landscape in which their adventures take place, they fit their roles within the structure of intrusion fantasy perfectly. I shall discuss this in more detail for the two books in chapters two and three respectively.

In the first chapter, I shall provide context for the understanding of my analysis of Garner's work. The area of Cheshire is not only significant to the books for its landscape features, but also for its history, its dialect, and its culture. To emphasise the locality of his books, Garner gives the human inhabitants a distinct Cheshire dialect. This interest in local speech, as well as his move back to the area, show that for the writer, too, the Cheshire area is of importance. I shall provide cultural and historical context relevant to the area and to Garner himself, in the light of which I intend to explore some original Cheshire myths, legends, and landscape as a social, cultural, and historical 'reality'. The connection between history, folklore, landscape, and even language is crucial for Garner's experience of the area, and therefore for the context of his stories. I shall also discuss the revival of paganism, and consider its significance and relevance to Garner's stories. Finally, I shall determine the boundaries of my

research of the fantastic. As there are many different origins to Cheshire folklore, I shall limit my research to the origins relevant to the folklore that appears in Garner's stories.

Chapter two compares Cheshire folklore and landscape directly with *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*. The two maps that the book contains shall be the starting point, as this is the most direct link between the story and reality. Landscape features such as the old quarries, the hills, forests, moorlands, and lakes are directly taken from the Alderley Edge area, and therefore comparisons shall be helpful to understand the story. In close-reading the novel and comparing it to Cheshire myths and landscape, I shall explore the natural features of the novel alongside the fantastic features that the protagonists encounter on their adventures. Since Garner has chosen creatures from several different legends and myths with different origins, I have limited myself to the analysis of most, but not all. I shall argue that the wizard and the dwarfs are of the 'good' side, fighting evil. The Morrigan, Grimnir, the svarts-alfar and the mara belong to the 'evil' side, trying to destroy the good. These creatures all have a distinct function and origin in their respective landscapes, but are all related to one thing that connects them: magic. I shall explore High Magic as a central force in the novel and reflect on its significance as opposed to Old Magic, which is mentioned as a presence best left untouched.

In chapter three, I shall analyse *The Moon of Gomrath* in the light of Cheshire folklore and landscape. The landscape expands compared to the first book. The protagonists travel farther, roaming new parts of the Cheshire countryside. As in chapter two, the map provided shall be the starting point for my landscape analysis. In this second novel, however, the folklore is more directly interwoven with the landscape. Therefore, the landscape analysis in this chapter shall be more integrated in my analysis of the folklore, which is more elaborate and varied in origin than in the first novel as well. The central force in *The Moon of Gomrath*, Old Magic, appears to be connected to natural energy and moonlight. It wakes up some of the fantastic creatures central to the story. This Old Magic is portrayed as ancient and therefore stronger and

less controllable than the High Magic of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*. I shall explore Old Magic as a central force in the novel and reflect on its significance as opposed to High Magic. I shall take into account the importance of ancient Cheshire history, including the old Celtic language that was once spoken in the area, but is now used by Garner to name or explain certain phenomenon. My main argument shall be that the awakening of the natural magical forces is an important reason for the border between reality and fantasy to be crossed more regularly.

Chapter 1: The Essence of Locality in Stories

Space and time are the foundations of every story; a story is set somewhere and somewhen. Mikhail Bakhtin uses the word *chronotope* (literally, 'time-space') to describe this "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. … It expresses the inseparability of space and time" (Bakhtin 84). In literature and art, certain specific parts of a chronotope can survive, and consequently appear in a situation in which their productive meaning is lost. This can lead to "the simultaneous existence in literature of phenomena taken from widely separate periods of time, which greatly complicates the historico-literary process" (Bakhtin 85). This is exactly what Garner plays around with in his first two novels. The space is the set area of Alderley Edge and its surroundings, but there are things to be found in that space that were (and remain) unseen to its inhabitants. Similarly, time is flexible in the novels. Ancient myths flow into the present day, and present-day characters can partake in the ancient stories of the area. Myths with various origins re-establish themselves in a very real, but at the same time untouchable way. For this reason, it is essential to look at the development of the space (Alderley Edge, and more broadly, Cheshire) through time.

Alderley Edge is a rather small area in Cheshire. The area is known for its lone hill with a steep drop on one side. In its background lie the Pennines and the Peak District. This specific setting is where both *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* and *The Moon of Gomrath* are set, and with good reason. Alan Garner grew up in the area, and moved back there after having studied Classics in Oxford. He wrote his first two novels in his farmhouse on The Edge, and set them in the landscape around it. In an interview for *The Times* in 2012, Garner explains: "I didn't realise how difficult language was. In those first two books, I could not handle character, I could not handle dialogue — but what I could do, what I had been born into and absorbed osmotically, was an awareness of landscape. And that's the real strength of those two books" (Wagner, *The Times*).

The landscape around Alderley Edge is varied. The Edge itself is a sandstone ridge with some caves, but in the area around The Edge one can find "ferns and beech woodland, ditches, banks, and ancient boundary stones, … springs and tumbling waterfalls" (Catling 24). And that's all on the surface of the land. In *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, a large part of the protagonists' adventures takes place under the surface of the earth, in old tunnels and caverns. In the nineteenth century, local people used these tunnels for mining copper and cobalt. For a long time, however, people thought these mines were relatively modern. Of all people, it was Alan Garner who set in motion an archaeological investigation, based on a shovel he remembered from his primary school. These excavations "confirmed the place of Alderley Edge at the dawn of metal working. The members of the project believe that metal prospectors came to Alderley Edge in the Early Bronze Age" (Catling 29). In Roman times, there was also a brief period of mining, although from the 2000-year time period between the Bronze Age and the Romans, no signs of mining work have been found. Of the Roman mining era not much evidence was found except shaft marks and a bag of coins, and after the Romans, for another 1500 years the mines were left undocumented. By the end of the seventeenth century, with the arrival of the Royal Mines Act of 1688, the royal monopoly on mining for copper, lead, iron, or tin was relaxed, and local people began to extract stone for building. This stone mining reached its peak in the mid-nineteenth century, which is when the enormous caverns from Garner's novels were excavated. "Today's landscape – with its numerous paths, tracks and cliffs, its depressions and saucer-shaped tips, all now decorously cloaked in trees and ferny undergrowth – largely reflects the activity of the last 500 years" (Catling 30). Garner, however, decided to incorporate the local area in its entirety – archaeology provided him with ideas and context for his, as well as pre-existing, local stories. Neil Philip remarks that due to this, *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* "was not conjured from some airy inspiration, but drawn from the rock, soil and sky of Cheshire (Philip 12). Peter Hunt explains that this is a characteristic

common in English children's fantasy: "The English … are re-treading ancestral ground" (Hunt 11).

Jacquetta Hawkes, writer and archaeologist, explains that archaeology and imagination are closely related: "Geologists and archaeologists … [are] instruments of consciousness who are engaged in reawakening the memory of the world" (Hawkes 26). Similarly, Georg Baumgart acknowledges that "the history of geology is the history of imaginative reconstructions" (Baumgart 34). In 1922, this resulted in the idea that "to stimulate children's imaginative responses to the past", one would need "direct engagement with material culture" (Campbell 5). In 1958, this led to the poet Geoffrey Grigson's fascination with the "imaginative sense of place consciousness" (Campbell 5). He encourages his readers to get to know their local area as a way to travel into the past, and states that "maps are time machines" that "will tell you where to find … desirable things to know and explore" (Grigson 13). At the same time, Ted Hughes wrote his first poetry. Hughes studied anthropology and archaeology, both of which are visible in his poetry: "He wrote frequently of the mixture of the beauty and violence in the natural world. … Animals serve as a metaphor for his view on life: animals live out a struggle for the survival of the fittest in the same way that humans strive for ascendancy and success" (Bell 1). Grigson and Hughes were among the writers who sparked the beginning of the Second Golden Age of children's literature, in which writers like Alan Garner used their books to encourage children to "explore and interpret the elements of rural landscape to cultivate an archaeological imagination which took them along a borderline of history and fantasy" (Campbell 7).

Like Grigson, Garner uses maps as time machines. The maps in both *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* and *The Moon of Gomrath* correspond to real-life maps in terms of locations. In terms of usage, however, they differ significantly. All maps can be found in Appendix A, although due to copyright issues, not all have been included. Drawn by Charles Green, the maps

"correlate real and fantastical objects without hierarchy or delineation; it demonstrates diagrammatically the archaeological process Garner's novel narrates through the explorations of his characters, and in the process his text takes the reader on a tour of a very specific place" (Campbell 9). The maps are marked by legends and landmarks, rather than by roads and towns. According to Hunt, the map is thus "not simply a map of places visited; the places link with the myths and traditions which lie deep behind the action" (Hunt 13). This allows for the area to be explored in an imaginative way. The main legend in the book, "The Wizard" is also featured on the map. However, on the map it does not refer to the legend itself, but to a pub that was named after the legend. This creates "an intentional confusion of geography, legend, and culture" (Campbell 9). According to Hunt, this is typical for English fantasy: "it explores a national psyche … these maps are both reductive and suggestive; they stabilize the fantasy, while releasing greater imaginative potential – and … symbolize the tension that exists for the writer between the real landscape and the fantasy which inhabits it" (Hunt 11).

For Garner, this tension never really existed. In the 50th anniversary introduction to *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, he states: "I grew up on the Edge, aware of its magic and accepting it. I didn't know that it wasn't the same for everyone. I didn't know that not all children played, by day and by night, the year long, on a wooded hill where knights slept in the ground" (Garner, "Introduction" 11). While Garner grew up in the area, familiar with the landscape as well as the local legends, his two main protagonists, Colin and Susan, come from a different part of England. They find Alderley Edge mysterious, and despite the warnings of Gowther Mossock (the farmer with whom they are staying), they go in search of the iron gates from the story "The Wizard". They stray into what is to them an unknown area, and there encounter svarts, evil elvish creatures. In this instance, they are saved by the wizard, but later in the novel, the children again wander off the recommended roads, and again find themselves in danger. The ideal of children exploring a landscape archaeologically thus becomes an "existential and fantastic

terror for the child who strays off the map" (Campbell 10). At the edge of the 'map' that the children have in their heads, where they cross the boundary of the known, is exactly where Colin and Susan first encounter the magic in the landscape.

The magic that Garner experienced in this landscape as a child, and still as an adult, is partly created by the local myths and legends that have survived. These folktales, combined with ancient European myths, lay the foundation for his first two books. In 2012, The Journey Man, a collector of folktales, wrote a collection of Cheshire folktales down as he collected them orally from local people. Garner himself, too, has written down folktales that he has heard during his lifetime. Even though these folktales are all local to Cheshire, they often bear strong resemblance to other civilisations. Especially Celtic, Welsh, and Anglo-Saxon mythology have played an important role in the formation of Cheshire folktales, due to the different cultures arriving in Cheshire through migration, invasion, travel, or trade. Some of the stories have been integrated into the Cheshire soil, whereas others have merged to form entirely new stories. Consequently, the origins of some of the folktales are hard to trace and can be ambiguous. They do, however, all have a strong sense of regionality and locality, transforming the Cheshire landscape into something magical and meaningful: "Not only do the complex layers of history embedded (as it were) in the landscape enrich the texture of the stories, but the meanings of the landscapes themselves provide a subtext for the journeys: places *mean*" (Hunt 11).

