

# Stone Deep Dwarves

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## Stone Deep Dwarves

The Dwarves of Stone Deep are keepers of knowledge. They are more serious and solemn than is typical of their race, and they enjoy scholarly pursuits as much as those of physical crafts. At an early age, certain of the Stone Deep Dwarves are chosen for their scholarly bent and turned into librarians or other types of keepers of knowledge. The community of Stone Deep is run by a High Council of learned elders, and Hammerhandt Citadel is dedicated to the defense of their accumulated knowledge.

## Mount Bursnul

Made of pure granite interlaced with quartz, Mount Bursnul is the largest mountain in the Valley of Stars area. It is reportedly named for a particularly nasty and immortal Wyvern of ancient lineage named Bursnul, who was originally vanquished by Frod Randwiga (f-ROAD rand-WIG-uh), the famed adventurer and poet, prior to the founding of Hammerhandt Citadel.

## Hammerhandt Citadel

Hammerhandt Citadel is the surface structure that sits atop *Dalmarian's Weg* ('Dalmarian's Way')<sup>1</sup>, the primary avenue into Stone Deep. It acts as the first line of defense for the Deep and also is where visitors are greeted. It sits high (over 200') above the valley floor upon a broad ledge on the southern face of Mount Bursnul overlooking the beautiful and mystical Sky Lake.

Although The Citadel is one structure, tunnels honeycomb into the mountain upon which it sits and these combined with the countless chambers of the building itself give it a feeling more like a small city. There are 29 levels within the Citadel itself, almost all of which have some chambers carved within the surface of the mountain.

Sections and features of note within the Hammerhandt Citadel include:

*Naedre Sid (NAY-dree sid)* – The Naedre Sid ('Serpentine Road') is a massive ramp 100' wide and over two miles long that winds from the floor of the Valley of Stars to the Main Gates. This gargantuan avenue turns back on itself many times, and has gatehouses at each turn. These are typically left open during peaceful times but can be closed in defense of The Citadel should the need arise.

*The Outer Walls* – Built from massive blocks of an incredibly hard stone, the outer walls of the citadel have never shown any sign of wear despite standing for centuries.

*The Main Gates* – The only apparent entryway into The Citadel, the outer gates are two enormous iron doors each measuring 70' tall and 30' wide. Despite the enormous weight of these, they swing on hinges relatively easily and can be fully closed and/or opened in a matter of seconds. The inner gate consists of a massive portcullis, and the 100' long courtyard between the gates is heavily guarded.

*The Vaulted Hall* – This massive hall is the first chamber within the enormous Citadel. Most visitors never get past this point, as this is where all trade with The Citadel takes place and many visitors are greeted.

## Dalmarian's Weg

Named for its founder, Dalmarian Slegghond, 'The Weg' as it is often called, was a natural tunnel into the side of Mount Bursnul when it was discovered. Modified to be flatter and straighter over the years, The Weg is now some 60' wide and 50' tall in even its smallest places. It runs on a steady downward slope in an almost exactly north-

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<sup>1</sup> Old English used as 'Ancient Dwarven' words throughout this text are taken from [http://www.freelang.net/dictionary/old\\_english.php](http://www.freelang.net/dictionary/old_english.php) and modified, sometimes significantly...pronunciation is completely made up © – Mike Ennis, 6/23/2010

northeasterly direction, and is over 12 miles long. There are half a dozen stone gates along its distance that can be closed for added defense.

### **The Steorran Scrafe**

After boring its way from the Valley of Stars deep into the surface of Tyrra, Dalmarian's Weg opens majestically into a truly fabulous and gargantuan natural cavern known as the *Steorran Scrafe* (stee-OR-an skrafe...a.k.a. 'starry cave'). This enormous grotto is rife with stalactites and stalagmites of all shapes and sizes, as well as countless passages shooting from it in all directions and of all lengths. The Scrafe is so large that you cannot see from one side to the other, and the floor of it has geographical features of its own. Travelers can only make out features of the roof from the highest sections of the floor, and from several low-lying areas near the middle of the cavern the ceiling and walls cannot be seen at all. It takes several weeks to travel across the cavern by foot.

During times of Darkness (10 to 14 hours per day – see 'Searogimm Leoma' below) the illuminating stones from the Valley of Stars shine from the ceiling of the cavern creating a 'starry' effect, hence the cavern's name. These offer just enough illumination to see a few feet ahead for those within The Scrafe.

