



Swarkstone, or **Swarkstone of the Seven Rivers** to give it its full title, is the city nearest to Ashwell and is a good 3 or 4 days hard travel from your home borough. It's one of the oldest cities in Lagonier and historically was a Venice like maze of canals. In your day the canals had mostly fallen into disuse, (although it still had far more bridges that it needed) with the shallower canal-ways being reused as sunken roads and many had been built over, filled in or used as storage pens for livestock. The few canals still "in use" were quite stinky, the city wasn't exactly the small quaint jewel it once was.

It contained amongst other things the Book Treasury (AKA Swarkstone library) and associated magic study house wherein you first discovered that books on planar travel had gone missing and the Hidalgo trading company warehouse – which was in fact a whorehouse above which Scrylash had his base of operations. It was also from Swarkstone that you set off on the Amoroso to track the ship that contained the Shard of the Sun crystal artefact.

Once you began to slip Swarkstone [2] was the first alternate reality you really visited & was much more like Swark of old, the canals were still very much evident and it's where you first encountered Chkah (as a canal taxi barge owner) and tracked down and defeated Randolph Dean Cargille, AKA "fat Deagh".

Swarkstone was also the site of the run in with Hayden Deagh when he lost his marbles and (chanting "whore" – or as you now know "hoar") while wielding the crystal sceptre regained from the boat he managed to fracture reality and cause some sort of cascade bleed of the neighbouring planes. This is where the Caldbeck Rise showed up, contained the city to stop the ripple effect of planar warping spreading out and performed huge, potent powerful magics to put the world back together, wiped your memories and saved your lives.

Or so you were initially led to believe at the time, they in fact killed you all and severed that plane like a septic limb. Ouch.

Your home plane now, whether it's Swark5 or Swark100, let's not quibble, is more like the Swark of yore: it's canal-ways were in terrible disuse but not filled in. That was always the "big hint" that the you that you became was not the you that you thought you were when you were you. Luckily the 6 years between games meant there was little danger of that being very obvious.

Things have changed around Swarkstone in the years since you returned from your madcap romp, but it's hard to pin down exactly what or precisely what's caused it; perhaps because of a renewed sense of civic pride due to the proximity to the Family home now that the "Royal Couple" are so popular and rumour is rife that next summer they intend to revisit the old family home and spend some time in Swarky; perhaps because the magic study house has become a fully fledged mage school again and has attracted young blood to the city, perhaps because of increased political influence from Ballantine on the civic council, perhaps because it's "vibe" has attracted religious people from far and wide to study there?

Most favoured explanation when you sit around in the Ravens and sink a pint after hours when no one is in earshot? That being in the planar neighbourhood of the epicentre to a reality explosion all those years ago has had a lasting effect on dear old Swarky – that the people of the city on some level felt the hiccup and it's left the city a bit...odd? Certainly not in a "crystal encrusted golems from other dimensions roaming the streets" way but – for instance – the entire city got behind the "reclaim the canals" project and, as if they could suddenly see how the city could look with a bit of effort and a vast scope of work to clean out and reuse the canal-ways has been going on for 18 months; the city looks and smells all the better for it.

There are more changes, some subtle and some not – but that dear chums is for later. Game soon!

[Oh yes, and this history contains one huge DMs prerogative LIE, just because]