The idea that places *mean* something also comes back in terms of language. Where stories travel, language travels with them. Places have names, and names belong to certain places. Robert Macfarlane argues that "the urge to mark places in a landscape with names – to attempt to fix a presence or an event within time and space – is a way of allowing stories to be told about that landscape" (Macfarlane, "Mountains" 191). According to Koch, this is exactly what Garner does. He "often lays great emphasis on the history behind place names. A place name often contains the history of that site" (Koch 40). The places themselves invoke stories

that the local inhabitants of the area have grown up with. Garner himself even insists that "there are no original stories. On several occasions I have 'invented' an incident, and then come across it in an obscure fragment of Hebridean lore, orally collected, and privately printed, a hundred years ago" (*Gomrath* 205). This sparks the question of what the word 'local' actually represents. According to Cat Ashton, the concept of locality needs to be placed in the context of post-war Britain. As the relationship with many colonies changed or even disappeared after the war, Britain had to renegotiate its identity and move it to British soil. Localism became a popular discourse, as it allowed writers to articulate specific regional identities, while at the same time lamenting "the modernization of England, and its accompanying war, industrialism, pollution, and destruction of green space" (Ashton 80). Garner is indeed quite critical of pollution and urbanisation in his first two novels; at the beginning of Part Two of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen,* Susan and Colin try to regain the magic they found in the forest previously, but "then the woods were peopled with townsfolk who, shouting and crashing through the undergrowth, and littering the ground with food wrappings and empty bottles, completely destroyed the atmosphere of the place" (*Weirdstone* 97). In his second novel, Garner again comments on the pollutive effect of humanity on nature by having the lios-alfar (light elves) suffer from smoke-sickness: "it is the dirt and ugliness and unclean air that men have worshipped these two hundred years that have driven the lios-alfar to the trackless places and the broken lands" (*Gomrath* 19).

Furthermore, Garner emphasises regionality by making use of the distinct Cheshire dialect in his novels. Charles Butler explains that as the Cheshire dialect is under threat, Garner's dislike of tourists is not so much xenophobia as it is an attempt to protect this regional accent: "In such circumstances the shutting out of strangers may be an act of self-protection as well as of self-definition" (Butler 120). For Garner, localism is a power, sometimes even as powerful as the magic in his stories. Gowther Mossock knows nothing of magic, but he knows

the land that they have to flee through, thus saving them from evil. He also owns an old parish ledger, which Colin uses in *The Moon of Gomrath* to find the "old, straight track" on which he has to find the plant to save Susan. Again, local knowledge saves the protagonists from evil. Locality, however, also includes origins of stories. Garner uses Welsh and Irish Celtic mythology in his English locality, suggesting that 'Celtic' is not so much a geographical term as it is a cultural identity. Celtic mythology has travelled from Ireland to Cheshire, and upon arrival blended with Anglo-Saxon mythology. At the same time, Cheshire borders Wales, and this border can be seen as both a connection as well as a boundary. The connection is in the nature of the stories, while the boundary is in the language used. Welsh stories are sometimes similar to Irish Celtic ones, while at the same time there are Welsh stories that are easily applicable to different regions. The stories of King Arthur, for example, have greatly influenced the Cheshire folklore. One of the best-known Welsh legends, that of King Arthur, can be linked to the legend of "The Wizard" that Garner uses in his first novel. The Welsh language, however, is vastly different from English, and does not always translate well. In Robert Macfarlane's *Landmarks* this becomes clear in the glossaries provided for each type of landscape. These glossaries show the wide range of words that each region of the British Isles uses, revealing the great varieties between landscape descriptions in different regions. Thus, if the landscape of a region does not fit the landscape in which the story was created, there may be no suitable language to tell the story in that new region. Therefore, as he explains, Garner uses elements of original stories and recreates them to fit his image of the Cheshire landscape and spirit:

> Most elements and entities in the book are to be seen, in one shape or another, in traditional folklore. All I have done is to adapt them to my own view. For example: *The Einheriar* were the bodyguard of the gods in Scandinavian mythology; *The Herlathing* was the English form of the Wild Hunt, and *Garanhir*, "the Stalking Person," one of the many names of its leader. … But the nature of the Wild Hunt seemed to be close to the Ulster Cycle of myth, so I have made the Herlathing Irish in manner and bloodiness. (*Gomrath* 205-206)

Noteworthy is that the existing stories that Garner used for his first two novels all involve magic of some kind. As the stories have different origins in both place as well as time, it is necessary to look at the development of magic in Europe. Modern scholars agree that the classic definition of magic was formulated in the early twentieth century by Sir James Frazer: "practices designed to bring spiritual or supernatural forces under the control of human agents" (Hutton 66). According to Hutton, there are five developmental phases of European learned magic. The first is the ancient, which focused on consecrated circles, central points of the compass, the concepts of natural elements and elemental spirits, a belief in angels and demons, usage of ritual tools, spells, and invocations, sacred geometry, and the drawing of spirits or deities into human bodies. It is this ancient magic that is used by Garner's Morrigan; in the novels known as 'witch-magic'. The second phase is the medieval one, which "placed a new emphasis upon the importance of complex sex rituals to gain power over spirits, collected in handbooks ('grimoires')" (Hutton 67). The third phase, the early modern one, is based on medieval magic, but emphasised the figure of the person who used it. The magus was "seen as an individual who needed to be both spiritually mature and unusually learned, and thus the mental preparation of the operator of magic was now held to be as important as the operation itself" (Hutton 67). This is the magic that Garner's wizard uses; in the novels known as 'High Magic'. The fourth phase was that of Enlightenment, and inherited practices from the tradition of scholarly magic. It also contained concepts of symbolism and was notorious for its secret societies of magi. The fifth phase, the modern one, comes with the invention of occultism, invented by Alphonse Louis Constant (pen-name: Elphas Zahed Levi). In the 1850s he started publishing works on magic, which was backed by secret societies and provided with a pseudo-historical background. "It revealed a world in which, ever since the time of Christ, evil forces had been working to undermine Christianity, decency, and stability, carrying on the struggle from one secret group to another through the centuries" (Hutton 71-72). His theory soon spread

across Europe, and half-way through the century it was customary to European society. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, occultism was a widespread phenomenon in France, as was paganism in England. In England, however, the revival of ritual magic was largely based on freemasonry, as well as linked to Christianity. Its main aim was "to search out the Great Secrets of Nature" (Gould 270). Attempts to explain these 'secrets of nature' have resulted in myths and legends, which therefore naturally are easily combined with the concept of magic.

As magic is a term that has changed its meaning over time, it is necessary to distinguish between the different kinds of magic that appear in Garner's novels. Stewart and Strathern suggest that "a distinction can be made between witchcraft as the expression of a malign power in a person's body and sorcery as the use of a magical craft or knowledge to harm or benefit others" (Stewart 1-2). Garner's Morrigan uses witchcraft ('Old Magic' in the novels), corresponding to the most ancient phase of European magic. Stewart explains that "witchcraft is seen as a power belonging to persons through their bodies or spirits, giving them an ability to fly out of the body or to transform themselves into other creatures and to kill, harm, or inflict sickness on those whom they intend to weaken. Characteristically, the witch is seen as a kind of cannibal, eating the victim's life-force as a way of self-augmentation" (Stewart 6). As Garner's Morrigan is also a shape-shifter, it is safe to say she fits in the general European definition of ancient magic or witchcraft.

The wizard in Garner's novels uses what Garner defines as 'High Magic'. It is described in *The Moon of Gomrath* as magic that bends to the will, magic "of thoughts and spells … made with a reason" (*Moon of Gomrath* 110). This can be related to Hutton's third phase, as the wizard is portrayed as a wise man with great life experience. Stewart describes this kind of magic as sorcery, and explains that "sorcerers are also seen as destroying a victim's life-force, not by directly consuming it but by inflicting sickness through magical means" (Stewart 6). The magical means come from the magus, but do not reflect back on the magus. This could refer to

potions or poisons, but also to the staff through which Garner's wizard controls his magic, as well as to Firefrost, the Weirdstone of Brisingamen that protects the sleeping knights in the hill. The stone, as well as the sleeping nights, are a symbol of the timelessness of magic. Even though magic went through several phases through the centuries, in Garner's novels Old and High Magic coexist. The landscape 'lives', and is "haunted by presences that do not quite belong to the present. 'Now' in Garner signifies a moment sometimes extended over thousands of years" (Jones 4). As a consequence, Garner's novels incorporate folktales that have no definite origin in time, but that still are very much alive in the local community around Alderley Edge and wider Cheshire.

Chapter 2: Landscape and Myth in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*

"In every prayer I offer up, Alderley, and all belonging to it, will be ever a living thought in my heart. REV. EDWARD STANLEY: 1837". This is the first sentence written in Alan Garner's first novel, *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*. For reasons that shall become clear, it is noteworthy that this reverend was an expert in ornithology; the study of birds. This quote, however, is not the beginning of the story. The story starts slightly before it, with a map (see Appendix A, Fig. 1). This map is the first of two, both used as a reference for separate parts of the novel. This first map belongs to Part 1 and gives a clear overview of the geography as well as the local folklore around The Edge. It is noteworthy that the map is geographically accurate and therefore incorporates the actual local landscape in the setting of the story. Moreover, it refers not only to the geographical places, but also to the legends belonging to those places.

The second map (see Appendix A, fig. 2) belongs to Part 2 of the novel. It is a necessary addition, as from this point in the book, Colin and Susan travel outside the boundaries of the first map. This second map is vital to follow and understand the final journey the protagonists undertake in the novel. Their journey is drawn into the map, and some of their encounters with evil forces are marked and labelled. On both maps, the reader can see tiny drawings of the locations, as if to create an awareness of the landscape features of the specific spots. This awareness is crucial to the reader's imagination, as the landscape allows the folklore to exist, while the folklore allows the landscape to come to life.

Colin and Susan, the main protagonists, are two children that come to stay with the Mossocks on their farm in Alderley Edge. The children explore the landscape and encounter the wizard from a local legend, as well as the witch who tries to destroy the magical stone from the same legend. The children stumble into the magical world through Susan's possession of the stone (which the wizard had lost), after which they become part of a big adventure that has

them crawling through the mines under the Edge, as well as through the woodland and moors around the Edge. With the help of the wizard and two dwarfs, the children help return the stone to the wizard. Their adventure takes place in the local landscape through which magical and mythical creatures come to life.

The landscape in which the story takes place is surprisingly varied within a relatively limited area. The folklore that Colin and Susan encounter also originates in various different civilisations or stages of civilisation, exposing the historical diversity of Cheshire. Cheshire is geographically close to the border of Wales, and thus incorporates many Welsh myths and legends in its own folklore. Additionally, some Irish Celtic mythology has become well-known in the area. However, as Cheshire has for a large part been ruled by the Anglo-Saxons, there are also many Norse and Germanic folkloric elements that have blended in with the local folklore of Cheshire. There is one particular legend, however, that is very specifically significant to Garner's story: "The Legend of Alderley". This legend is engrained in the local community and landscape in which the protagonists have their adventures and fantastic encounters. Even some of the fantastic figures they meet can be traced directly to the legend. Larrington explains: "Garner fuses the widespread legend of the sleepers in the cave, localised at Alderley Edge …, with elements taken from Norse, Anglo-Saxon and, increasingly, Celtic sources" (Larrington 72).