There are several notable features within The Scrafe and some are outlined below.

*Searogimm Leoma (see-ROW-gim lay-OH-ma)* – Directly in the middle of the ceiling of The Scrafe is a crystalline orb of gargantuan proportions. Legend tells that one of the first of the Stone Deep wizards tricked Light and Darkness Elementals into infusing the orb with their power, each unbeknownst to the other. Since that time the orb has spent a more or less equal portion of the day in light and darkness as if it were some type of subterranean sun. Easily the most notable feature within The Scrafe when lit, the Searogimm Leoma cannot be seen when it is shrouded in Darkness.

*Staenen Weald (STAY-nenn wheeled)* – The stalactites and stalagmites meet in this area along the outer edge of the cavern creating a forest of columns. Flowing streams of water, an unprecedented variety of wild fungi, and a carpet of subterranean moss give it a truly sylvan feel.

*The Library of Gillinthor* – Out in a particularly rugged section of The Scrafe there is a keep and spiraling tower known as the Library of Gillinthor. Sitting atop an island of volcanic glass within a lake of bubbling acid and guarded by powerful winged beasts, the archive is rumored to contain extra-dimensional rooms to house its unlimited supply of tomes, folios, pamphlets, scrolls, etc. The only admittance is via an obsidian ferry piloted by a being of stone, and only those that bring knowledge to donate can gain any in return.

*Ettenane Denu (ettin-ANE day-new)* – This massive gorge covers nearly one third of the length of The Scrafe. Certain sections of the Ettenane Denu have an uncharted depth despite attempts at exploration, and are believed to be bottomless.

*Walu Scarp (wah-lou skarp)* – While several subterranean mountain ranges cover parts of The Scrafe, none are as high nor nearly as long as the Walu Scarp. This chain runs the length of the cavern with some parts impassable for miles.

*Campaeg Wudu (kam-PEG woo-doo)* – This feature is a large area grown over with massive amounts of giant fungi. Within the Campaeg Wudu exists a marsh as well as a sizable, unbroken tract of mushrooms the size of trees – literally a mushroom forest. This region is teeming with life, and the ample hunting often attracts large predators from other places.

### **The Outer Realms**

All subterranean areas outside of those already covered and Stone Deep itself are considered to be "Outer Realms".

*The Ruined Deep* – Beyond the Steorran Scrafe and through one of the countless tunnels that delve deep into The Underway lies a set of ruins that legend tells was once a sister city to Stone Deep.

*Betynan Blaek (bet-EYE-nun blake)* – Deep beneath the Underway lies the Betynan Blaek, or 'black edge of the world.' Only the most adventurous of the Stone Deep Dwarves venture here, and even they rarely return to

tell the tale. Strange creatures wander up from the depths occasionally to terrorize travel within the Steorran Scrafe. Legend tells that this is a realm of eternal darkness and an equally endless variety of alien life forms.

*Nexaenelemin (nex-ane-ELLA-min)* – In a large chamber far beyond the charted lands of Stone Deep lies a cavern in which fire, ice, lightning, and stone coexist. Storms wrack the grotto and beings of Elemental origin battle one another within this place. It is believed that this is the center of all Elemental influence upon Tyrra, and the name of this place literally means ‘Nexus of Elements.’

## Stone Deep

Immediately turning right along the wall of The Steorran Scrafe, Dalmarian’s Weg continues its downward descent for about half a mile before becoming more or less level for a roughly mile and a half stretch. It is on this final level portion that the many broad avenues and elevator shafts of Stone Deep find their origin.

The assorted tunnels twist and plunge into the side of Mount Bursnul and the surrounding Green Mountains for miles and miles, creating several broad avenues and enormous grottos in the process. The entire region is fairly well contained with only three sealed gates leading to the Underway.

### *Appearance*

The skin of Deepites ranges from lightly tanned to rich, almond brown with tiny flecks of glittery silver or gold. Beards are long and flowing, but many keep them braided or otherwise decorated. The higher one’s standing in society quite often the more groomed his or her beard. Females grow full beards as well, and it is rare to see a female’s beard unadorned with gems, jewelry, and/or flowers.

