

Embrea Hilly Places of Interest 6: Fair Market

As the name might suggest, and as the crescent face-in-the-moon symbol beside the map indicates, Fair Market is part of the great Twilight Market at Embrea. No matter what time of day it may have been elsewhere in Embrea, at the Twilight Market, it is always a time of day with either twilight, or a low Sun. If the Sun is up, it will be within two hours of sunrise or sunset. If not, for most of the year, it will be within 1½ hours of sunrise or sunset, so there will be at least a degree of lightening in the sky in the general direction of the sub-horizon Sun, with a few of the brighter stars and planets, or more, visible. Increasingly fainter stars will be seen the further the Sun is before sunrise or after sunset. For a period of 40 days before and after the Summer Solstice, however, the twilight lasts all night at Embrea. The time between sunset and sunrise for much of this interval is around 7 hours. If greater precision than these guidelines is preferred, use the actual sunset, sunrise and nautical twilight times for any real-world site at Embrea's approximate latitude, 54° North.

Further to this, it is possible to access the Twilight Market under special circumstances (as the GM may decide) from any other long-established market or travelling fair anywhere else on Nibirum, when required. It may not be possible to leave the Twilight Market and return to such places so easily afterwards, however! It is though always easier to move between the various parts of the Twilight Market than to go to any other place in Embrea, once the Market has been found.

Fair Market is set upon a huge, squarish hill occupying nearly all this map, called Fair Market Heights. At its southern foot, where the road passes between the map's south edge and the Market proper, are the few genuine, permanent, buildings here, in the area marked "Inns of Trade". Many of the other illustrated round, square or rectangular objects are either enclosed tents, or the awnings above market stalls (some of them set on or in enclosed wagons - this aspect is not indicated on the map, so is left to GMs to decide). The colourful rectangular objects in the Fair Camp area, however, are all fully-enclosed, large living-wagons, where many of the Market folk spend their time when not in the fair and market - for as the name indicates, this part of the Twilight Market is indeed a mixture of fairground and the typical market traders found elsewhere in Embrea. Most of the fairground attractions are in the "walled" area of Fair Park, while most of the market stall traders are to be found across Market Lawns, although this is not a hard-and-fast rule, and again as elsewhere in the Twilight Market, things do change location from time to time as well. The only fixed places are those few buildings at the base of the hill referred to above, and the Stone Ring in Fair Park.

Further detailed notes on the map features and labelled places follow. First though, some more general points.

The misty edge to the mapped area is because, like all the Embrea Places maps, Fair Market does not link directly to any other specific location in the city. Instead when leaving the mapped zone (or sometimes only when passing some form of threshold within it - GM's choice), the party can return either to the Hilly Places map, or the Embrea Official Guide map, from where the GM can select a new location for the players to visit.

While scales are provided alongside the map, accurate to the features as drawn, and directions in these notes refer to the standard pattern of north being towards the map's top as viewed, east to its right-hand edge, and so on, none of these elements need be considered strongly fixed. Such things in the Faerie Realm can be quite fluid, to fit whatever the GM may prefer.

The featured text also beside the map is intended to be used to enhance visits here, and the standing stone pillars - at Stone Ring - are illustrated on the map. The text reads: "A blue-robed, barefoot dancer with swirling, long black hair, performs by starlight within standing stone pillars. She dances over the backs of large turtles that fly as if swimming through the air. They move constantly, yet she never falls."

For greater clarity, note that the FCW file has a toggle to allow the on-map labels to be turned-off, if desired, and a second toggle shows the building interiors, to help clarify exactly where they are.

Aspects of Fair Market

Fair Market Heights is a magical place, as might perhaps be expected, albeit rather more so than even other parts of the Twilight Market elsewhere. Its particular peculiarity is that it is always best to approach the Market by the road that passes the Inns of Trade. Attempting to climb the hill in another way, including overland from any direction, or using the roadway from the eastern map edge, involves much more effort, and time, than the relatively gentle steepness of the hill might suggest, and will leave those on foot very breathless for quite a while when they reach the top. Coming down from the hill is no problem in any direction, however. The Inns of Trade route is magically-enhanced for ease of access, so those using it always arrive quickly, refreshed and eager by the time they reach the Market proper. One complication is that sounds of music, laughter and enjoyment from Fair Park can be heard from the moment anyone enters this mapped area, and for those so-inclined, this may prove an especial temptation to move towards the Park area more directly, regardless of the difficulty.