The legend itself can be traced back to Parson Shrigley, who, according to a Perambulator who sent a letter with the story to the *Manchester Mail* in 1805, "used to relate the following story" until his death in 1776 ("Letter"). In the letter, the writer suggests that the story took place 80 years before, which would suggest the story was already known around 1696. In the letter, the legend tells the story of a farmer from Mobberley who wants to sell his milk-white steed, but meets a figure "of more than common height, clad in a sable vest … over his head he wore a cowl, which bent over his ghastly visage … in his hand he held a staff of

black wood" ("Letter"). The figure turns out to be an enchanter who protects "soldiers, accoutred in the heavy chain mail of the ancient warriors of England" ("Letter"). The soldiers are "the Caverned Warriors, who are doomed by the good Genius of Britain" until they "rise to turn the fate of Britain … when George, the son of George, shall reign" ("Letter"). The legend was first officially published in the form of a pamphlet as "The Iron Gates". In the pamphlet it is told in verse, though no separate stanzas are used. The figure of the enchanter is similar to the figure in the letter: "He saw a form black huge and broad- Above the human height it seemed, Quick light'ning from his eye-balls gleamed;" (Adams). The knights are simply described as armed men, who again are waiting to fight for England during the reign of "royal George, great George's Son" (Adams).

In Egerton Leigh's collection of Cheshire ballads and legends of 1867, there are two versions of the legend, both in verse. The first version, without separate stanzas, appears to have been found in *The Guide to Alderley* and is very similar to "The Iron Gates" found in the pamphlet. The second version, which does contain separate stanzas, is written by James Roscoe. In Roscoe's legend, the wizard looks like a monk, and the farmer is a miller. Roscoe suggests that the wizard is Merlin, while the leader of the sleeping knights is King Arthur. King Arthur is an important figure in Welsh mythology and therefore it is hardly surprising that there are stories about him that travelled over the border into Cheshire. Alan Garner himself has been inspired by the stories of *The Mabinogion*, a collection of eleven Welsh tales from the Middle Ages that include several Arthurian tales as well. The name of Garner's wizard, Cadellin, is taken straight from the story of *Culhwch and Olwen*, and Angharad Goldenhand is even taken from the collection in her entirety as goddess or fairy queen.

The significance of "The Legend of Alderley" does not limit itself to cultural historical referencing. In *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, it is used to pull the reader into the fantastical world that lives under the surface of reality and foreshadows the adventures the protagonists

are to encounter. Garner's work "typically involves reinventing a legend or folk tale, usually from this immediate area, so creating a mystical reality, into which stumble characters from the modern world" (Chalmers). These modern world characters are Susan and Colin, who are as new to the area as the reader is. Through the eyes and adventures of the two children, the reader experiences the local landscape of Alderley Edge and the folklore of wider Cheshire. This exploration starts when the children arrive by train, from which they are collected by horse carriage. This difference in transport illustrates the difference between the children's origin and their destination. Their journey to Alderley Edge is typical for a 1960s children's fantasy novel. "Indeed, a stock way to begin a book was with the train bringing the protagonist … to the site of the adventure" (Butler 1). The journey, according to Hunt, is "often a metaphor for exploration and education" (Hunt 11). The exploration is reflected in the rural landscape, whereas the education is more related to the folklore and the local customs and people. The first people the children meet are Beth and Gowther Mossock. Beth had nursed Susan's and Colin's mum, but despite that, the children had never met her or her husband, Gowther. The farm on which the Mossocks live, Highmost Redmanhey, has no electricity and therefore is quite shut off from the "outer" world. The Mossocks are very familiar with the area, as their family has lived in the area for generations. Alderley Edge as they know it has been based on the real Alderley Edge from Garner's childhood and teenage years. As a result, the landscape, dialect, and folklore in the novel are accurate and representative of the area.

When Colin and Susan first explore the landscape, they have not yet heard of the Legend of Alderley. They first encounter an inn, The Wizard. Its sign above the door shows a scene from the legend, though they do not yet recognise it. On their way back, the children come across the Wizard's Well, "a stone trough into which water was dripping from an overhanging cliff, and high in the rock was carved the face of a bearded man, and underneath was engraved:

DRINK OF THIS
AND TAKE THY FILL
FOR THE WATER FALLS
BY THE WIZHARDS WILL
(*Weirdstone* 26)

In his memoir, Garner explains that "People said my grandad's grandad had made it, and someone else a bit later had carved the words underneath" (*Memoir* 109-110).

The reason Susan and Colin are pulled in the magical world around Alderley Edge is the bracelet Susan wears. It contains a stone which Susan calls her 'Tear', but Beth Mossock calls it the Bridestone, a family heirloom. The reason Susan owns it is that Beth never had any children of her own, and so Susan's mum was the closest she had to a daughter, thus passing on the family heirloom to her. The stone is the link to the legend of Alderley; it is in fact Firefrost, the Weirdstone of Brisingamen, and it contains powerful magic. Firefrost is a symbol of possession. It is a very physical form of possession, and operates on only one level. The stone in the bracelet is the reason the evil forces pursue Colin and Susan, as it not only protects the sleeping knights, but is also able to destroy its enemies. It contains "the strongest magic the world has known, magic that would stay the sleeping warriors from growing old or weak, and that no evil could ever break" (*Weirdstone* 49). This magic is held in place by the wizard Cadellin, who turns out to be the wizard from the legend.

Firefrost is immediately recognised by Selina Place, the first fantastic figure that the children encounter. She presents herself to them in her human form, which means Susan and Colin do not recognise the strangeness nor the gravity of the situation for what it turns out to be later on in the book. Selina Place, also known as the Morrigan and Shapeshifter, is described in detail by Garner through the eyes of Susan:

> "She looked about forty-five years old, was powerfully built ("fat" was the word Susan used to describe her), and her head rested firmly on her shoulders without appearing to have much of a neck at all. Two lines ran from either side of her nose to the corners of her wide, thin-lipped mouth, and her eyes were rather too small for her broad head.

> Strangely enough, her legs were thin and spindly, so that in outline she resembled a well-fed sparrow, but again that was Susan's description" (Garner 27).

Susan's description, even though she doesn't know it yet, fits the character of Selina Place perfectly. As a shapeshifter, she regularly changes herself into a bird, usually a carrion crow. Significant here is that Alderley Edge is often described as an area that lacks birds, despite being forested. In an interview with Garner, Robert Chalmers, who grew up in Manchester, explains: "There was a widely held belief … that Alderley Edge would not be a place you'd want to be at night. People said no bird would sing there" (Chalmers). Garner responds to this, saying: "The thing about birds is not strictly true, but it is something I grew up with. There is not a lot of birdsong there, considering the number of trees" (Chalmers). Despite knowing the lack of birds to not be accurate, Garner does use the local belief in his first novel: ""Birds," said Gowther. "There is none. Not worth speaking of, onyroad. Flies, yes; but birds no. It's always been like that, to my knowledge, and I conner think why it should be. … No, it's very strange, when you come to weigh it up."" (Weirdstone 67). The quiet of the forest, combined with the presence of birds commonly known in myths as a symbol of death, adds to the uncanny, eerie atmosphere of the area, which foreshadows the events to come.

The eeriness of the countryside has been defined by Robert Macfarlane in an essay for *The Guardian*: the eerie is "that form of fear that is felt first as unease, then as dread, and which is incited by glimpses and tremors rather than by outright attack. … Its physical consequences tend to be gradual and compound: swarming in the stomach's pit, the tell-tale prickle of the skin" ("Eeriness"). The cultivated and idyllic English countryside is thus transformed into a troubling landscape, no longer symbolising civilisation and safety. This allows for the imagination to recognise evil things lurking in the space. However, there needs to be a historical background to these dark forces inhabiting the area: "it are those features of the landscape which signify a violent or mysterious past that load the landscape with an eerie quality" (Koch 17).

These features can take the form of stone circles, like the one in which Susan and Colin encounter Grimnir for the first time. They can also be boulders, like the Golden Stone, or man-made objects, like wells (for example the Wizard's Well). According to Koch, "the English landscape lends itself well for evoking the past because it is such an "old" landscape with a rich history" (Koch 19).

Directly linked to landscape features are weather features. Descriptions of the weather can be a powerful tool to create a certain atmosphere in a landscape. Garner uses magic mist as a powerful tool to change the scenery. When Colin and Susan are on their way to find the wizard, Cadellin, they ignore his advice always to follow the elf-road, which should protect them from evil magic, but instead walk through the forest until they

> came to a level stretch of ground where the bracken thinned and gave place to rich turf, dappled with sunlight. And here, in the midst of so much beauty, they learnt too late that wizards' words are seldom idle, and traps well sprung hold hard their prey. Out of the ground on all sides swirled tongues of thick white mist, which merged into a rolling fog about the children's knees; it paused, gathered itself, and leapt upwards, blotting out the sun and the world of life and light. (*Weirdstone* 72)

It turns out this mist moved around with them, wherever they walk to, and after a while the children end up in the middle of a stone circle. Stone circles are a common feature in the English eerie, as "these stone formations form on the one hand one of the oldest man-made part of the landscape, but on the other it is still not entirely clear what purpose they served exactly. … These stones allow for many interpretations, projections, and fears" (Koch 50). It is no wonder then, that within the circle they meet yet another evil figure: Grimnir, 'The Hooded One'. His name is one of the many names of Odin. Stemming from Norse mythology, it was recorded in this form in Húsdrápa, a skaldic poem in the Prose Edda. Odin is often portrayed with two ravens on his shoulders, a characteristic that Garner applies to Grimnir as well when he is watching the farm: "On the crest of the Riddings, staring down upon the farmhouse as it lay bathed in gossamer moonlight, was a dark figure, tall and gaunt; and on its shoulder crouched

an ugly bird" (*Weirdstone* 57). Grimnir has not yet been encountered at that stage, but that night, Gowther Mossock's dog barks wildly, and as Gowther goes outside to check why,

> A cold, clammy air drifted against Gowther's face, and with it a smell so strange, so unwholesome, and unexpected that a knot of instinctive feat tightened in his stomach. It was the smell of stagnant water and damp decay. It filled his nostrils and choked his lungs, and, for a moment, Gowther imagined that he was being sucked down into the depths of a black swamp, old and wicked in time. (*Weirdstone* 62)

This smell can be explained by the fact that Grimnir lives under the Black lake of Llyn-dhu, akin to Odin's underworld.

The first time Susan and Colin hear about Llyn-dhu, it is again because of a strange mist hanging still in the air: "About the trees through which the Black Lake could normally be seen hung a blanket of fog. Elsewhere, as far as the eye could see, the sunset plain was free of haze or mist, but Llyn-dhu brooded under a fallen cloud" (*Weirdstone* 101). The word choice anthropomorphises the lake, giving its presence an extra dimension. Machen suggests that "an animate landscape … makes us emphasise with their emanated feelings" (Machen 26). Fenodyree, one of the dwarfs in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, explains exactly how the landscape of Llyn-dhu is animate:

> Men thought to drain that land and live there, but the spirit of the place entered them, and their houses were built drab and desolate, and without cheer; and all around the bog still sprawls, from out the drear lake come soulless thoughts and drift into the hearts of the people, and they are one with their surroundings. (*Weirdstone* 88-89)

When the children decide to visit the lake to find out more about the mist, they too experience a dreading feeling. ""Oh let's go," said Colin, "this place gives me the willies"" (*Weirdstone* 105). On their way back to Alderley, they see the mist again: "halfway up the nearer slope of the Edge a ball of mist hung as though moored to the trees. And out of the mist rose the chimneys and gaunt gables of St Mary's Clyffe, the home of Selina Place." (p. 105)

Selina Place's house in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* is an old country house, away from the village. Gowther Mossock describes it to Colin and Susan: "hers is one of the big

houses on the back hill – a rambling barn of a place it is, stuck on the edge of a cliff" (Weirdstone 32). Garner explains that as a child, he and his friends already felt odd about the house: "The house was red bricks and blue bricks in patterns, with spikey tiles sticking up on the roof ridges like a dragon's back; and there was old-fashioned woodwork in sharp gables and a carving over the door saying: GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS MINE INHERITANCE. We knew it must be haunted" (*A Memoir* 97-98). Despite being in a poor state, St. Mary's Clyffe is a normal house, with its physical presence separate from the Morrigan's magic. Indoors, however, it is furnished to practice it:

> The room was long, with a high ceiling, painted black. Round the walls and about the windows were draped black velvet tapestries. The bare wooden floor was stained a deep red. There was a table on which lay a rod, forked at the end, and a silver plate containing a mound of red powder. On one side of the table was a reading-stand, which supported an old vellum book of great size, and on the other stood a brazier of glowing coals. There was no other furniture of any kind. (*Weirdstone* 106).