### *Personality*

Stone Deep Dwarves are taciturn by nature, and though not as emotionless as Stone Elves even the most jovial among them are not prone to laugh openly often. Their thirst for knowledge drives some to exploration, but most are content to seek philosophical truths. As a result of their isolation, most Deepites are not comfortable around other races and this awkwardness can often be mistaken for arrogance in casual encounters.

### *Society*

Stone Deep society is dominated by magicians of all types – from an early age all Stone Deep Dwarves are taught the rudimentary lessons of magic, and those that take to it soon find themselves growing in importance among their peers. Those that do not grow to become masters of the arcane arts still practice it throughout their lives such that it is extremely rare to find a Stone Deep Dwarf without at least some basic magical ability.

While Stone Deep is one large settlement, it is divided into five primary regions:

**Fealhinne (feel-HEEN)** – The Fealhinne is a series of tunnels and grottos dedicated to the practice of magic.

This area has a bustling magical district complete with shops containing components, books, rare ingredients, and magic items of all types. It is also rumored to be home to many other-worldly portals and free-standing gateways.

**Halls of Creation** – This region is home to artisans of all sorts. While not as prominent among Stone Deepites as in many other Dwarven cultures, crafting is still a well-respected trade.

**The Citadel** – This is the region surrounding the Citadel. It houses a large portion of the soldiery of Stone Deep.

**The Boroughs** – By far the largest portion of Stone Deep, The Boroughs is a collection of dozens of settlements ranging in size from village to large town. Among the more prominent boroughs are Uhtfloga, Wyrmhord, Dracatun, Frecaburg, and Aisselburg. Some are separated by miles of winding tunnels while others are relatively close. Throughout the region are areas of wilderness filled with mild but dangerous fauna, sprawling fungus plantations, and wildland regions of rock deserts, fungus scrub, and giant mushroom

forests. Travel is mostly safe, but some of the lesser denizens of the Underway are known to live in the uninhabited regions of this area.

**Undergates** – Situated in the lowest portion of Stone Deep, the three Undergates (Burggeat, Scyldgeat, and Faestgeat) are well-guarded and relatively close to one another.

**Brimbenopan** (brim-BEN-open – aka “The Undersea”) – This large, sprawling sea is bound almost completely by the walls of an enormous grotto over half the size of the Steorran Scrafe. One large section bounds The Boroughs, and Dwarven fishermen set out daily from ports along the shore to fish for several breeds of fish and eels. The surface of the Undersea has few uncharted regions, but the underwater regions away from the coast are largely unknown. Rumors persist of several openings to the Underway, Sceorran Scrafe, and even other planes.

Knowledge is the most important thing to Stone Deep Dwarves, and they seek and guard it jealously in many cases. It is a type of currency, and many Deepites aspiring to become greater than their station have given themselves over to apprenticeship or other types of servitude in order to gain knowledge that will help them improve their status in the long run.

### *Government*

Stone Deep is ruled by the Coterie Arcanum. This collective of Wizards makes law and oversees every aspect of The Deep’s existence. Councils of representatives, one from each of The Coterie’s five colleges, rule on matters within their area. Once per year all of the Councils sit together to address matters of over-arching importance. Councils of Law, War, Trade, and Exploration exist, among others.

*The College of Artificing* – Artificers focus on the creation of items, especially relics and artifacts.

*The College of Farseeing* – Looking into the future and judging the impact of recent decisions is the focus of the Farseers.

*The College of Seeking* – Seekers are constantly trying to uncover lost or hidden lore and recording it.

*The College of Transmutation* – Transmuters look to find ways to alter existing items and beings for the betterment of society.

*The College of Worldbending* – Worldbenders experiment with Interplanar Travel and Planar Collision within the Tyrran Planescape.

In addition to rulings of The Coterie there is the Council of Burgers in which each borough appoints a Non-Coterie magician to represent their settlement at an annual gathering. The Burgers have no power to enact law, but they put together a list of suggestions known as the Gewrit Abiddan (goo-RIT abba-dahn) that are reviewed by the Coterie at their annual meetings. The act is not in vain, as The Coterie always spend a good deal of time considering the list and often act upon its suggestions.

### *Law*

In Stone Deep, all of the usual laws of a civilized culture apply (murder, theft, necromancy, etc.), but the harshest punishments typically come from the theft of arcane knowledge.

### *Marriage*

Marriage in Stone Deep culture is typically for life, although the somewhat aloof nature of Stone Deep Dwarves in general makes their relationships seem less loving than many others.