

Duncan Lucas Collection of "Strange Happenings in Wigston"

STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN  
WICH1NGSTONE

DOES THIS LADDIE AND  
OTHERS STILL ABOUND?

Read on these works/  
Collected by Duncan Lucas





Bid the Magna Cinema ever have a ghost? Former projectionist Mr. John Freer thinks so.

Mr. Freer, who worked there from 1941 to 1944, recounts an interesting ghostly story about what happened one sultry summer evening.

He and fellow projectionist Ken Withers, who were about 18 at the time, were spending the night in that vast and echoing building while on firewaters duties.

Before settling down for the night, they always made a thorough check to make sure everyone had left the premises and that there were no smouldering cigarette ends.

They spent four nights a week there when they were on hand to raise the alarm and to help put out any fires which may have resulted from bombs that dropped.

"We had just dozed off when we were woken by the sound of footsteps," said Mr. Freer. "We could hear someone coming up the stone stairs, then silence!

"We shone our big cinema torches down the stairs, but could see nothing.

"The next time we knew, we saw the double doors leading from the lounge to the balcony swing open.

"Whatever had climbed the stairs must have walked

A weekly look at the

## Ghostly tale of cinema in wartime!

quietly over the carpeted lounge, but we had seen nothing.

"We both felt shaky, but gave the building another search, even the gigantic loft, but no-one was there. The outside doors were still locked.

"We thought at first it might have been an American serviceman from Brunt-ingham. We sometimes put them up if they missed the truck home after they had come to Wigston for the beer and the girls."

Mr. Freer, now 61, of 83 Pullman Road, Wigston, only ever told a handful of people of his ghostly experience.

But his memory was jogged at the news of the sale of the cinema to become a snooker hall.

He is curious as to whether anyone else has heard of a ghost at the Magna and would like to hear from them. He also often wonders about his mate Ken who lived in Oadby at the time and similarly

would love to hear from him.

Do you have any nostalgic memories of the Magna Cinema?

It has been a Wigston landmark for so many years. It has been the place where young children grew up and met (their future husbands and wives. It has been the place where many couples courted, perhaps in the double seats in the back two rows. After they were married, their own children went there.

We would love to hear from you.

### Choirs join forces...

The combined choirs of Blaby and Whetstone Baptist Churches presented Thiman's The Last Supper during the evening service at Blaby Baptist Church on Palm Sunday.

Conductor was Maurice Shenton and organist was Cliff Beck. Soloists were Bette Bolton (soprano) and David Hurley (bass).

In our lives there are things + happenings which we cannot explain. If it only happens to ones self it has little relevance amongst our fellows, but if many experience events it does help to clarify the mind.

Most it is a prime example of strange events as described at No 64.

Almost opposite is Bedar Ave, on the corner of which is a 1930's shop, formally a Coop grocers. Then a TV shop now a kitchen show room. Upstairs

more lovely

During the previous ladies end unfold In 1986 ladies saw a man near stairs, a lady on the sun bed saw nothing on that occasion but a "man" in the room on another occasion. There was no sense of fear but Music was switched on at night

Bell rang announcing visitors downstairs. No one there. Shop staff noted noises upstairs no one there. Keys rattling no one about.

New staff not told but they reported a figure in a black suit or dark clothes with a white apron always near the rear stairs.

Legend tells of a man killed in a fall on the stairs & a boy of 12 having a similar tragic death

An escort has been involved. The ladies call the figure George who frightens no one, but wonder why. We know James Whizatt with wife & 3 daughters was Provisions + Drapery Manager in 1981 a coop

Who is "George" why  
Garry I have no

## ITEMS EXTRACTED FROM LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

SATURDAY FEBRUARY, 4TH. 1871.  
SUPERSTITION v. SCHOOLS.

Whilst the land is ring-ing with the fierce contests of School Board elections, and our schools are receiving higher and yet higher grants from Governmental funds for increased efficiency in rudimentary education, superstition - that Archdeacon Fearon's system of teaching would crush out -still rears it's foolish head. The whole of the village is at this moment, especially the junior part, but not wholly confined to them, agitated with rumour that the old church is haunted. Hideous noises in the true ghost fashion having been heard preceding from the building, Crowds of people have during the past day or two flocked into the churchyard, various speculations having offered as to the cause of the nightly sounds. Matters assumed such a serious aspect, and assertions that a real ghost was in hiding in the church so persistant, that the Sexton has searched the church, and, strange to say, found - no ghost. Still people are not satisfied, and still persist that the noises from the weathercock, which required a little oil, are the ravings of a veritable goblin.