The Morrigan is quite recognisable as a classic witch for her creation of potions and her use of spells from a spell book. As mentioned in chapter 1, the Morrigan's witchcraft is that of the first phase of magic in Europe, which is recognised in her attempts to release the magic of Firefrost:

> The Morrigan took the bracelet and placed it in the middle of the circle on the floor. She pulled the curtains over the windows and doors, and went to stand by the brazier, whose faint glow could hardly push back the darkness. She took a handful of powder from the silver plate and, sprinkling it over the coals, cried in a loud voice: "*Demoriel, Carnefiel, Caspiel, Amenadiee*!!" … Shape-shifter opened the book and began to read. *Vos omnes it ministri odey et destructions et seratores discorde…* (Weirdstone 109-110).

The consecrated circle, the natural elements, ritual tools, angels and demons, the spells and invocations; all these symbols of the most ancient recognised form of European magic are there. But Garner's Morrigan is a classic witch not only for her practical magic, but also for her choice of shapeshifting. In the first novel, she mostly appears in her human form, but when she does change shape, it is to the form of a carrion crow, a bird associated with the Celtic Morrigan,

goddess of battle. Her shapeshifting abilities, however, can be linked to Norse mythology in the form of Loki, the trickster god. He is also known in mythology as the thief of Brisingamen, the necklace of the goddess Freya. Garner's Morrigan has her roots in several different mythologies, parts of which will only become clear in the second novel, and therefore shall be discussed in chapter three. In the first novel, it is important to note that a witch turning into a bird is by no means a stand-alone phenomenon: "Hans-Peter Duerr (1985: 1-12) cites numerous records of witches allegedly rubbing their armpits and bodies with salves and ointments, which enabled them to turn into birds or otherwise fly" (Stewart 141). Some of the ingredients of these ointments were hallucinogenic and therefore might have created the sensation of flying, rather than actual flight. The women that participated in these activities were "vulnerable to witchcraft accusations" (Barstow 109). This was especially true for women who, like Selina Place, "were predominantly poor, middle-aged, or elderly women" (Larner 89). This would explain why the Morrigan lives in, as Gowther Mossock puts it, "a rambling barn of a place".

While the Morrigan lives in an old country house that looks haunted, the wizard Cadellin lives underground, in the ancient dwarf-halls of Fundindelve. He lives there to guard the magic that surrounds the sleeping knights. The wizard is described as "an old man, taller than any they had ever known, and thin. He was clad in a white robe, his hair and beard were white, and in his hand was a white staff" (*Weirdstone* 42). This is in contrast with the original legendary wizard, who was described as wearing black and holding a black staff. Presumably, Garner has made his wizard white to emphasize the fact that he is good, creating a contrast with the black-coloured evil creatures. Colin confirms this idea when they are in the cave and he takes another look at the wizard: "He saw an old man, true, but one whose body was as firm and upright as a youth's; whose keen, grey eyes were full of the sadness of the wise; whose mouth, though stern, was kind and capable of laughter" (*Weirdstone* 44-45). His look of wisdom fits the early modern phase of magic, in which the magus is mature and wise, and crucial to the magic itself. In

Garner's novels, this is referred to as High Magic, the magic of the mind. It bends to the will of the magus, and thus can be used for good or evil. Whenever High Magic is used, a bright blue light appears. This is the first that Colin and Susan see of magic: "There was a flash, and the whole rock was lapped about by a lake of blue fire. The children could feel no heat, but their captors fell, hissing and spitting, into the swamp, and the ropes charred and crumbled into ash, while pandemonium broke loose through all the assembly" (*Weirdstone* 41-42). After this the wizard takes them to Fundindelve, his residency and that of the sleeping knights.

Fundindelve from the outside is invisible, but has two entrances. One is a rock on Saddlebole, and one is the Holywell. The entrance through the Holywell is not used in the first novel. The rock on Saddlebole is the one behind which the iron gates from the legend are located, with behind it a tunnel that leads to the wizard's living quarters. Magic is needed to open the rock and the iron gates, though since the caverns are ancient dwarf-halls, dwarfs can open it by touch, as if the rocks have a memory: "He ran his hand down the rough stone, like a man stroking the flanks of a favourite horse. The rock stirred ponderously and clove in two, and there were the iron gates, and the blue light of Fundindelve" (*Weirdstone* 81). Cadellin, the wizard, needs to touch the rock with his staff, after which "there was a hollow rumble, and a crack appeared in the rock, through which a slender ray of light shone. The crack widened to reveal a tunnel leading down into the earth: it was lit by a soft light, much the same as that which had scattered the mob in the swamp" (*Weirdstone* 43). This light comes from the cave of the sleeping knights, who are surrounded by magic to stay in their enchanted sleep. Their cave, and in fact all of Fundindelve, is likely to be the Roman part of the Alderley mines. It is older than man can remember, but there is an even older part, through which the children and the dwarfs travel during their journey later on in the novel. The dwarfs confirm that there are even older mines and tunnels, dug before Fundindelve. That ancient part is likely the Bronze-

Age part of the mines, long forgotten by the inhabitants of the area. It is connected to the newer mines, however, which allows the party to escape the mines altogether:

> We are in the West Mine, and from it there was one exit made. But so deep did men delve that they touched upon the secret places of the earth, known only to a few; and, of those, my father was the last. There were the first mines of our people dug, ages before Fundindelve; little remains now, save the upper paths, and they are places of dread, even for dwarfs. (*Weirdstone* 148)

The title of the chapter in which the children and the dwarfs enter these tunnels is called "Where No Svart Will Ever Tread" (*Weirdstone* 157). This is significant, as the svarts, or svart-alfar, inhabit all other tunnels of the mines. Cadellin explains that they followed men as new tunnels were dug, in the hope that it would expose Fundindelve. It never did, nor do the ancient tunnels connect to Fundindelve, but the fact the svarts never tried, shows the trial the children and dwarfs face in those tunnels. Without the dwarfs, the children would never have found their way in them, as it requires a dwarf's vision to see the ridges on the walls: ""The eyes of men were ever blind," said Fenodyree. "Can you not see the crevices and the ledges?" The children peered down the shaft, but still it seemed to them impassable" (*Weirdstone* 160).

Fenodyree is the first dwarf the Susan and Colin meet. Gowther Mossock has actually met him earlier, when he came to the farm to offer his labours: "He was a midget, with long black hair and a beard, and skin like owd leather. He didner talk as if he came from round here, either – he was more Romany than owt else, to my way of thinking; and his clothes looked as though they'd been borrowed and slept in" (*Weirdstone* 59). This is a very xenophobic description of the dwarf, as both the protagonists as well as the reader at this stage have not yet encountered dwarfs. When the children meet him, however, he is described in a more neutral manner as "a man four feet high. He wore a belted tunic of grey, patterned with green spirals along the hem, pointed boots, and breeches bound tight with leather thongs. His black hair reached to his shoulders, and on his brow was a circlet of gold" (*Weirdstone* 80). Dwarfs in Garner's novels, as mentioned above, have very good eye sight in dark spaces. They can also

communicate with birds, as Fenodyree explains: “Ay, my people have ever been masters of bird lore. We treat them as brothers, and they help us where they can” (*Weirdstone* 88). Dwarfs ‘historically’ are an underground people, which is why they don’t usually connect easily with the lios-alfar, the light elves, who have the power of flight. Durathror, the other dwarf in the novel, was cast away from his family by befriending them. He is the prince of the Huldrafolk, which in Garner’s novels refers to the dwarfs, but in Norse mythology refers to elves. It is therefore unsurprising that it is Durathror who befriends the elves. He gave up Tarnhelm “the greatest treasure of the huldrafolk”, based on *Das Ring des Nibelungen* by Richard Wagner; it is a magic helmet that functions as a cloak of invisibility. In return the elves gave him Valham, his white feathered cloak. “I exchanged the power of going unseen for the power of flight” (*Weirdstone* 207).

The lios-alfar, or light elves, are only briefly present in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, but become increasingly important in *The Moon of Gomrath*. In the first novel, they are mostly present as a message as to why so many of these magical creatures are no longer seen by men, as Durathror explains:

> They are the elves of light, creatures of air, the dew-drinkers. To them beauty is food and life, and dirt and ugliness, death. When men turned from the sun and the earth, and corrupted the air with the smoke of furnaces, it was poison to the lios-alfar; the scab of brick and tile that spread over this land withered their hearths. They had to go, or die. Wherever men now were, there were noise and grime; only in the empty places was there peace. Some of the lios-alfar fled to the mountains of Sinadon, some to the Isle of Iwerdon across the Westwater, and others past the Depths of Dinsel in the south. But most went north with Atlendor to far Prydein, even beyond Minith Bannawg, and there they dwell upon the high hills. (*Weirdstone* 226-227).

Sinadon is the Anglo-Saxon name for mount Snowden in North Wales, while Iwerdon means ‘Ireland’ in Welsh. Dinsel refers to Cornwall, Prydein is the medieval Welsh name for Pictland, and Minith Bannawg refers to the Grampian mountains in Scotland. These are all areas that are now located in national parks, where nature is still ‘wild’. Essentially, Garner uses the lios-alfar to comment on the human destruction of nature.

It is the man-made landscape of dirt an ugliness that the svart-alfar, the dark elves, thrive in: the mines. The svart-alfar are addressed by Cadellin as "maggot-breed of Ymir" when the children encounter both the wizard as well as the svart-alfar for the first time (*Weirdstone* 42). Ymir in Norse mythology refers to the proto-being from which all troll-like beings emerged. Despite being called dark elves, Cadellin describes svarts as being of the goblin-race, which resonates in their appearance:

> They stood about three feet high and were man-shaped, with thin, wiry bodies and limbs, and broad, flat feet and hands. Their heads were large, having pointed ears, round saucer eyes, and gaping mouths which showed teeth. Some had pug-noses, others thin snouts reaching to their chins. Their hides were generally of fish-white colour, though some were black, and all were practically hairless. (*Weirdstone* 37)

The svarts are part of the Morthbrood, who want to gain possession over Firefrost in the hope they can destroy the sealed magic in order to wake up the sleeping knights so that they cannot fight evil when the time comes. According to Cadellin, they are "a cowardly people, night-loving, and sun-loathing, much given to throttlings in dark places, and seldom venturing above ground unless they have good cause. They have no magic" (*Weirdstone* 46). The svarts live in the mines and caves found around the Edge, trying to find a way into Fundindelve. Because they have no magic of their own, they hope for the mercy of the Morrigan if they do find the stone. Therefore, they follow her orders and function as part of her personal army against the wizard and the two children. Their main gathering area, as marked on the map, is Svart Warren, right under Saddlebole. It is also called the Cave of the Svartmoot, which refers to their gathering. They have their own language "full of guttural and nasal sounds, and the words hovered and slurred most jarringly" (*Weirdstone* 145). During a Svartmoot at which the Morrigan is present, she prepares them for battle above ground by offering them a potion that makes their eyes accustomed to daylight.

