

Embra Crossing Places of Interest 3: Slateford Market

The “Market” name and crescent face-in-the-moon symbol beside the map confirm this is part of the great Twilight Market at Embra. No matter what time of day it may have been elsewhere in Embra, 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 Embra. 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 Embra’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 Embra, once the Market has been found.

Notes on the Market’s labelled locations and map features follow. First though, some more general points.

The misty edge to the mapped area is because, like all the Embra Places maps, Slateford 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 Crossing Places map, or the Embra Official Guide map, from where the GM can select a new location for the players to visit. In that case, there should always be an option to move to another part of the Twilight Market (or even return to this one) along with the more usual range of possibilities.

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.

Similarly, the featured text also beside the map can be used to add extra flavour, or ignored, just as the GM wishes. It reads: “A female Faerie, wrapped in a simple, red, flowing, cloth-bound head-scarf, watches over the Ford. She bears a tall staff with a pointed-oval, spiralling tip. A great lion with spiral tattoos and a unicorn’s head horn is by her. Many cats are nearby.”

For greater clarity, note that the FCW file has a toggle to allow the on-map labels to be turned-off, if desired.

Aspects of Slateford Market

Slateford Market is set amidst substantial amounts of open grassland and moor. Despite that, the Market seems surprisingly closely confined, with its tents, stalls and wagons clustered in two near mirror-image groupings around the roadways on either side of the eponymous Ford. Those roads, and the form of the Market, give it the look of a pair of colourful butterfly wings on the map, separated by the “body” of the River Clack. This is not accidental. The only elements that do not mirror one another are the three great trees with thatched structures in their tops. There are though no buildings in the strictest sense at Slateford Market. Most of the 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). Where some features may appear to be more traditional structures, they are either really open plan inside, with no walls, only supporting pillars for their roofs, or are living, vegetation-thatched, house-like structures in the tops of the three great trees. These tree buildings can be reached by living-vine ladders, by flying or levitating, or by hauled basket for smaller/lighter creatures.

The four larger, square, grey-tiled structures are simply covered areas where stalls based around tables or small barrows are set up beneath. Each has four stout wooden pillars, one at each corner. Hard-packed earth roads run right through the two of these nearest the Ford itself, although ordinarily, the roads are blocked by stalls. A tall, circular, green-tiled dome, again supported by four pillars, is on the grass at about the middle of each “wing”, and is a raised stage where bands and other acts perform, and from where important announcements can be made.

* **Butterfly Peak:** A larger hill on the map’s northern edge, north of the Market’s northern “wingtip”. The light woods scattered over and around it are notable for their many colourful butterflies and moths.

* **Butterfly Tree:** The largest of the Market’s three great trees, and the only one north of the Clack. It has a living wooden platform in its heights, forming its own little market square, along with a cluster of living building-like forms housing stalls and a tavern. The tavern, “The Tasty Drop”, is in the thatched structure on the limb that directly overhangs the River Clack in this tree, where its name serves as a handy pun for any intoxicated patrons to beware how they step when leaving it. Like Butterfly Peak, this tree attracts a great many colourful butterflies and moths.

* **Clack Hollow:** For all the Clack is quite a narrow stream across this map, it broadens considerably upstream of the Ford, forming this large, deep pool in the river bed. The Hollow is surrounded by especially low-lying ground that often floods, the Clack Hollow Marsh.

* **Clack Hollow Marsh:** Stretches of low-lying land surrounding the Clack by the Clack Hollow basin, particularly on the northern and upstream southern banks. It too is an area notable for its numerous colourful moths and butterflies.

- * **Clack Hollow Wood:** An extensive area of woodland running from the Clack Hollow Marsh off the map's eastern edge along both banks of the Clack.

- * **Commonside Tree:** The smallest of the three great trees at Slateford Market, housing the southern "wing's" refreshment hostel in its branches.

- * **Hollow Tree:** The third and most easterly of the great trees. It has a collection of additional stalls in its branch-buildings, above the Market's southeastern wingtip.

- * **Raisin Egg:** A small, squarish, low hill with a few trees on and by it, on Slateford Common.

- * **River Clack:** The Clack often appears variable in size and nature from the different Places maps on which it features, but it is always the same river that names the vale in which Embra lies. Here it is apparently rather narrow, except near the Clack Hollow basin. It is of course crossed by the eponymous Slate Ford. The Clack usually flows east to west, right to left when viewing the map.

- * **Slate Ford:** A fairly shallow, rocky ford across the Clack, named from the slate rock clearly visible on both banks and the river bed here. If using the female Faerie from the featured text, with her horned lion and cat accompanists, she may be watching over the Ford from either bank, though she commonly favours the tree near the southern Clack bank close to the Ford as her watching place.

- * **Slateford Common:** The largely open grasslands south of both Clack and Market.

- * **Slateford Moor:** The more open moorland north of the Clack, between Clack Hollow Wood and Butterfly Peak.

- * **Slateford Rise:** A low, narrow, hill-line right on the map's southern edge.

- * **Watcher's Height:** A fairly small hill on the northwestern map edge. Occasionally, some say when the Market becomes too boisterous, the watcher Faerie of the featured text and her entourage may be seen on the crest of this hill nearer the Ford, still watching over it, instead of nearer the heart of the Market as more usually.