LEICESTERSHIRE MERCURY.  
SATURDAY 6TH. MARCH 1869. PAGE 3 UNDER "WIGSTON".

SURPRISING PHENOMENON - On Thursday night week, about ten o'clock, the inhabitants resident near the National Schools were startled by the loud clanging of the school bell called St. Anthony, a crowd quickly gathered around the schoolhouse, v/hich up with the exception now mentioned, silent, dar and deserted street, the bell rang on. The officials of the place were soon on having cautiously entered the building, looked in vain for the motive power\* St the bell rang on. The matter was becoming serious, and unless the cause could satisfactorily explained, another case would be added to the list of mysterious occurrences. This could not be allowed. The credulous and superstitious the believers in ghosts and goblins - must not have another voucher to prove the truth of their peculiar belief. The marvel of intellect forbad it, and cause and effect demanded vindication. Still the bell rang on. Renewed efforts were put forth, and at last rewarded the searchers after the unknown. What was the cause of the unearthly clangour? Had the sub influence of electricity or the invisible hands of a wandering sprite been at work? Nothing of the kind. Some mischievous person had attached a piece of string to the clapper, and from the safe retreat of a neighbouring house, "tollled the bell". At the explanation Cause and Effect smiled in unison; and the lurking superstitious yet lingering in the breast of the ignorant, and not always confined to that class, received another blow.

## WIGSTON GHOSTS

When I was eighteen, nowt but a lad, I had an allotment on Horsewell Lane, and being very hard up. I had just started pig keeping. I had a job in the daytime and my own stock was serviced in the evening,,

I built my pig styes by The Parish Lantern (moonlight) and hurricane lanterns.

One very dark night about 9.30pm, I was busy laying bricks when I heard a thump thump. I ignored it, but a few minutes later, another thump thump! As I listened, the mysterious sound came again, thump thump., I felt the hairs raise on the back of my neck, and taking a stout stave in my hand, a lantern in the other, went off to investigate across the allotments,

I wouldn't say I was scared; just Frit! Then, nearby came a loud thump thump and I nearly jumped out of my wellies! There, right in front of me was a buck rabbit signalling to the does in the rabbit hutches. Well, I had to laugh at my ghost!

\* \* \*

## UHO OR WHAT SAVED MR. MATTHEWS?

A Mr. Matthews, around the turn of the century was cycling from Wigston Magna to Oadby. It was a foggy night and just before he reached the washbrook, a man jumped out in front of him and waved him to stop.

Mr. Matthews dismounted, but to his amazement the man had vanished, but right in front of Mr. Matthews, was a hole in the road, which, even as he watched, the bridge collapsed. The mysterious person had saved Mr. Matthew's life.

No one was ever found who had warned Mr. Matthews that night of the collapsed bridge. Why did no one come forward when Mr. Matthews made enquiries? He wanted to thank the man for his presence that night. Perhaps that's what it was -a presence.

### THE LEGEND OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH

During the 1939-1945 war, 'Wimpey' Towers, a scout member of the 28th Leicester Troop, asked his fellow scouts to sit with him in All Saints Church during the night of All Saints Eve. i.e. November 1st.

Legend has it that during All Saints Eve, recognizable forms of all who were destined to die in the parish during the ensuing year, pass down the nave of the church,,

The scouters, never ones to resist a challenge, were all 'frit to death' according to 'Wimpey'<sup>1</sup> but he nevertheless sat and dozed throughout the night- "It was weird , spooky and cold" he said, but regrettably he saw nothing.

However, ancient gentlemen, he said had insisted that the event did occur. Did it take place during one of 'Wimpey naps?

\*            \*

### THE WISTOW GATE-MAM

Up at Wistow on the road to Kibworth against the left hand turn to Newton Harcourt was the blind man's gate so called because a blind war veteran opened the gate f , and scratched a living that way,