Despite the help of the svarts, the Morrigan and Grimnir need more help against the wizard and the children. They call the Mara, who Fenodyree explains are "troll-women: from

rock are they spawned, and to rock they return if the sun should find them above ground. But by night they are indestructible, all-powerful. … the mara's brain is as meagre as its strength is great" (*Weirdstone* 232). When Susan sees a mara, it is instantly clear that it comes directly out of the ground:

> It bore resemblance to a woman, an ill-proportioned woman, twenty feet high, and green. … The flesh gleamed dully, and the tunic, of the same colour and texture, might have been of the same substance. A statue of polished malachite; but a statue that moved.

The Bronze Age mine of Alderley Edge, according to the archaeological research team, contained malachite, which they believe is the reason "metal prospectors came to Alderley Edge in the early Bronze Age, attracted to the area by outcrops of green copper-bearing malachite and azurite ores" (Catling 29).

To escape the mara, the travelling party runs to Redesmere, as mara cannot swim and easily lose a trail over water. There they find an island that was not there before. It turns out to be the island of Angharad Goldenhand, the Lady of the Lake. Angharad Goldenhand is present on the island, but they cannot see her. She is part of the Old Magic, as shall be discussed in chapter three. She protects the travellers, feeds and cloaks them. Susan is singled out, as, according to Angharad, for her "the danger is most real" (*Weirdstone* 240). It is a bracelet of white metal, identical to Angharad's, and according to the Lady of the Lake has many virtues. In the first novel, however, Susan does not yet find out what they are. Fenodyree suggests she may not yet be ready for it: "Perhaps it would not do for you to learn all its secrets at a time: sudden power is an evil, dangerous thing for any hands. Wear this always, guard it as you would the stone, and I know it will not fail you in need" (*Weirdstone* 241). Susan's need becomes clear in *The Moon of Gomrath*, when the Old Magic begins to stir, and the magic of the wizard is rendered next to useless.

Chapter 3: Landscape and Myth in *The Moon of Gomrath*

In Garner's second novel, *The Moon of Gomrath*, Susan and Colin again become entangled in the web of magic that immerses the area around the Mossocks' farm, Highmost Redmanay. This time, however, the magic is of a different kind, and more importantly, its purpose has changed. There is no object to obtain, but possession does play a large role on two levels. The main objectives of their new adventure are to stop the Morrigan from obtaining too much power, while at the same time to stop the Brollachan from destroying the world. In pursuing these, the children start to understand the world around them in a new way.

The first words the reader finds in *The Moon of Gomrath* are those above the map: "The Hunter's Land". In the first novel, no hunter was mentioned, and therefore this map promises a new kind of adventure, introducing new magical creatures and forces. The map (see below) covers an even wider area now, but it also includes a detailed enlarged map of Errwood Hall, suggesting this will be a significant place in the story. The map is followed by a quote by William Caxton (31 July 1485): "And for to passe the tyme thys book shal be plesaunte to rede in, but for to gyve faith and byleve that al is trewe that is conteyned herein, yet be at your lyberté" (*Gomrath*). With this quote, Garner prepares the reader for yet another magical journey within the local area around Alderley Edge, in which the border between fantasy and reality shall be even thinner than in the first novel.

The first chapter brings the reader back to the magical world around Alderley Edge immediately. Again, the landscape and the weather play an important role in the creation of the fantasy: "It was bleak on Mottram road under the Edge, the wooded hill of Alderley. Trees roared high in the darkness. If any people had cause to be out in the night, they kept their heads deep in their collars, and their faces screwed blindly against the Pennine wind. And it was as well they did, for among the trees something was happening that was not meant for human

eyes" (*Gomrath* 1). For between the trees were the Elves of Sinadon, the lios-alfar, who have travelled from Mount Snowden in North Wales to Alderley Edge to meet Cadellin, the wizard. They have come to Alderley Edge to seek the help of the wizard, because "for a long while now the numbers of the lios-alfar have been growing less – not through the smoke-sickness, as is happening in the west, but for some cause that we have not found. Elves vanish. They go without a sign. … Atlendor is bringing his people to him from the south and the west, gathering what magic he can" (*Gomrath* 19-20).

Colin and Susan start off the novel in the non-magical world. The woods are just normal woods to them: "Almost they wished that they had never discovered enchantment: they found it unbearable that the woods for them should be empty of anything but loveliness, that the boulder that hid the iron gates should remain a boulder, that the cliff above the Holywell should be just a cliff" (*Gomrath* 9). As they are walking over the Edge during twilight, however, they notice something near the old quarry. "The hollows of the valley were in darkness, and a patch of the darkness was moving, blacker than the rest. It flowed across the grass, shapeless, flat, changing in size, and up the cliff face. Somewhere near the middle, if there was a middle, were two red points of light" (*Gomrath* 10). The appearance of the black thing changes the atmosphere. "The Edge had suddenly become, not quite malevolent, but alien, unsafe" (*Gomrath* 11). Soon after this they meet Atlendor, the elf-lord, and Uthecar the dwarf, who bring them to Fundindelve once again.

Eventually, it turns out that the thing that has been taking the lios-alfar is the same thing that Colin and Susan have encountered in the woods: the Brollachan. The Brollachan, as found in Volume II of John Francis Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, is the child of a fuath (literally "hate" in Scottish Gaelic), a malevolent water spirit from Highland Gaelic mythology. The Brollachan is shapeless and speechless, but does have eyes and a mouth. It is often found near water, and is therefore often associated with kelpies. More importantly, it can

take possession over other living forms, taking their shape instead of its own shapeless form. Susan finds this out too late, when she is visiting the old quarry and sees a pony that wants her to ride it: “The pony turned its head and looked at Susan. Its foaming lips curled back in a grin, and the velvet was gone from the eye: in the heart of the black pupil was a red flame” (*Gomrath* 33). The Brollachan/pony, with Susan on its back, jumps into the water of the quarry, and when Susan is finally back at the farm, she is “looking pale and dazed. Her hair was thick with mud, and a pool of water was gathering at her feet” (*Gomrath* 35). At night, Susan escapes from her room somehow, which wakes up Colin. He follows her to the old quarry, but realises there that something is wrong: “It seemed that out of the quarry a formless shadow was rising into the sky. Behind him the stars went out, but in their place were two red stars, unwinking, and close together” (*Gomrath* 43). It is then that the Old Magic first stirs, though still unrecognised for what it is. Colin responds to the black void by speaking a word he does not know. “The words came to him and were torn from his lips independent of his will, and he heard them from a distance, as though they were from another’s mouth. They burned like a silver fire in his brain, sanctuary in the blackness that filled the world” (*Gomrath* 43).

It turns out Susan is possessed by the Brollachan. After Albanac carries out an exorcism, Cadellin the wizard finds out that Susan is not really with them anymore; the Brollachan has split her soul from her body. As the Brollachan is of the old evil, it needs to be fought with Old Magic. The wizard, therefore, is of not much use in bringing Susan back. The Old Magic, however, has been put to sleep by the practitioners of High Magic, and is therefore hard to find. Uthecar the dwarf suggests trying to find the Mothan, a magic plant that “grows only on the heights of the old, straight track, and flowers only in the full of the moon” (*Gomrath* 59). The old, straight tracks of Britain are described by Alfred Watkins in his book *The Old Straight Track: Its Mounds, Beacons, Moats, Sites, and Mark Stones,* first published in 1925. In it, he describes how as a self-taught amateur archaeologist, he noticed that there seemed to be straight

lines between mounds, moats, beacon hills, earthworks, and old churches built on pagan sites. Often these paths would be aligned with either the path of a star or with the sun. He calls these tracks ley lines, and explains that they exist more through aligned waymarkers rather than as a continuous track. Robert Macfarlane has written an introduction for one of the newer publications of the book, stating "to his many readers the ley vision – with its mixture of mysticism, archaeology and sleuthing – re-enchanted the English landscape, investing it with fresh depth and detail, prompting new ways of looking and new reasons to walk" ("Introduction" 39). This is how the old tracks can be associated with the Old Magic: just as ley lines popularly are believed to be connected to the Earth's energy, however, so too Old Magic seems to function as an energy that runs through the world. In his film "All Systems Go!", Garner explains: "Wherever I look, no matter how far I go, outside or inside, there is always energy which I call 'violence'. And violence when it's good, we call creation, and when it's bad, we call destruction" ("All Systems Go! 00:04:16-00:04:34). In his book, Watkins does not clarify the purpose of these tracks. Their function is lost to current man, as they are in Garner's novel. In *The Moon of Gomrath*, however, Colin uses his local knowledge, found in the old parish ledger at the farm, to find a potential track:

> It was engineered, if that be the term, at so remote an era that all record of it is lost, save the frequent mounds and stones erected to indicate the way. Of these, the Beacon and the Goldenstone are the most remarkable on the Edge, and from the latter, where I terminated my excursion, it seemed that the trackway was aligned with the peak of Shining Tor, which stands distant nine miles towards Buxton. (*Gomrath* 62)

The Goldenstone is mentioned regularly in *The Moon of Gomrath.* It is often used as a meeting point, but also as a way marker. In *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* it also appears as such, mostly because it marks the elf-road, which protects the protagonists from evil, as "old magic still lingered" (*Weirdstone* 55). In the second novel, the Goldenstone is used to recognise the elf-road again: "by the Goldenstone, an old elf-road goes to Fundindelve. It will be some shield for us, for even the Morrigan cannot walk an elf-road without pain, and lesser troubles cannot

walk it at all" (*Gomrath* 150). It now turns out it also marks the old, straight track of Old Magic. When Colin tells Uthecar and Albanac of his findings, Uthecar enthuses that "Old Magic has quickened to our need: it has shown you the way to its heart, the old, straight track from the Beacon hill", while Albanac is less enthusiastic, remarking that "strange memories linger on the Beacon" (*Gomrath* 65).

At night, Colin is the one who hears the Old Magic: ""Listen! It's music – like voices calling, and bells of ice! *And look! There's the track!*"" (*Gomrath* 67). He runs along the track, the Old Magic pulling him forward: "On, on, on, on, faster, faster the track drew him, flowed through him, filled his lungs and his heart and his mind with fire, sparked from his eyes, streamed from his hair, and the bells and the music and the voices were all of him, and the Old Magic sang to him from the depths of the earth and the caverns of the night-blue sky" (*Gomrath* 68). As soon as the moonlight stops shining on the track, Colin suddenly is confronted with gravity again, and he falls. He does have the Mothan, which shines pale like the moon, and brings it home with him. On the road back, however, he notices something unsettling: the sound of the padding of bare feet following him. Colin walks on, but "the footsteps that were never quite echoes stayed with him … Then, approaching a sharp corner, Colin heard something that stopped him dead. It was a new sound, and it came from in front: hoofs – the sound of a horse walking slowly" (*Gomrath* 71). This sense of uneasiness is typical for the intrusion fantasy, the genre of fantasy to which Garner's first two novels belong. It "constructs a rhetoric in which the shiver up the spine is more trustworthy than scientific discourse" (Mendlesohn 181). Sound is one of its most powerful tools, as "the intrusion fantasy is aural and musical. As the closest descendant from the ghost story or fairy tale told around the fire, the intrusion fantasy depends for its effect on the tempo of the tale, the constant seesawing between latency and escalation" (Mendlesohn 181). Garner uses his sound effects to create a tension that is at the same time an explanation for what is about to appear. The Old Magic is very suitable for this manner of

writing, as it is "magic of the heart, not of the head: it can be felt, but not known" (*Gomrath* 81-82). It also works through necessity, rather than willpower. Therefore, it is Colin who has to feed Susan the Mothan: the magic moves through him.

