



Hampshire Hauntings and Hearsay

Also by Patricia Ross:

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Hampshire at War; An Oral History, 1939-194



HAMPSHIRE
HAUNTINGS
AND HEARSAY

by
Patricia Ross



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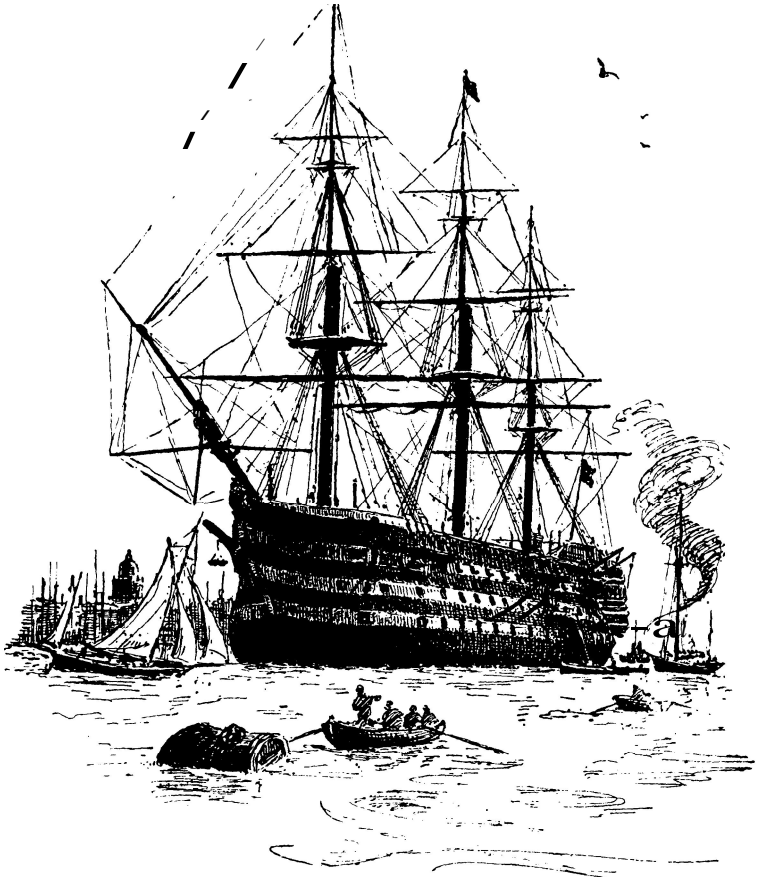
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To the kind people of Hampshire and Sussex who have shared
with me their haunting stories



Nelson's famous flagship the Victory: but is it haunted? [See page 9]



INTRODUCTION

I have never seen a ghost, but some people never do. There is, however, a strong belief that such beings exist and provide an explanation for the otherwise unexplainable. Some people tell me: "I don't believe in ghosts, but..." and follow with a story of a personal experience for which they can provide no rational explanation. Many ghost stories appear to be fantasy or folklore, the result of the way someone felt at the time, hoaxes, misinterpretation of things half-seen in poor light or over-indulgence in another kind of spirit... If, however, you accept that everything is possible, even if it goes against the laws of physics, then the world allows for the supernatural.

I accept ghost stories as the experience of the people who tell them, or as, more often, the reported experience of a friend of a friend (hearsay). Such stories may be vestiges of an old belief in life after death, left over from primitive times, oddly coexistent with, or incorporated into, more orthodox religion over centuries. For instance, there is evidence from early church art that some Saxon and Viking beliefs persisted well past the Norman invasion.

Some people have a lot of fun ghost-hunting and many books have been written about ghosts, especially those associated with turbulent and traumatic happenings. Whilst engaged in historical research, from time to time I have met haunting stories, told by apparently sensible, sincere people, some of whom were quite proud of their local phantom. Others were sceptical until the unexplainable occurred.

I could not have written this account without the help of the many people from Hampshire and nearby Sussex who have shared their paranormal experiences with me in letters to the King's England Press

or in casual conversations. I have included some from the Isle of Wight and from parts of Dorset lost to the county in boundary changes. Stories continue to reach me; those for which there is no room here will be saved for a second volume. Please write to me if you would like to contribute.