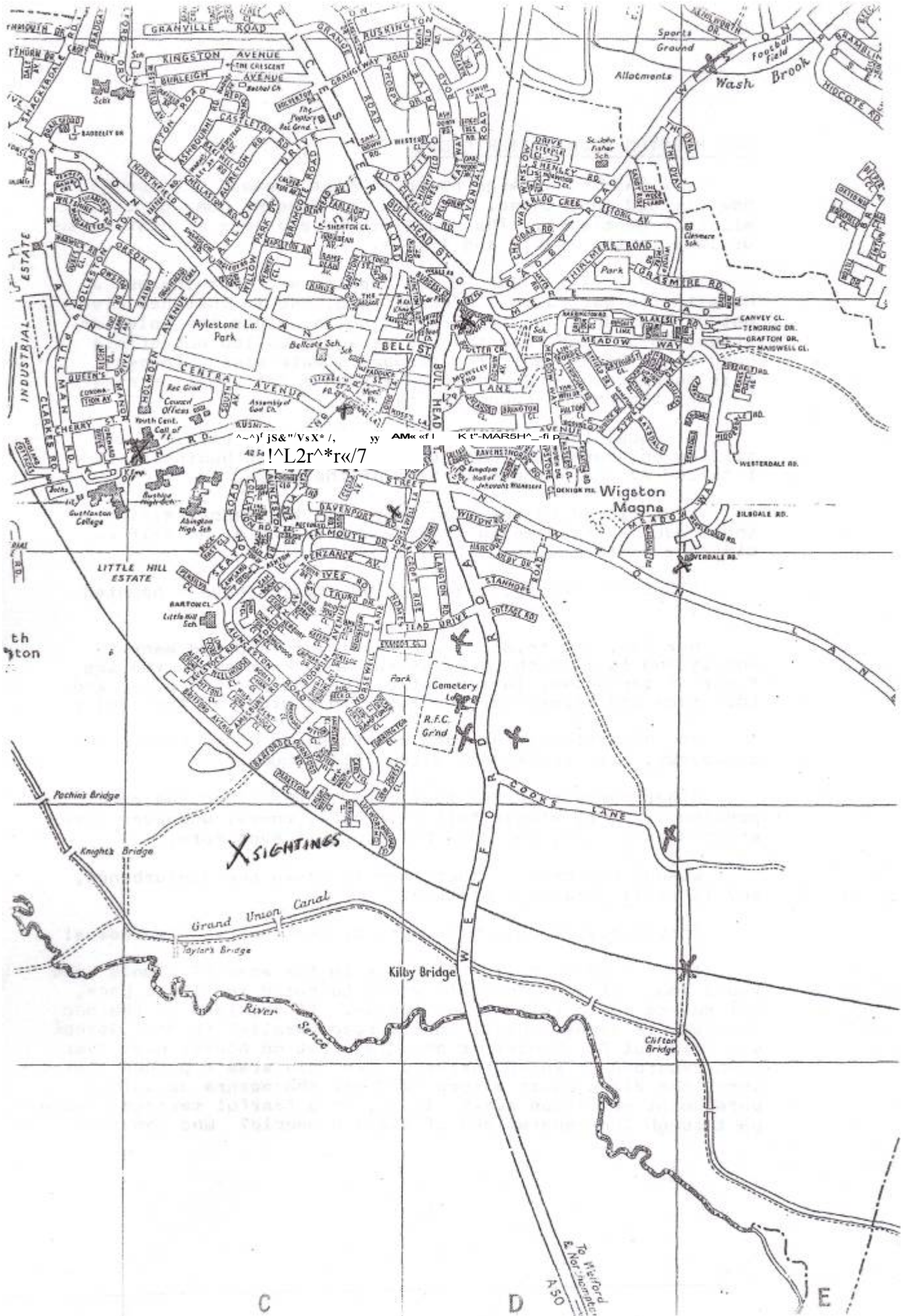
Nou on dark and stormy nights the gate would open one would hear the sounds of a coach and horses rattling through, and then the gate would close.

My father claimed to have witnessed such an occasions in his boyhood. Strange things have happened at Wistow through the decades, there is the ghostly hunt that races silently across the fields at the time of The Hunters Moon. Witnessed by more than one old Wigstonian, on many occasions

### THE SPECTRE IN ST. WOLSTANS

A spectre was claimed to have been seen by a Mr. Harold Hurst, a man not given to thoughtless gossip, or for that matter, any fanciful notions. As he looked ac the churchyard, a figure, crouched up, moved slowly aero the yard. A terrible feeling of coldness and fear enveloped Mr. Hurst as he watched the crouching figure before it disappeared round the side of the church.

Was this the same spectre that caused the dog in Doreen Boulter's story? such abject terror?



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## THE HAUNTED ROOM AT THE CEDARS

The Cedars, a large house in float Street, Wigston Magna, now divided into three, was once the elegant home of various military gentlemen. The house did have a aura of mystery to us lads in the 1930's and 1940's.

One day, a plumber, doing repairs and cleaning out a hole in the wall with a piece of rag, had it snatched clean out of his hand. He repeated it again, wiped the hole, or attempted to wipe, and the rag as again pulled out of his hand and disappeared. The plumber's mate also witnessed this phenomenon. Could it have been a rat? Well, whatever it was, they never found the rag.

A sequel to this tale came to light recently. I was calling on houses in Moat Street on election business, when I called at the western portion of the house.