When Susan wakes up in her own body, it turns out that the Brollachan had "thrust her from the one level of the world that men are born to, down into the darkness and unformed life that is called Abred by wizards. From there she was lifted to the Threshold of the Summer Stars" (*Gomrath* 81). The summer stars are a triangular constellation containing Altair, Deneb, and Vega. There, Susan somehow has ridden with Celemon and the Shining Ones, the Daughters of the Moon, who were heading for Caer Rigor. Celemon is known in the Legend of King Arthur as the daughter of Cei and mother of Rathtyen in *Culhwch and Olwen* as found in the Middle Welsh collection *The Mabinogion*. The Shining Ones are a widespread phenomenon that generally describe gods or creational forces of light. In this case they ride among the stars in the sky, which may be a reference to heaven. This would make sense in the light of Caer Rigor, which is mentioned in the Middle Welsh mythological poems in the Book of Taliesin as being one of the castles that King Arthur and his men travelled to in the Welsh underworld. Cadellin quotes two lines of the poem after Susan has told her story, explaining this is how it is remembered in song:

> *Three times the fulness of Prydwen we went into it:*
>
> *Except seven, none returned from Caer Rigor*.

It is from this moment on that Susan is part of the Old Magic, and more specifically of the moon magic. Her connection with the Moon Magic is through the bracelet that she had received from Angharad Goldenhand in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* as a replacement of the one containing Firefrost. It is similar to Angharad's, and had an air of great age. Along the outer face it was lightly incised, and inlaid with black enamel, much of which was missing. One half was plain, coiling, leaf design, flanked by two oblongs of a diamond lattice pattern, with

four spots within each a diamond. On the other half, between two more oblongs, was an inscription in heavy, square lettering that was unknown to Susan" (*Weirdstone* 242). This bracelet, as it turns out in *The Moon of Gomrath*, is the Mark of Fohla. Garner explains in his notes at the end of the novel that "Fohla is the name of the wife of MacCecht, one of the mythical Kings of Ireland. She is an aspect of the Triple Moon Goddess" (*Gomrath* 208). Jane Ellen Harrison points out that in the pagan ancient world, people had believed in three divine women, such as the Fates and Graces. The original Mother Earth had been honoured in three roles as well, namely the Maiden ruling the living, the Mother ruling the underworld, and the third she did not name. The third, according to Graves, is the Crone, as represented by Garner's Morrigan. Much later in the novel Angharad explains to Susan:

> When you put on the Mark you put on a destiny … that is what Cadellin feared. And at this time through you alone can we work most surely. For, you see, this is moon magic and we wear a part of it. … Our power waxes and wanes: mine is of the full moon, the Morrigan's is of the old. … You are young and your bracelet is the young moon's. Then you can be more than the Morrigan, if you have courage. (*Gomrath* 128)

The Triple Moon Goddess is also known as the White Goddess, which is also the title of Robert Graves' book, which Garner names as one of his own sources. This suggests that Garner may have based his triangle of Susan, the Morrigan, and Angharad Goldenhand on the White Goddess. Robert Graves explains: "white is her principal colour, the colour of the first member of her moon-trinity, but … the New Moon is the white goddess of birth and growth; the Full Moon, the red goddess of love and battle; the Old Moon, the black goddess of death and divination" (Graves 65). By wearing the bracelet, Susan has become an aspect of the Triple Moon Goddess herself. Celemon wears exactly the same bracelet as Susan, suggesting Celemon is what Susan might eventually become. The Mark of Fohla, when Susan wears it, is both "her blessing and her curse. For it guards her against the evil that could crush her, and it leads her ever further from the ways of human life. The more she wears it, the more need there is to do so. And it is too late now to take it off" (*Gomrath* 81-82). The Old Magic has spiritually

possessed her, and she cannot escape it anymore. However, Susan does not know how the Old Magic works, and therefore is unaware of its powers, as well as of her own.

The Old Magic, as Susan soon finds out, guides her to places where it wants her to go, it moves through her quite literally. She and Colin end up making a fire on the Beacon just before moonrise, and when Colin realises the flames do not spread heat, the deed is already done. The children have corrupted the energy of the place, and in this way woken the lingering memories from the Beacon that Albanac referred to before: "Who now brings fire to the mound at the Eve of Gomrath?" (*Gomrath* 88). When Susan and Colin turn around to look at the fire,

> the flames were a scarlet curtain between hill and sky, and within them, and a part of them, were three men. At first their tall shapes and haggard faces danced and merged with the blazing pine branches, and were as unstable as any picture that the mind sees in the shadows of a fire: but even while the children looked, they became more solid, rounded, and independent of the flames through which they stared. Then they were real, and terrible. (*Gomrath* 88)

The creatures from the Old Magic have literally appeared from the land, as a memory that has been woken. This is an aspect of the English Eerie, as Koch explains: "there are pits suddenly opening up only to release an ancient force … Often, the impression is invoked as if the eerie landscape had some agency with which it can influence events" (Koch 19). In this case the landscape has the Old Magic living in it, which is woken by the wendwood fire on the Beacon on the Eve of Gomrath, when the Old Magic is most powerful. It wakes the ancient forces that were asleep in the hill and allows them to take on a physical form once again. Bakhtin explains that at the heart of this "lies folk-mythological time, in which ancient historical time (with its specific constraints) begins to come into its own" (Bakhtin 104). This mythological time, together with the landscape of the place, forms the chronotope. Bakhtin suggests that the representational importance of the chronotope is of the essence, as "Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins" (Bakthin 250). When Old Magic is viewed as an energy,

this can be linked to Garner's explanation that "Energy is timeless …and inexhaustible. It will never run down" ("All Systems Go!" 00:29:51-00:30:05).

The creatures that have been woken and take on flesh are the Einheriar of the Herlathing. They are part of the Wild Hunt, a mythological group of horsemen led by the Hunter. The name 'Herlathing' in Old English means "Herla's assembly". Herla can be traced back to Woden, or Odin. The Einheriar in Norse mythology are known as the ones who have died in battle and are brought to Valhalla. In the *Prose Edda* book *Gylfaginning*, Odin is mentioned to be called Valföðr, which means 'father of the slain'. Odin is supposed to lead them to Valhalla and assign them places there. He can therefore be seen as their leader, the Hunter, and together with the Einheriar he forms the Wild Hunt. The Eve of Gomrath, as Albanac explains later, is "one of the four nights of the year when Time and Forever mingle. … For the Old Magic is moon magic and sun magic, and it is blood magic, also, and there lie the Hunter's power and his need. He is from a cruel day of the world. Men have changed since they honoured him" (*Gomrath* 109). This ties in with Jung's idea that myth is "the product of a particular social group, at a particular time, at a particular place" (Segal 107). Garner has taken a myth from a previous civilisation and placed it in a modern one, thus allowing chaos to storm through the world. This storm can be taken quite literally in the case of the Wild Hunt. They ride incredibly fast and seem to always appear in the landscape together with a strong gust of wind.

The first three riders that Susan and Colin have woken are dressed all in red, symbolising the bloodshed that they are known for. They pick up the children and ride away with them to wake others, which they do by setting the same cold, red fire to the mounds in which they sleep. In total there are twelve riders, after which they ride back to the Beacon to wake the Hunter. The first rider touches the ground with his spear, after which the old, straight track appears "like a band of molten steel from a furnace" (*Gomrath* 95). Instead of the silver of the moonlight, as Colin saw it before, it now glows in the red fire of the Wild Hunt. The Old Magic has been

woken by cruel creatures this time, rather than by a pure-hearted one like Colin previously. The leader calls to wake the Hunter, after which "all was quiet. No one moved. Then, faintly, from a distance, there came a voice, clear, like a blend of trees and wind, rivers and starlight" (*Gomrath* 96). The way in which Garner describes the appearance of the Hunter shows that he, too, comes forth from the landscape itself. He lives in the atmosphere and exists of it. When he appears, his looks are described similarly: "He was huge and powerful, yet with the grace of an animal; at least seven feet tall, and he ran effortlessly. His face was long and thin, his nose pointed, and nostrils flared; his eyes night-browed, up-sweeping, dark as rubies; his hair red curls; and among the curls grew the antlers of a stag" (*Gomrath* 97).

Despite his cruel looks and behaviour, Susan is not afraid of him. "Her mind could not accept him, but something deeper could. She knew what made the horsed kneel. Here was the heart of all wild things. Here were thunder, lightning, storm; the slow beat of tides and seasons, birth and death, the need to kill and the need to make" (*Gomrath* 97-98). Susan has experienced the wildness of the Old Magic, and as she carries the Mark of Fohla, it runs through her, too. It feels natural to her, as opposed to Cadellin's spells. Once Susan is in Fundindelve, Albanac explains that Cadellin is the reason Old Magic was put to sleep: "To wizards, and their High Magic of thoughts and spells, the Old Magic was a hindrance, a power without shape or order. … There you see the difference between the Old and the High. The High Magic was made with a reason; the Old Magic is a part of things. It is not *for* any purpose" (*Gomrath* 110).

As Susan went inside to warn Cadellin of the recent events, Colin stayed outside with whom they thought was Uthecar, but turns out to be Pelis the False, an evil dwarf. He kidnaps Colin with the use of palugs, cat-like creatures that find their origin in Welsh mythology as recorded in the Welsh Triads. They surround him and drive him forward over a track that makes Colin grow "increasingly more uneasy: there was something here, in this rank garden set in the hills, that was not good" (*Gomrath* 116). Garner explains in an interview with the *New*

Statesman: “Consider this. Is there anybody who has not felt, at some time, immediately and without reason, that a particular spot, be it landscape or building, is a “good” place, and conversely that another is “bad”?” (“Revelation”). Colin’s feeling turns out to be justified, as around the bend lies an old house on top of a hill that only exists in moonlight: it is the Morrigan’s house, constructed of moon magic. The Morrigan is still not recovered from the fight for Firefrost in *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, and therefore she only has magical powers during her moon phase, the waning moon. When the moonlight does not reach it, the house is a ruin: “as the moon disappeared, the light inside the house faded. Now the house lay barely visible against the hill behind it, yet what was to be seen made Colin stare. It could have been a trick of the darkness, but somehow the building had lost its form, had slumped” (*Gomrath* 117). When the moonlight shines on it again, Colin is chased inside by Pelis the False, and locked in there until the final battle, when Susan releases him again.

Susan finds the house through the Old Magic that drives her. She runs away from Fundindelve, and even though the palugs are afraid of her Mark of Fohla, they chase her until she stumbles and drops her bracelet. The bracelet turns into a portal through which Susan reaches Angharad Goldenhand on her island. This is when Angharad explains Susan’s role in as an aspect of the Triple Moon Goddess, after which she gives her a horn. The horn, Anghalac, “in her art will call on other power, and you will have little. … Blow it if all else is lost, but only then. For once Anghalac sounds you may not know peace again, not in the sun’s circle nor in the darkling of the world” as Angharad explains (*Gomrath* 129). The horn returns at the end of the novel, when Susan uses it to defeat the Morrigan once again.

Then the magical portal disappears, and Susan finds herself near the stream below the house of the Morrigan. Susan sees the house by moonlight first, and in daylight is quite shocked to find only ruins. The house, Errwood Hall, is surrounded by rhododendrons, which in reality were planted there by the Grimshawe family that also built the house. Nowadays, Errwood Hall is a ruin, but a popular tourist attraction in the Peak District National Park, and still surrounded

by rhododendrons. The ruins that can be found today is the shape in which the house in Garner's novel is in daylight, while the moon restores the house to its former glory. The close-up on the map at the beginning of the novel shows that the Hall will be the centre of the final battle between Susan and the Morrigan.