Most of the ghosts I hear of are friendly to those who observe them or just peacefully coexist, harming no one. Some observers were scared at the time, but enjoyed sharing their stories. A few letters have reached me from people whose experiences are too personal or worrying to print here; I have suggested they contact the church or their medical adviser to obtain individual help and counselling. Anyone similarly worried may like to contact the Bishop of Portsmouth's office, Portsmouth Cathedral, as I gather from an article in *The News* of February 22 1995 that a priest has been appointed by the Bishop to advise and, if possible, to help people who believe they are troubled by spirits.

There is an ambivalence about the supernatural. I am not superstitious- am I?- but was caught absent-mindedly throwing spilt salt over my shoulder the other day.

"Why?" asked my husband.

"For good luck?" I said. " - Or to avert bad luck?"

"You are not consistent," he said. "I thought you didn't believe in that sort of thing."

"Of course I don't," I said; "But..."

I am not going to go ghost-hunting; I'd frighten myself half to death. I present the following stories because I find them interesting, intriguing and - you never know, do you?

The Old Landport Gate, Portsmouth: Portsmouth has an abundance of ghost stories.





ARMED SERVICE GHOST STORIES

A feeling I was being watched.

It would not be surprising if there were ghost stories connected with Nelson's flagship, HMS *Victory*, on display in Portsmouth Dockyard. Mr. David Blackmore of Portsmouth Quartermaster Sergeant (retired), Royal Marines, told me of his experience while serving as a boy bugler aboard the old wooden ship.

"You can't blow a bugle after an appendix operation," he began, "so I took over from a bugler who had had his taken out; and I used to practice bugling and drumming down below in the ship; it's set in concrete now... It was very dull down there and you used to get shadows and a very creepy feeling. I used to be bugling or drumming away and had the feeling I was being watched and a cold shiver down my back. The hair used to stand up on the back of my neck and I'd feel cold- you'd look over your shoulder... they used to say they had a ghost there. I acted as a guide and a bugler for about a year on the *Victory* and also looked after the visitors' bookstall."

Mr. Blackmore had a strange experience much later, when he was visiting war graves in North Africa. He took a photograph near one grave, because the name on it caught his eye; back in Portsmouth a lady whom his wife knew saw the photograph and recognised the name on the gravestone as that of her son.

"She had previously never found where he was buried."

The thud of boots pounding along ...

Aldershot has been the home of the British Army since 1854 when the War Department bought Aldershot Common and began to establish military camps there. An army runner was said to have been murdered by thieves while carrying the news to Aldershot of Wellington's victory at Waterloo in 1815, 29 years earlier. Brode writes that the thud of boots can be heard pounding along what is now Alma Lane, Aldershot, where he was ambushed, then they stop. The story has mysteriously slipped back in time because the army had not yet reached what was then a small hamlet at Aldershot. Alma Lane, Crondall, is claimed by Brookes to be haunted by a military messenger ghost, on the same errand, who was murdered by footpads. Are there two Alma Lanes, were two military messengers murdered (footpads were common enough in the early nineteenth century) or are these two versions of the same story?

Roman soldiers are said to haunt the area near the new Northam Bridge over the River Itchen near Bitterne Manor. Could their ghosts have been disturbed when the bridge was built, or was the haunting already there? I don't know. Do you?

Dumped in a well ...

At Lymington, earlier this century, Mrs Hamilton-Gordon of Bywater House was disturbed by doors opening and closing in the night. It was known that a supporter of Monmouth carried documents and valuables after the Battle of Sedgemoor to Bywater to hide until he met a courier who would take them to Holland. The plot was discovered, the young man killed and it is thought his body was dumped in a well. Mrs. Hamilton-Gordon believed his ghost wanted her to help him find the valuables. Later, inexplicably, a portrait print of her appeared to include a young man with Cavalier curls. The valuables were never found.

Royalist survivors retreated to the church ...

There are bullet holes in the wooden door of Alton's St. Lawrence Church, from a battle fought during the English Civil War when the town was a Royalist stronghold. It was attacked by Sir William Waller

and his Parliamentary force in December 1643. After the Royalist cavalry had left (shame!), 500 Royalist foot soldiers faced a superior Roundhead force. Royalist survivors retreated to the church, defended it for over six hours but were overcome inside it. Their officer, Colonel Richard Boles, "slew with his sword six or seven of them (Roundheads) and then was slain himself, with sixty of his men about him". (Epitaph in Winchester Cathedral.)