I mentioned to the good lady, the tale appertaining to the house, as told me in 1940 by a Mrs. Eagle, herself an old lady at that time.

"That is strange," she replied, "we do have a haunted room".

Her son, she told me, was a soldier, and had many models and toys which were set out in a display on the top floor of the house, in the attic. He was away on duty, and this room was closed up, and left undisturbed by the family.

On his return, the room was found to be in complete disarray, toys and models strewn all around.

Other members of the family had never liked the room previously, they always felt distinctly uneasy whenever they entered that room, and now they avoid it even more.

No-one had been in that room to cause the disturbance and it still remains a mystery.

J

Incidentally, Blunts Lane runs at the rear of The Cedars!

There were no buildings built in the area of Blunts Lane years ago. It would be very wrong to build in Blunts Lane, but no-one could tell us the reason. If you look at the map overleaf it seems logical that a road parallel to Moat Street was laid out for houses at one time, but no houses have ever been recorded or known thereon. Was this area a plague spot where the Black Death struck hard and the meagre dwellings were burnt or rotted away? If so, was a fearful message passed on through the generations of Wigston people? Who can say?

# Welcome to my New Haunt!

Ian Jeeves tells of his recent experience moving to a 'new' home.... originally an eighteenth century farmhouse ripe for renewal.

Some folk like a challenge. The prospect of moving into an old house with plenty of potential for becoming a 'des-res' is appealing, especially if you're adept at D.I.Y. So it is hardly surprising that Ian spent more than the odd moment of his tour of night duty in early October (between diligent patrols of the grounds, of course) trying to visualise where he would begin. The week following nights would be ideal for getting to grips with the 'essentials'. There was also the business of being on hand to organise furniture removal, etc. Yes .... there was much to organise. Nevertheless it was a challenge that Ian was secretly looking forward to.

The house stands three stories high, sitting back from the road just sufficiently far to allow for a semblance of front garden, not that gardening was high on Ian's priorities at this stage. Originally an old farmhouse building, it had plenty of character. The trouble was, Ian was soon to wonder if it had more character than he originally bargained for.

During his week of nights, Ian took the opportunity to nip round to the house during the day for odd jobs prior to physically 'moving-in'. On one occasion he replaced a light bulb in the first-floor landing wall-light fitting. The next morning the same bulb was lying on the floor approximately two feet away from the wall. On another day Ian visited prior to his night shift and

departed for work leaving only the downstairs hall light switched on. The following morning, when he called in to extinguish the hall light he was amazed to find all the lights on the first floor landing were burning bright. Apart from the occasions when Ian attended the house prior to moving in, the house was unoccupied or was it?

There could be logical explanations for the light episode thought Ian and, faced with other pressing jobs to do, he duly concentrated his mind on work to tackle in the 'top' bedroom. Whilst merrily working away, Ian became aware of footsteps on the second landing. Perhaps his good lady had let some workman have her key to gain access? Or perhaps even turned-up to give a hand! Not so in either case. Ian moved to the door to find out who was making their way up the stairs. He met only with a chill feeling up and down his spine as he looked, and saw.... no-one.

Came the great day when the family moved in for real. There were still jobs to be done that required qualified chatting to two 'Dampco' plasterers working in the top bedroom, Ian again heard footsteps on the second staircase. This time, the two tradesmen also heard 'somebody' approaching. • As before, there was nobody there! Within a short while Ian, two tradesmen and a friend of Ian's eldest son had all heard the phantom footsteps on the staircase. Furthermore, one of the plasterers swears that he saw his plasterers 'hawk' move (of its own accord!)

did only a short period before Halloween did little to settle Ian's nerves! But still there were jobs to be done and on the following Saturday morning Ian casually went to get some tools from the under-stair cupboard. Unfortunately, the door appeared locked. Strange, thought Ian, since he was unaware the door had a lock. Indeed it didn't! However, the strenuous efforts of Ian and a number of friends failed to budge the door for two hours. Having given up on the task, Ian returned a short time later and without thinking, and with very little effort, opened the same cupboard door.

By now the house was presenting a catalogue of strange events. In the converted loft a window keeps opening by itself! That itself could be explained away by air-pressure within the building were it not for the fact that the window in question is very hard for one person to open once it is properly closed. Ian became curious and made some discreet enquiries among folk living in the neighbourhood. He was somewhat more than mildly surprised to learn that the local priest, a Father Green, had conducted an exorcism in the building some five years or so earlier.