* **Fair Camp:** The most northerly lobe of the hill is set aside for the living-caravan park of the Fair Market traders and performers. The Camp area is encircled by impassable, high, thorny hedges, and can be approached easily on foot only by two narrow paths, which themselves are closely-confined by more such hedges, where the paths break away from the broader route at the northwest corner of Market Lawns. There are many trees and bushes scattered across the Camp, whose focal-point is a large, stone-edged **Firepit** on the central green. This is lit and blazing merrily whenever Fair Market is beneath twilight or early night-time conditions, often with a crowd of Market folk around it, feasting and telling tales to one another. Although whole families live in the caravans, it is obvious there are too few to accommodate more than a fraction of those who run the Market. As ever in Faerie though, such things are deceptive, and one caravan-plot may be home to numerous others if one only knows how to find them. While the brightly-decorated wooden caravans all have wheels, and would be fully mobile under tow, as the footpaths and more worn areas of grass suggest, they are effectively fixed in place. There is no evidence for towing animals. Another oddity is there is no route for the caravans to get in or out of the Camp, except by air... The square wooden structures between the vans are a

combination of store-sheds and privies. Someone is always about and active here, making it very difficult for outsiders to move about the Camp unnoticed.

* **Fair Heights Wood:** Despite the label's placement on the map, across the more defined diagonal strand of woodland, this is actually the general name for all the trees and copses growing across the hilltop, including the vegetation around Fair Camp.

* **Fair Market Heights:** The large central hill's name.

* **Fair Park:** A name applied to the high-walled "castle" part of the Market, southeast as far as the open area with the two freshwater well-fountains and copse, where the Inns of Trade road crests the hilltop and links with the broader routes there between Fair Park and Market Lawns. While the "castle" walls (about 18 feet tall, 5.5 metres) enclosing the bulk of the Park appear to be of red sandstone, they are really cunningly-painted wooden structures. Despite this, they are also solid and reliable, and contain many stalls at both ground level and along their wall-top walkways. At ground level, the stalls are often built into the lower parts of the walls, with projecting awnings. The large, round, brightly-coloured structures at the main "turret-corner" wall-angles are actually very tall tents, into and through which the walls pass, the tents higher than the upper walkways. Each contains more stalls at both ground and wall-top levels, although part inside is open to the ground, as there are spiral wooden stairs in each corner-tent too, providing access to the wall-top walkways. The rounded structures across the grass in Fair Park are all tents (except that marked as the Helter-Skelter; see below on this). Some contain typical market stalls, others amusements of numerous kinds. The larger ones contain more features, in general. There are also more typical market stalls in rows, or scattered about across the enclosed grounds, along with trees and shrubs, some of which latter also contain stalls within their living forms. The other named structures here are described further below.

* **Grand Pavilion:** A great, square, silvery-blue high tent, with a ridged-roof, in the enclosed part of Fair Park, containing entertainments and amusements of many kinds on two floors inside.

* **Great Dome:** The largest hemispherical-domed tent in Fair Park, where acts perform for entertainment continuously, much like a great circus or theatre.

* **Helter-Skelter:** A huge helter-skelter, this is the tallest structure in Fair Park. The internal spiral stairs to the top are accessed by a doorway and ticket-booth on its northwestern side. Its external spiral slide-ramp descends steeply over one-and-a-half circuits of the conical structure, providing exhilaration and magically restoring fatigue (once per visit to Fair Market for each person using it). Sliding mats are collected and returned to a pile by the base of the ramp, next to the door.

* **Inns of Trade:** Flanking the main southern access road to the Market are four buildings and three large, square tents. Each offers a different range of refreshments for visitors and travellers. As noted earlier, this roadway provides the easiest route up to the Fair Market hilltop, requiring unusually little time or effort for what seems quite a steep slope, as long as one uses only the roadway.

* **Market Lawns:** The eastern half of the hill is covered with many market stalls, set up in fairly neat rows, surrounded by broad pathways. The stalls run close to the breaks of slope on the hill edges along the southern and eastern sides of this area. Still broader routes link Market Lawns with Fair Park, while narrower paths lead away from the northwestern corner to the secluded Fair Camp area, and also east off the map from the southeast corner of the Lawns.

* **Pink Bazaar:** A single-storey, pink-and-white striped wood-and-canvas structure in Fair Park, with a raised wooden walkway access along its front, containing numerous small trinket stalls and small amusements. It extends into the wooden south wall surrounding the Park area. Lit inside by many small, multicoloured, free-floating, flower-shaped lanterns, that sometimes spill-out along the front walkway, as far as the neighbouring trees and stalls, and occasionally even up to the wall-top walkway.

* **Stone Ring:** An oval circuit of tall, symbol-inscribed, red sandstone menhirs, within which the dancer of the featured text performs when the stars are visible. At other times, the area is empty and unused, as no one else here will make use of it for any purpose.