Dorothea St. Hill-Bourne has written that during one evening service in the church, she had a sense that she was surrounded by fighting soldiers. A local man assured her he knew of half a dozen people who on separate occasions had had the same weird impression. It has been suggested that an imprint of the battle somehow attached itself to the church. No one to my knowledge has whispered that, knowing of the battle, some observers may have dozed off in the sermon and misinterpreted sounds they heard as they awoke. It could easily have happened to me. However, it is widely believed that imprints of other battles are sensed by people now, for instance at Edge Hill.

A man in armour, on horseback ...

During the 2nd World War, Alfred Crookes, returning to Crondall from a dance at Crookham, heard a knocking. As he went along Croft Lane by All Saints Church, Crondall, he was surprised to see a man in armour, on horseback, appear through the doors of Crondall Lodge. The horse carried its rider across the lane, through the churchyard wall and up an avenue of limes to the church porch. Never again did Alfred pass the lodge after dark.

Military apparitions reputed to have been seen at Crondall church are thought to be echoes of battles fought in and around Crondall during the English Civil war. Was Alfred's horseman one of Waller's Roundheads, stationed in the village from 1643 while waiting to attack Basing House? The *Good Ghost Guide* says six Roundheads surrendered in Crondall and were put to death on 27 January 1645. Ghost-hunter Stephen Darby recorded his own observation in 1899 of a man in leather jerkin, armoured breastplate, black thigh boots and round helmet, who crossed the road and entered Crondall church-yard. He thought the man was dressed for a pageant, enquired and found there was none. The phantom soldier was seen by a number of local people from time to time.

The above stories are difficult to explain; the surprising aspect of them to me is that Cromwellian apparitions are accepted as commonplace in Crondall.

Colonel Norton

A Cromwellian military ghost, Colonel William Norton, is reputed to walk from the chine to the Old Manor House at East Wellow in the Romsey area. Stories of Cromwellian ghosts could have originated as a symptom of the Roundheads being deeply unpopular in formerly Royalist areas.

Ghostly pilots

The former Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, (now the Aerospace Division of the Defence Research Agency), boasts two ghostly pilots in and near its accident investigation hangar. If ghosts there be, this seems reasonable.



The ghastly remains of The Painter (see story opposite)

On a stormy night ...

In life Jack Aitkin (Jack the Painter) worked in Portsmouth Royal Naval Dockyard. He started a fire in the dockyard ropewarehouse, was arrested at Hook Old Raven Inn, convicted of arson at Winchester, and hanged from the mainmast of the *Arethusa* in Portsmouth in 1777. It was believed at the time that he held anti-monarchist views and planned to blow up the fleet. Jack's body was hung in chains on the beach for years at Blockhouse Point, Gosport, as a warning to others, which is a macabre enough tale. Then sailors stole his body, loaded it into a sack and left it as pledge for a drinking debt at a Gosport pub. It is said that Jack's chains can still be heard on the Hard, Gosport, on a stormy night.

I can vouch for the fact that the story is alive and well as a number of people tried to persuade me I could hear Jack's creaking chains while we waited for a boat to a social event at one of the forts one wet and windy evening. Very eerie it was too, but I can't in all honesty say I heard anything but the wind and the slap of the sea.

Ran away screaming ...

Early in the nineteenth century, rumour had it that a weird apparition haunted the graveyard of St. Thomas's Church (now Portsmouth Cathedral) in High Street, Old Portsmouth. It was so weird that people who saw it ran away screaming. This was in the days when the local militia guarded Government House, the Governor's official residence. Even the guards were very frightened when they saw this figure leaping energetically in the churchyard opposite. It always appeared in darkness, was taller than a man and shrouded in white. It was seen by several people to leap from gravestone to gravestone and became known as Springheel Jack. The military tried to catch him by standing guard and laying traps, but never did.