Ian went on a closer tour of inspection around the house and found; A two-foot difference in places between the downstairs ceiling and the level of the first floor above. Roman numerals carved in an oak beam in the lounge ceiling. The 'Red Room' of the house (allegedly the haunted room) floorboards appear to be 'lifting'. Phil Kemp, roving electrician of the Parish, thinks that the timbers were reclaimed timbers when they were fitted some 200 years ago. Attending to one or two of Ian's more elaborate electrical needs, Phil was clearly undaunted by the prospect of a phantom overseeing his handywork. However, he was heard to be talking and whistling to himself whilst he worked .... WITH THE LIGHTS ON!

Mrs R A Hammond/Mr I Jeeves 64  
Moat Street Wigston  
Leicester  
LE18 2GD

12 January 1996

Mr D Lucas Lucas  
Landscapes  
Newton Lane  
Wigston  
Leicester

Dear Mr Lucas,

We understand from Mrs Berresford that you would be interested in updating your records with regards to our property (above). We moved into Moat Street in October and have had one or two peculiar happenings so far!!

We will list these separately for you. Also we are very interested in gaining a full history of our property as far back as is able, but due to the enormous amount of work we are undertaking on the house at the moment we have not had time to start investigating. As you are a keen historian of the Wigston area could you please point us in the right direction either for paperwork or people who may be able to help us. We have your two Bygone Wigston books, but unfortunately our is about the only old property that has no photograph, although one photo looks as though it is taken from the front. Someone told us recently that at one time it was a Dentists, but we don't know how to check this out.

We would be more than happy to hear from you if you can offer any help or advice. Our telephone number is 2888361.

Yours sincerely

Rose Hammond  
Ian Jeeves

## STRANGE OCCURENCES!!

1. The week before we moved in Ian was working on upstairs floorboards. Having securely checked the house before leaving he left a front bedroom light on (first floor). On returning next morning a different light was on but the switch had not altered, and the bulb was still working. That particular day whilst working upstairs (top attic room) Ian experienced a cold peculiar sensation on his neck, which made the hairs on the back of his neck stand up.

We were fully aware before we bought the property that it is "haunted" and are not concerned, although this did unnerve Ian somewhat.

2. Several people including 4 or 5 workmen, Ians children, my children have heard footsteps on the top flight of stairs.
3. Myself and Ians youngest child were in the first floor back bedroom (on separate occasions) and were convinced someone was walking along the landing and expected the door to open, but it didn't (thinking it was another member of the household). Ian's youngest is 5 years old and unaware of the "hauntings".
4. The downstairs under stair cupboard only has a handle. One morning it was actually locked. Ian had to force the whole handle off and a bolt had shot through into the frame - it hadn't got a lock!
5. We arrived home one night (no one in and no lights on). I put the hall light on. By the time I had reached the first floor the front bedroom light was on.
6. A light bulb fell from a wall light, a long distance along

the landing and did not break. The actual shade suddenly sported a hole - the bulb still worked,

7. The plasterer had his 'hook' move. He knew- he hadn't touched it, but found it gone on his return. It was as I was searching for it and milling round that he was informed that the property was haunted! He had to be bullied come back in!

We find all these things fascinating, and I can always put a logical explanation to them, and besides the previous occupiers were there happily for 10 years - in one piece, so it *must be* friendly.

## STRANGE OCCURRENCES AROUND THE CEMETERY

Mr. Ted Robinson was a gravedigger up at Wigston Magna Cemetery on Welford Road, or Wharf Road, as old Wigstonians called it,

Mr. Ted Robinson, and his son Roland, recounted many tales of findings up the cemetery when digging deep graves up there.

A broken sword, smashed in skulls, surrounded by pottery, beads, bits of harness and armour and odd looking stones. Although these finds were passed on to Leicester Museum, unfortunately these items are not in any records held there.

As Mr. Ted Robinson remarked "It was just as if a battle has taken place up here."

There is Nichol's account of the Saxon brooches and artifacts found. Also the O.S. map of Wigston published in 1887 which shows the large triangle of almost open land bounded by Horsewell Lane, Welford Road and the old track which led to Rawlins Farm; it still runs by Tythorn School,

Was this the site of Saxon Wigston? The

Danes burnt Wigston about 876 A.D.

Did the survivors rebuild on the present Wigston Square?

# # #

In August 1981, a woman and her son, travelling from Nottingham to Basingstoke with a car and caravan, had the misfortune to break down. Her car needed two full days to repair, so they parked the caravan in fields opposite the Wigston Magna cemetery to await the vehicle's return.

Mr. Peter Wilford spoke to her after her first night's stop and she told him of her fear of the site. "I'm Psychic" she said, "and this is an evil spot. I hear shouts and shrieks, groans and the clashing of metal, just as if a battle is being fought."