The first time Susan actually actively uses Old Magic, is on her way back to Fundindelve. Just after she meets Uthecar, they are attacked by palugs and bodachs (in Gaelic mythology bogeyman, goblin-like) on top of Shining Tor. It is the hill in which the Hunter slept, and thus Old Magic is strong there. It is Susan's bracelet through which it moves: "the Mark of Fohla shone with white fire, and the black characters engraved on it appeared to hover above the face of the metal, and now she could see the word of power" (*Gomrath* 145). The moment she speaks it, the landscape and weather join the fight:

> The hill shook at the word. The air pulsed as at a note below the range of hearing, and the web of heaven trembled, making the stars dance, and their glittering echoed, "tromador, tromador," down the night, and out of the sound came a wind. It was a wind that was never imagined … a wind that would take hair from a horse, and moorgrass from the ground: it would take heather from the hill, and willow from the root: it would take the limpet from the crag, and the eagle from its young: and it came over the gritstone peaks, howling and raging, in blazing sparks of fire. (*Gomrath* 146)

With the wind, the Wild Hunt appears, which then sweeps over the palugs and bodachs like the horsemen themselves are a gust of wind. Susan and Uthecar are safe to go, but at the end of the night, when they are near the Goldenstone, they encounter the Morrigan, for the first time in her human form. However, in daylight her powers are not strong enough, and she shapeshifts, taking possession of the Goldenstone and splitting it in doing so.

Now that Susan, Albanac, and Uthecar know where Colin is, as well as that the Morrigan cannot reach them until moonshine, they prepare for Colin's rescue. Cadellin does not join them, because if he dies the sleeping knights cannot be woken at the hour of their need. The lios-alfar do ride with them, although they are not happy, for, as Atlendor explains: "We have given aid to hunt the Brollachan. This moon magic concerns us not at all" (*Gomrath* 160).

Still, they agree to join the party after sunset, and when they come, the grounds around the house have been prepared for battle. Fires have been made to keep palugs and bodachs at bay, and although the Morrigan corrupts the moisture in the air with the little magic she has in her, she does not have the power to keep them from burning.

When the moon shines on the house, Susan and Uthecar enter in search of Colin. One of the last doors they encounter contains a black witch-brand, behind which they find a typical scene of ancient witchcraft, with geometrical patterns and ancient symbols:

> on the floor a circle had been drawn, about eighteen feet across. … and in the circle was a lozenge, and a six-pointed star was near each of its four corners. In the centre of the lozenge stood a squat, long-necked bottle, which held a black substance that writhed as though it was boiling, though the cork was heavily sealed with wax, and two points of red light swam inside the bottle, always the same distance apart. (*Gomrath* 174-175)

They have found the Brollachan, which the Morrigan wants to use to set out evil in the world again. They also soon find Colin, but when they want to leave the house, they encounter a new problem: the moon is hidden. As Uthecar explains, "to the valley the house is 'here' when the old moon is on it, and not at other times; but to the house the valley is 'there' only in the moon" (*Gomrath* 180). This negotiation of place in time is again Garner's power in his fantasy. The house has become a portal to 'nothing', which is a place (if it is a place at all) where the protagonists do not want to be. Once the moonlight reaches the house again, they jump through the window, and into the battle that has now started. The battle takes the life of Albanac, but allows Uthecar to kill Pelis the False. The Morrigan, however, does not show up during battle. Once the palugs and bodachs stop their attack, Atlendor decides that the lios-alfar shall leave, and Uthecar and the children join them on the way back. Susan in particular does not feel good about this, as once the Morrigan reaches the house, she can release the Brollachan. Therefore, once they reach Shining Tor, she turns around and rides back. The other horses refuse to follow hers, and the party watches her go, while Colin goes after her on foot.

When Susan arrives on the driveway, the palugs and bodachs feel the power of her Mark of Fohla, and they flee. The Morrigan, standing in the middle of the drive, holds up her arm to show her own Mark of Fohla, in black. “The moon charges the Morrigan with such power that when she lifted her hand even the noise of the stream died, and the air was sweet with fear” (*Gomrath* 199). She then speaks a spell in Latin, which sends black lightning towards Susan, who parries it by speaking the word that appears on her own bracelet. Susan’s bracelet sends a white flame towards the black lightning, but after a while, the black magic of the Morrigan is stronger than her white magic. The Morrigan, however, is too sure of her own power, and underestimates Susan’s. Susan therefore does not die, but is only stunned for a while. During this time, the Morrigan releases the Brollachan, which “grew high above Errwood, strong in itself, and in the moon, and in the power of its keeper. … Susan felt the sky go black above her: she glanced up, and all she saw was night. … The hill disappeared; she could see nothing; the air beat with the rhythm of her blood, and the night swam into her brain; the world drifted away” (*Gomrath* 201). The Brollachan is trying to take revenge on its previous imprisoners and is trying to possess the entire atmosphere. Susan, however, hears Angharad Goldenhand’s voice remind her of the horn she gave her, which Susan then blows. “Its note was music, like wind in caves of ice, and out of the wind and far away came hoofs, and voices calling, “We ride! We ride!” and the darkness melted” (*Gomrath* 201). Colin, who is watching from a distance, heard a sound “so beautiful that he never found rest again; the sound of a horn, like the moon on snow, and another answered it from the limits of the sky; and through the Brollachan ran silver lightnings, and he heard hoofs, and voices calling “We ride! We ride!” and the whole cloud was silver, so that he could not look” (*Gomrath* 203). Susan, being part of the Old Magic that appears, does see what is happening in the cloud: the Wild Hunt appears. Susan rides with them for a while, but Angharad tells the Hunter to leave her behind, as “She is but green in power! It is not yet!” (*Gomrath* 202). The horsemen then disappear into the night sky, where they are

greeted by the Daughters of the Moon. They leave Susan behind, but “a voice came to her from the gathering outlines of the stars, “It is not yet! It will be! But not yet!”” (*Gomrath* 202-203). This voice likely belonged to Celemon, who Susan may become eventually, when she is ready to join the Daughters of the Moon. At this moment, however, “away they rode together across the night, over the waves, and beyond the isles, and the Old Magic was free for ever, and the moon was new” (*Gomrath* 204). The landscape is now alive permanently, and ancient myths will forever be present in it. It suggests a promise that landscape will always speak to the imagination, ready for new stories to be created from it.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explained that *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* and *The Moon of Gomrath* are set in the same landscape in which they were written, and have argued that the folklore and history that live in the landscape in turn appear in Garner's books exactly through that landscape. Garner explains:

> I felt it very important that everywhere that I mentioned could be touched. When I read books as a child, I was furious when I discovered that the adventure I liked turned out to be a dream. Now, nothing that I dreamt was going to be a dream, it was going to be for real. So, I set outlandish stories in real places, so that you may say "well I don't believe that happened, but I can show you where it happened. (The Edge of the Ceiling 00:13:47-00:14:12)

Thus, Garner creates an atmosphere that allows the reader to explore landscape and stories as though they are one, adding an importance of place to the novels. Furthermore, Garner uses Jung's notion of myths being timeless to allow them to live in the present-day landscape of Alderley Edge. His books include maps that correspond to real-life locations, but link the places with myths. These myths create a feeling of magic in the landscape, as they carry in them ancient civilisations that tried to explain nature's secrets. By using the local myths of Cheshire to carry his stories, Garner creates a landscape that is infused with magic, but at the same time feels very real.

In the analysis of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* in chapter two, it has become apparent that the red thread of the story is the Legend of Alderley, which tells the story of a wizard and sleeping knights in a cave. The mines and caves in the area have likely been the inspiration for the local legend, and it introduces the magical world to both the reader as well as to Susan and Colin. The children encounter the wizard and other magical and mythical creatures through exploring the landscape. Without realising it, the children are pulled into the folklore and become a part of the magic through Susan's possession of the Weirdstone of Brisingamen, the

stone from the Legend of Alderley. The children are pursued by the evil forces that mainly come from Norse mythology, but that thrive in the landscape that at times can become rather eerie. This eeriness is created by Garner through his description of the landscape, but also through the appearance of certain types of weather. It is countered by the good forces that mainly come from Anglo-Saxon and Welsh mythology. The lios-alfar are Garner's commentary on the human destruction of the ancient landscape, and as they flee from industrialisation, this is symbolic for the mythical history leaving the area due to urbanisation. They make way for their evil counterparts, the svart-alfar, who live in the man-made mines of Alderley Edge. The wizard from the legend lives there, too, protecting the sleeping knights, but also the protagonists with his High Magic. When he is unable to do so, the protagonists are regularly saved by their knowledge of the local landscape and people, as well as by their wit. It is wit that brings them to the island of Angharad Goldenhand, where Susan receives the bracelet that is the centre of the second novel, *The Moon of Gomrath*. The bracelet stirs the Old Magic, which becomes more prominent than the High Magic of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen.*

In chapter three, in which *The Moon of Gomrath* is analysed, the landscape is discussed as an active participant in the story. The mythological creatures are often memories from an ancient past, put to sleep in the mounds and hills of the area, ready to be woken. Specific locations and landmarks play a more important role due to the strength of the Old Magic in them, the energy that Garner refers to as 'violence'. In his "The Edge of the Ceiling", he explains that he sees the hill of Alderley Edge as a means of communication, particularly with his family: "The only thing that I could reach with understanding, that we shared in common, was the hill Alderley Edge. My family understood that hill, as craftsmen, and I understood it as a trained academic" (The Edge of the Ceiling 00:12:29-00:12:45). The hill contains Old Magic, which is not only part of the landscape, but also of the energy and the atmosphere of the area. It can be felt through the ground and through the weather, but also through the protagonists

themselves. It moves through necessity, and cannot be pursued or controlled. Garner uses sound as one of its indicators; music and voices travel with the wind and through the mind, and can only be heard by those that play a part in it at that moment. In some instances, this creates a sense of unease, but at other moments it is used to reassure the protagonists and to give them comfort. Principally, it creates a sense of possession over a character – the Old Magic moves through them and guides them outside their own will. This is also true for the old evil, like the Brollachan, that also possesses Susan in the novel. It splits her soul from her body, and sends her soul to a different realm between the stars.

After this, Susan is an active part of the Old Magic; she has become part of the mythology that has been woken by the Old Magic. Her power is connected to the New Moon, to which Susan herself is connected by the Mark of Fohla that she wears. It links her to the eternity of the constellations, but also to the Morrigan, who has the power of the Old Moon. It is also the moon that sets the novel in a certain time: Gomrath. This is a period in the year in which the Old Magic is most powerful and when time does not progress as normal. This allows mythological creatures to be woken from the hills and take on a physical form. The Wild Hunt awakes and sweeps over the world, creating chaos like a strong storm. They are not necessarily evil, though cruel, and several times they save Susan, who calls upon them twice when she uses Old Magic. Susan feels through the Old Magic that their existence is justified, not because they have a reason to be, but just because they are. This is the essence of the Old Magic: it does not have a purpose, it just is. This is intrinsically how it lives in the landscape; it is part of the world and connected to space and time through moonlight. This is how the Morrigan's house can exist in Alderley during moonshine, but 'nowhere' when the moon is gone. It is also the reason that Susan can call upon the Wild Hunt without knowing that they will arrive, nor the way they will help her. They arrive with the wind not to help her, but because they are called to be there. Once they have appeared, they follow their own path, almost accidentally helping Susan. During the

final battle, the power of moonlight for Old Magic becomes even clearer, as suddenly the Morrigan is very powerful, while in daylight she is very weak. She releases the Brollachan, who covers the moon, diminishing the Morrigan's as well as Susan's power strongly. Susan, however, blows the horn that will change the world forever, and not only the Wild Hunt appears, but the portal to the world of constellations is opened once again. This time, Susan is not allowed to ride with them, as she is still too earthly, too new to the Old Magic. The Old Magic, however, is now permanently released into the world, and Susan can grow in her powers to eventually become Celemon, one of the Daughters of the Moon. The landscape is now alive permanently, and ancient myths will forever be present in it. It suggests a promise that landscape will always speak to the imagination, ready for new stories to be created from it.