This 'haunting' was a hoax perpetrated by a far from ghostly trickster who, in spite of the springs attached to his legs, nevertheless managed to slip away. The 'shroud' which covered the man and his metallic attachments was a bedsheet. To say he was unbalanced would hardly fit the bill. He was obviously sufficiently well co-ordinated to avoid slipping off gravestones. Mischievously mad, maybe?

Home of the R.M.L.I. ...

Forton Barracks, Gosport, was the home of the Royal Marine Light Infantry from 1848, contributing greatly to the town's prosperity until they marched away in the 1920's and the Royal Navy took over Forton as St. Vincent training barracks for boy sailors. Several ghostly stories are associated with the R.M.L.I.'s occupation of the barracks.

It came closer and closer ...

Soon after the R.M.L.I. took over, in the mid-1800's, on a particularly dark night a lone sentry was guarding the main gate at Forton when he heard the sound of a drum beating in the distance. As he listened, straining his ears, it came closer and closer. He peered into the night but could see nothing; nor could he see anything even when the sound of the beating drum came level with the main gate, then passed by to fade gradually into the distance.

The ghostly story was traditionally associated with the loss of life of a drummer boy in an epic battle of former times. He is said to have hung around his old barracks for some time, providing one-man drum displays over many years. The late Harry Camfield, who joined the red marines at Forton in 1914 as a 14-year-old boy recruit, confirmed, according to Ron Brown, that the ghostly drummer boy was heard during the early 1900's and that each time the guards were terrified. He seems to have moved out when the marines left Forton and has certainly not been heard since new housing development changed the town.

A weird, moaning sound ...

Another Forton Barracks ghost story concerns a nineteenth century sentry who actually saw and heard the ghost he described. He was on patrol at the rear of the barracks, which was at the time still fairly countrified, when he heard a rustling in the darkness together with "a weird, moaning sound". Two balls of light emerged from the gloom; they came closer as the moaning became louder. The sentry ran swiftly to the main gate where he collapsed and died of a heart attack shortly afterwards, so it's said. He must have been a city lad for the 'ghost' was no more than a friendly cow, the noise mooing and the lights a reflection in its big, sad eyes.

Strange noises in the night ...

Ghost stories, some much documented, attach to the Lower Quay area at Fareham, which was part of the old port. Some of the buildings there are preserved because of historical connections, and may have been used as a hospital treating injured sailors and later for keeping French prisoners of the Napoleonic Wars. This is the historical background to stories of vague hauntings, some of which may be connected with servicemen of long ago.

Unquiet spirits may, it was thought, have been disturbed when the area was used for light industry in the 1970's, for a workman at Palmers (light engineering) factory was frightened on night shift by a figure he said came through the wall, walked through the workshop and disappeared. At Miltalls (toolmakers and injection moulders) in 1977, a director's office lamp had, he said, "leapt into the air and floated about before it fell to the floor". Other Miltalls workers noticed tools moved to odd places, plugs which fell from sockets and strange noises in the night.

In ghost-hunters' jargon, two different phenomena were described here—a ghost and a poltergeist. The tools could have been misplaced by absent-mindedness or as a practical joke, but a rational explanation for the rest is difficult to find. I have recently heard, from a friend who spent time in hospital, that heavily sedated terminally ill patients have been known to experience images of people walking through walls: drugs or alcohol could explain some of the above.

Did sorrow cling? ...

After the Dieppe raid and D-Day landings in the 2nd World War, a former isolation hospital at Frater Lane, Gosport, was used as a mortuary for the bodies of soldiers brought ashore at Hardway. Did the sorrow experienced there cling to the place? For 25 years, murmuring voices and a sound of a scraping chair were heard in empty rooms and a shadowy figure passed across the floor on a sunless day, according to Fox.

Sick naval humour

The ghost of Fanny Adams, a nine-year-old girl murdered at Alton by Frederick Baker in August 1867, is said to appear in the former hopfield where the brutal deed took place. Frederick Baker, a clerk, was hanged for her murder at Winchester. Poor Fanny's name came to mean 'worthless' in naval slang, sailors having nicknamed canned meat, issued by the Royal Navy about the time of the girl's disappearance, 'Sweet Fanny Adams'. Yuk.