Peter said nothing, but wished her well and trusted she would sleep much better the second night.

"I will," she said, "I've some strong sleeping pills here"

Peter, our society expert in finding buried object has found numerous items on the site, decided not to pursue the subject further.

The following morning he returned and again and spoke to the woman.

"How did you sleep last night?" he asked.

" Oh very well, but I was awakened by my son shouting 'Get up - Get up'" Only it wasn't her son.

The poor woman, only half awake was confronted by a youth of pale countenance, dressed in a white robe, who then vanished.

"Then I looked across to the opposite bunk where my own son was still sleeping soundly, unaware of our visitor," she continued.

As I looked out of the caravan window, everywhere was covered in mist. Dawn was breaking, and I was deathly cold.

My car's here now, and I will tell you now, I can't get away from here quickly enough. It is evil here.

Peter never told her of the facts he knew regarding the area. Perhaps this lady will come again one day, then again, perhaps not.

The Leicester Search Society who have helped so much in investigating the area, has as its leader Mr. Husgrove. His wife does not possess knowledge of this particular site but she also declares the area to be evil. She cannot-explain her feelings but remains very uncomfortable when visiting the site with her husband on his survey of the area.

Mr. William Ward, an ardent Wigston Historian also relates the story of a lady living in Homestead Drive who confided in him one day.

"Bill, I've had a vision, I saw men in ancient costume, like medieval armour." She stopped and looked at Bill, "I'm to tell you because knowing your interest, you'll perhaps believe me." When Bill re-assured her, she continued - "looking out of my kitchen window towards the cemetery, it was very misty and coming through the mist were large numbers of men with spears and shields, dressed in armour, walking or marching along, then they were gone as quickly as they had appeared.

So there we have it, Bill Ward, Peter Wilford, and Mr. Husgrove. Roland Robinson merely repeated what his Father had told him. All trustworthy men.

Now you be the judge and jury on the history of the area, and what message is coming from this ancient spot.

NB. A man working on a building site in this area was killed in a trench on Wednesday 21st, September 1983.

In some respects, the cutting from The Leicester Mercury, Retreat of an army of Dead Soldiers, by John Macklin has echoes of the Saxon Army. There are many things in this Earth and Heaven that we mortals are only given a glimpse of. We cannot explain; it happens from time to time, and we can but wonder.

SEE OVERLEAF.

#### THE VIKING

My Uncle Ted, apart from having his allotment "next to ours up Newton Lane, was a grave digger up at Welford Road cemetery. When, as a small girl I went with father to visit cousin William's grave in the babies section, oh! they were such tiny mounds; we carried on along the path, by the old cemetery lodge, it was a spooky place, fancy having to live there all among the graves and dead people.

*We* carried on right to the end of the path where the hut was situated. It housed all the implements and stuff needed for looking after the cemetery and of course grave digging.

Uncle Ted was always so cheerful, despite his melancholy surroundings. Inside the hut there was a small window and on the ledge was a skull. Nobody was getting me inside that hut with that thing there. Uncle Ted laughed and said 'Cedric' wouldn't hurt anybody. "Where did it come from?" I asked from the safety of the hut doorway.

"Oh! I dug 'im up one day, I'm always finding stuff when I dig deep down," said Uncle Ted, "tell you what, there's been some run doings in these parts in the past. Them Vikings or whatever they were called did nowt else but fight.

"Was Cedric a Viking then, Uncle?" I asked. "No telling gal, he's never said owt to me," said Uncle Ted grinning at me.

## THE OLD LADY OF HEATHERLEY HOUSE

It was on a September morning in 1987 when I had my first encounter with the ghost of Wigston College.

I was working, cleaning the back stairs on the middle level, when I was called by my first name. I went to find out who had called me going to every floor finishing on the ground floor. By this time I was quite annoyed because of the wasted time.

When I asked the caretakers they explained it was the Old Lady. I thought they were joking but when I asked by workmates they told me it was true. As time went by I came to realize it was true as she tried to distract me many times.

It was about 2 years later, about April time, she excelled herself one morning by making all sorts of weird noises. I think she must have been very cross but I was in a hurry that morning and I told her to go away, I hadn't got time for her fun and games. I carried on working. Next day was very peaceful and quite on the stairs. I was taking my time mopping the stairs. I got down to the middle landing and was facing the windows looking down -the pathway alongside the workshops. I straightened up to stretch my back, still looking out of the windows. To my amazement I saw the lady of the old house come out of the workshops and across the path through the wall into the mobile. It wasn't until she vanished that I realized that I had just seen a ghost.