Both *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* and *The Moon of Gomrath* are magical tales that bring the landscape to life. They allow readers to be immersed in the landscape of the area without being there, and confirm that nature speaks to the imagination. Garner shows that folklore does indeed live in the landscape in which it is created. Moreover, he establishes the sense that the landscape itself can come to life through these stories. In his novels, he lets his protagonists explore the landscape and simultaneously the folklore that belongs in it, releasing the ancient past in the modern world.

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Appendix A: Maps

Fig. 1 Map of The Edge featured in Part 1 of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*.

Fig 2 Map of the journey outside The Edge, featured in Part 2 of *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*.

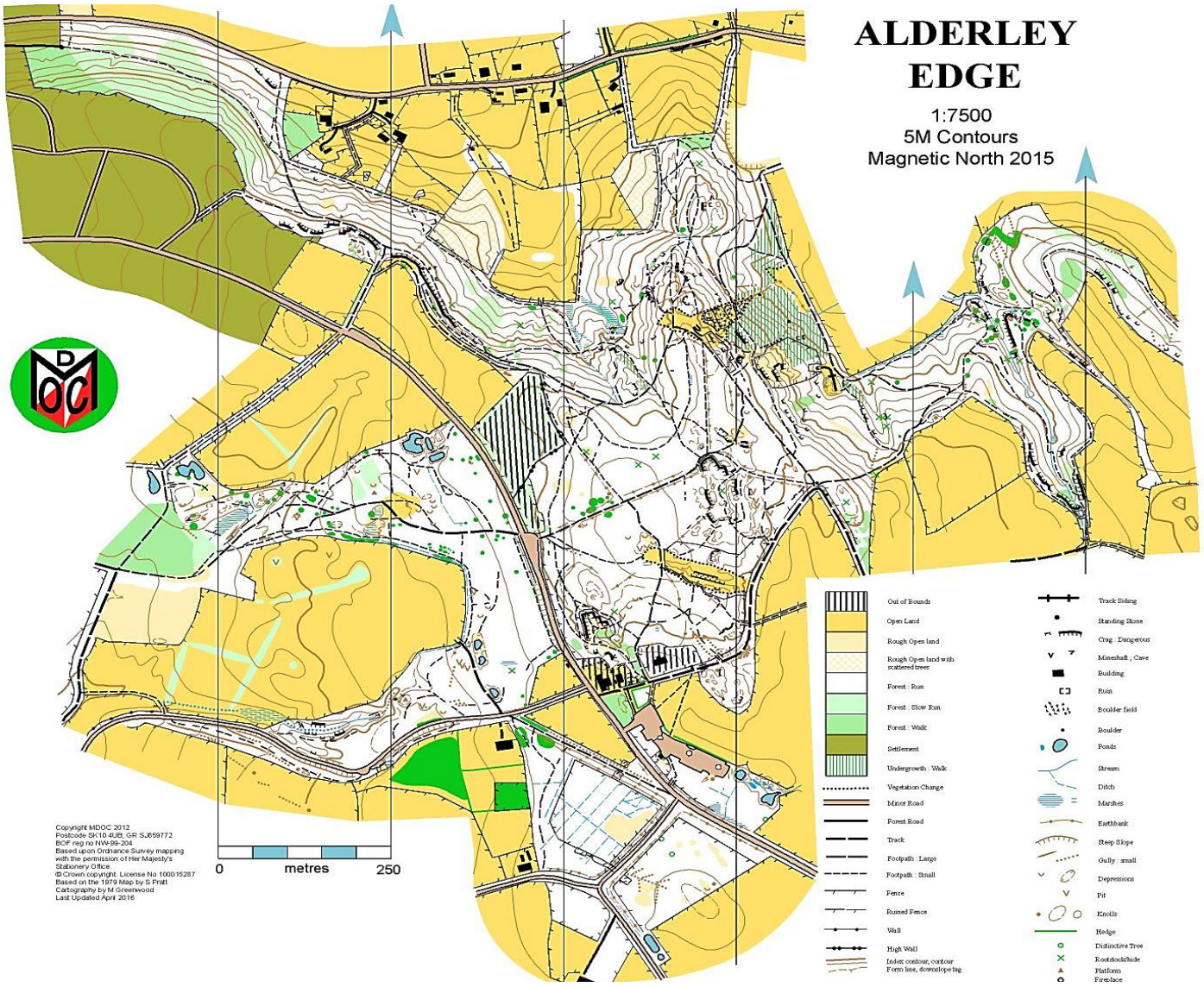

Fig. 3 Map of Alderley Edge.
Source: Greenwood, M. "Orienteering Map of Alderley Edge, Manchester and District OC." Map. *Omaps, WorldofO*, Routegadget, Apr. 2016, omaps.worldofo.com/index.php?id=195641.

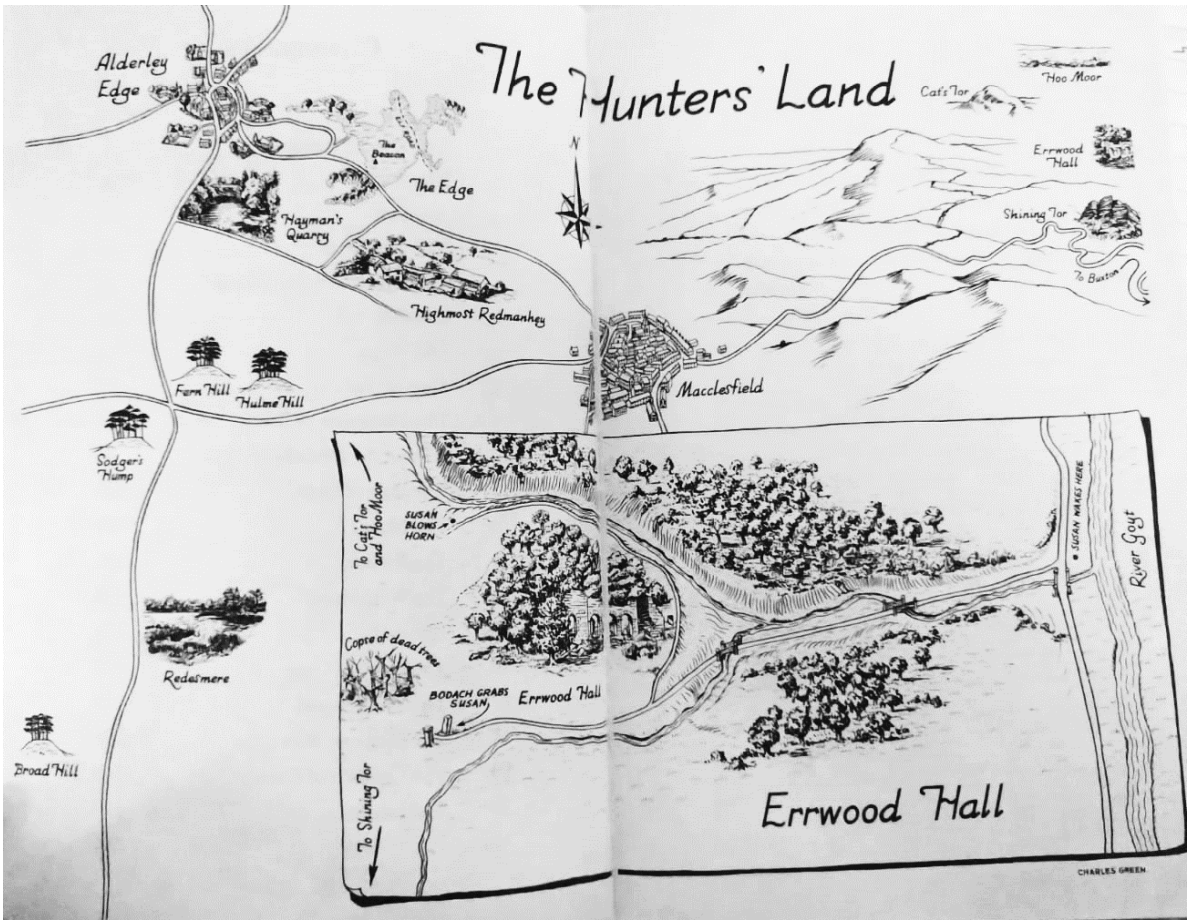

Fig. 4 Map of "The Hunter's Land" featured in *The Moon of Gomrath*.

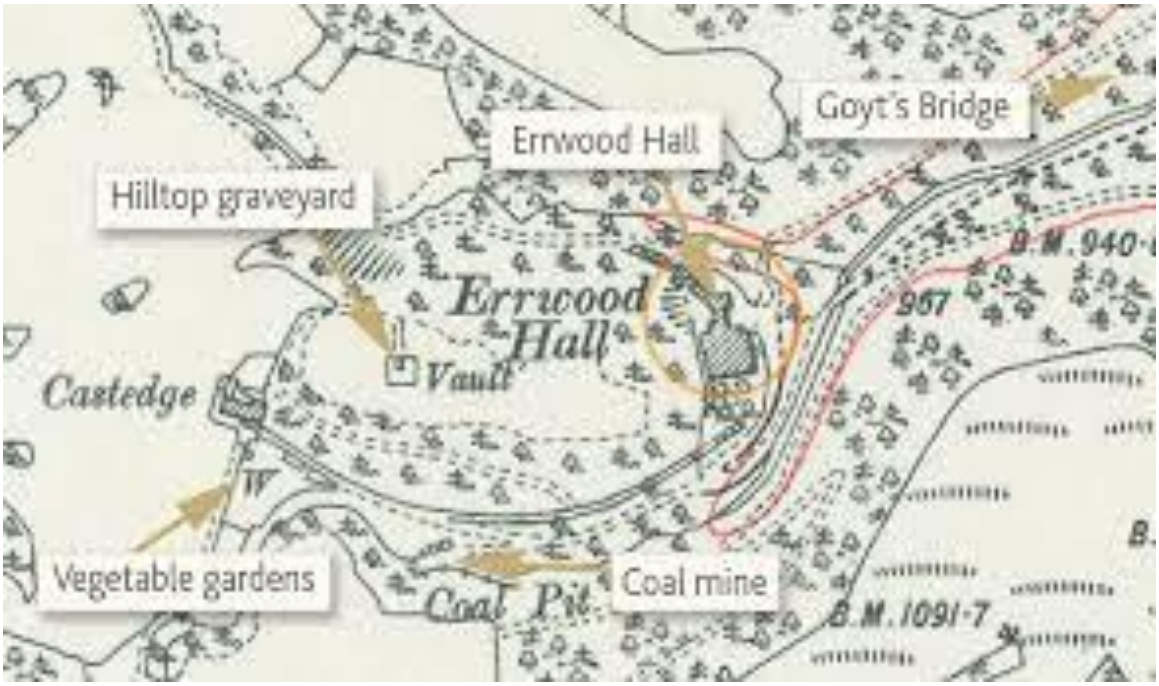

Fig. 5 Map of Errwood Hall, 1890.
Source: https://www.goyt-valley.org.uk/goyt-valley-families/errwood-hall/