I ran down the stairs to find my workmates and the caretaker to tell them what I had just seen. I described the lady as wearing a long, black dress and a belt round her waist with a bunch of keys hanging from it.

A few weeks after this incident I was talking to an old lady, who lived in Manor Street, about what I had seen. She told me that the last housemaid who worked at Heatherly House was still alive and could tell me all about the old lady of the house. What was also interesting was that she had lived very near to me.

Arrangements were made for my husband to go and visit the housemaid. During that visit photographs were produced of the old Heatherly house, the grounds and the lady of the house. The photograph of the lady was exactly as she had been seen at the college.

During conversations with the old housemaid an interesting story emerged. Heatherly House being one of the four big houses in Wigston was owned by a Cigar Manufacturer and his wife. When the wife was taken ill a nurse/companion was employed to keep her company while her husband was away on business. Unfortunately the wife died. The companion was asked if she would stay on at Heatherly House as housekeeper, which she accepted.

## THE GHOST OF HEATHERLEY HOUSE

Over the future years love blossomed between them and they married. When the husband died the wife stayed on at the house. She took on a housemaid to help her with the upkeep of the house.

Many years later the County Council asked if they could buy the house and grounds to build a college this was flatly refused, never would an education building be on her grounds, she would curse it.

That is how things stood until the old lady-.was taken into care in a hospital, too sick to care for herself any more. The house and grounds were sold by the guardians of the estate, and the college was built.

Since then many a person has spent time looking round rooms and corridors to find out who called out their Christian name, or looking to see who tapped them on the shoulder. She meant what she had said, she still hinders and wastes our time.

P.S. Mrs Gudgeon, the house maid whose husband was gardener, told that the lady of the house was a lovely lady who would hurt no one..

Prior to the house being demolished she visited it and saw the lady sitting on a chest of drawers at the top of the stairs. She smiled and was gone. Also, the good lady was buried in her Warwickshire village, but not in the spot she expressly desired and spoke about in her life time.

A tormented soul ???

## THE CLOAKED SPECTRE

On June 26th, 1992 a couple, with their daughter, chose to walk home from the Navigation Inn, Kilby Bridge to Wigston Harcourt the long way around. It was a moonlit night and they walked the tow-path beside the canal and up over the railway on to Cooks Lane.

While on the stretch leading towards Norwood House the man and woman noticed a greyish vague misty figure cross in front of them, apparently in a cloak, with something protruding or trailing at one side like a sword but under the cloak.

The daughter asked if they had noticed anything and complained that she had seen a greyish white figure with a child or object under a misty type of cloak.

The land has a hedge running along each side with no gaps or stiles at that point.

The good lady spoke in front of Peter Wilford and myself, She was amazed when we presented her with a copy of 'Strange Phenomena'<sup>1</sup>. Subject to her name being reserved this is her tale.

## TERROR IN THE GRAVEYARD

During the bad winter of 1946/7, we lived in one of the small terraced cottages in Church Nook. My husband was abroad serving in the Army, and I lived with our baby son and 'Prince'<sup>1</sup> our mongrel pedigree terrier in the middle cottage of the row.

Being an open yard, it was difficult to keep 'Prince'<sup>1</sup> at home, and from time to time he would go A.U.O.L. to visit my parents home in Bull Head Street, Father would bring him back, or he would return of his own accord.

This particular evening he did not return, It had been snowing all day, and although I had been down The Nook to look for him. I gave it best and decided that Father had kept him for the night.

Around midnight I could hear him barking, and rising from my bed looked out of the window the snow had stopped, and it was freezing. I donned coat, "Wellingtons, a woolly scarf over my head, checked my sleeping babe, and then flashlight in hand ventured forth into the night. Down past St. Wolstans churchyard, into Oadby Road, and looking towards The Bank I could see the wretched dog barking his head off"

Stumbling and slipping towards The Bank, I shouted his name. He came ploughing through the snow, threw himself upon me joyously, tail wagging furiously.

"Oh' come on, you nuisance," I said, or words to that effect and turned back towards Church Nook. 'Prince' dashed on ahead like a miniature snow-plough, revelling in the snow up to the church gates, Suddenly, he became rigid, staring intently through the gates at something in the churchyard. As I shone my flashlight, I could see the hairs on his back literally standing up. He uttered a loud whining sound it was a sound I had never heard him make before, a sound, I never want to hear again.

"What is it? Come on, what's the matter with you" I urged him on. He wouldn't move, he just stood there, tail between his legs, making this awful whining sound.

Bravely I shone my flashlight up the church pathways all I could see was old snow-covered tombstones and deep shadows.

"Come on, will you," I pulled at his collar, it was no use the dog was rigid in abject terror.

By this time I wasn't feeling too brave myself,

I scooped him up, and floundered back through the snow and thankfully back in home.

As I put him down, he fled into his box underneath the cupboard, and lay there shaking. Nothing would induce him out, so what was it he saw or sensed in St. Wolstans churchyard that night, that changed him from a boisterous terrier into an animal so overcome with terror that he was unable to move?

I don't know, and I don't want to know either!

St. Welstans reverted to St. Wistans in 1957.

Doreen Boulter

ON A TOMBSTONE : IN ALL SAINTS CHURCHYARD , WIGSTON MAGNA

MY FATHER POISONED ME TO DEATH MY  
MOTHER 'S HAND WITHHELD MY BREATH HER UOM 8  
THAT ONCE MY -SUBSTANCE GAVE WILL VERY  
SOON BECOME MY GRAVE

Well, I suppose he meant well!

## "BACCY MARSH"

"Baggy Marsh" walked on Midsummer Eve. He was the Apparition of an old gardeners who, it was said, haunted the allotments up Newton Lane.

I first learnt about "Baggy Marsh" when Father worked his allotment 'up top end' seventy odd years ago. Anyone who neglected his allotment Fell foul of "Baggy Marsh".

A man, who WAS badly stung after disturbing a wasps nest in the roof of his shed. A new water butt; full up ONE night, perfectly dry the next morning. Another, stuck a garden fork through his foot, and nobody could fathom what became of that man's liquid manure! All put down to "Baggy Marsh"

We usually had our bread 'n' cheese 'n' onion inside the garden shed after our labours on the allotment. Father had sent me down to the wooden bungalow fronting Newton Lane for a bottle of pop. As I returned I noticed an old man standing on the path leading to Father's allotment, Tripping over my shoe lace, I never could tie them proper I bent down to tie them up, and when I looked up, the old man had gone.

I asked Father who the old man was. Father denied seeing anyone and said I'd imagined it. I knew better, While he was putting his gardening tools away, I hedged my bets and placed a small bunch of wild flowers on the path. Best to keep on the right side of "Baggy Marsh" I reasoned, The following evening, I hurried in front of Father up our garden path. My flowers had gone! I hoped "Baggy "' accepted them in the spirit in which they were given.

The allotments have been built on now, but if you see an old man, wearing baggy trousers, tied at the knee with string, an old baggy coat, cloth cap worn askew, a clay pipe in his mouth, come Midsummer Eve, then you've met "Baggy Marsh".

Doreen Boulter

## PHANTOM

Many years ago, Grandfather was a railway signalman. He often manned the signal-box up by Cooks Lane Crossing. It was a lonely spot so anyone passing by always gave a wave or a cheery shout at the signalman.

It was a late summer evening and the mist was rising off the fields when Grandfather first noticed the horseman plodding across the fields; hedges proving no obstacle as the horse approached at a steady walking pace. Grandfather, not being a fanciful man surmised the horse came through a gap in the hedge.

As the rider passed by the signal box, Grandfather raised his hand and shouted a greeting. There was no response, and the horseman turned towards the canal bridge and rode on towards the water meadow of the River Sence. The following two nights, the same thing occurred and Grandfather thought it odd that the fellow never acknowledged his greeting.

The next evening, along came the horseman and this time when he reached the signal-box, he stopped raised his arm and pointed towards the railway line.

Grandfather looked along the line, and to his horror saw that a herd of cows had strayed onto the line. Quickly he put the signals at danger, the horseman had disappeared, As he peered along the line, Grandfather saw to his relief, two farmhands herding the animals back into the field. A few minutes later, one of the men appeared at the signal-box.

"It's a good job you saw them Sam, and that chap on the 'oss didn't waste much time," he gasped.

"What did he say?" asked Grandfather intrigued.

"He didn't say out, wasn't time, he just beckoned us urgent like, and us followed him and saw the cows on the line, we were too busy shifting 'em to see where he went, do you know him than?"

"No," said Grandfather, "but I've seen him about now and again."

Grandfather never saw the horseman again. So there you are, make of it what you will.

Doreen Boulter 1993

/ NB. The official name of the signal box was KILBY BRIDGE.

With reference to the Kilby Bridge Signal-box mentioned in "THE PHANTOM HORSEMAN".

This signal-box was dismantled and moved to Swanick Junction of the Midland Railway Centre Working Museum at Ripley on July 29th, 1986.

The Kilby Bridge Signal-box, a listed building, dated from 1901 will continue its working life on the steam railway at the tourist attraction.