The grisly murder of Fanny Adams: a contemporary engraving from a 'Penny Dreadful'





GHOSTS OF THE ROAD AND RAILROAD

Famous headless lady of Ellingham

I have mentioned Lady Alicia Lisle's ghost in connection with the Eclipse Inn, Winchester (page 27). However, not only is she said to appear at the Eclipse, but also in the lanes near her former home, a sixteenth and seventeenth century building which was restored in 1870 and later used as a school at Moyles Court, Ellingham, near Ringwood. She appears in period costume, usually minus her head.

Another story relates how she travels by coach along the drive of Moyles Court to Ellingham church, drawn by headless horses and without a driver. She appears, it is said, complete with head (but held tightly beneath her arm like Ann Boleyn's was in the song about the Bloody Tower) at Dibden, where her son lived (near Hythe and at the edge of the New Forest).

Her crime was to have hidden two fugitives from the Battle of Sedgemoor, Monmouth's unsuccessful uprising. He was the natural son of Charles II and the opposition Whig party had pressed for his being offered the throne of England, prior to James II's accession. There was a lot of support for Monmouth in the South of England, and the brutal clamp down on his followers after his defeat was the Catholic king's reaction to the threat of long-term civil unrest by people who would strongly have preferred a Protestant monarch. The rebellion was neither well-organised nor successful, but must have seemed at the time to pose a considerable threat to the crown.

Ellingham is a lovely village, well worth a visit even if you fail to meet its famous headless lady. Lady Alicia in life used to sit in the canopied pew which now faces the pulpit in Ellingham church. After her execution she was buried in Ellingham churchyard, with her daughter. On each anniversary of Lady Alicia's death, a rose is placed on her tomb. Nobody knows how it gets there. I cannot help thinking that the more lurid of the Lady Alicia ghost stories may have been invented to heap insult on injury by a regime violently against Monmouth's supporters, and which harboured a particular resentment against her for being the wife of the man who signed Charles I's death warrant.

Ghosts of the old A3

The old A3, known as the Portsmouth Royal Road, provided a scenic journey in coaching days when travel from London to Portsmouth was neither as fast nor as comfortable as it is now. Travellers were bounced and vibrated towards their destinations in such vehicles as The Rocket, Clarke's Flying Machine, The Hero, The Regulator and The Nelson. Ron Brown of Fareham, local history enthusiast and writer, reminds me that long after the railways had made horse-drawn vehicles redundant, phantom coaches were seen on the London Road, sometimes (it is said) in the hours of darkness, surrounded by a ghostly glow.

Highwaymen, too, haunted the route: Claude Duval and Jerry Abershawe were well-known operators of this stretch of road. According to legend, Captain Jacques the highwayman was cornered by soldiers in room six of the Royal Anchor, Liphook, hid up a chimney to escape them and could not get down. He was either shot by the soldiers or perished up the chimney; his bones were discovered ten years later. His ghost is said to roam around on certain nights, so no one sleeps in that room. It is locked at night and used as a dressing-room during the day. Prisoners who were chained in the cellar (and in a blocked-off tunnel beneath the inn, which once ran beneath the old A3 to what is now a bank but was once another licensed premises) are also said to roam the inn from time to time. I wonder if they meet Captain Jacques?

A sailor's ghost was reputed to haunt the Portsmouth Road in the nineteenth century. It was associated in popular legend with a murder which occurred in 1786. The sailor was walking along the highway to

rejoin his ship when he was joined by three men also walking south, named Lonegon, Casey and Marshall. They were looking for work, but about level with the Devil's Punchbowl at Hindhead they combined to mug the sailor (to be precise, they slit his throat, took his money and clothes and rolled his body into the gorse). They were caught at Sheet near Petersfield, at a pub where they tried to sell the sailor's clothes. Not very subtle of them, was it? They were hanged for their crime and that was the last of the three villains. The sailor, however, mindful of his duty, could not rest and continued to try to join his ship, endlessly tramping along the Portsmouth Road. Many road ghost stories tell of phantom travellers to whom some misfortune occurred.

A one-legged man with a haversack full of Bibles ..

Fred Bason, an author, stayed in 1945 at Langstone. On his way from the Mill end of the village to catch a bus to Portsmouth one fine morning, he felt uneasy and everything went quiet. He wrote, for the *Saturday Book*, that he saw a naked man, bald, thin and with only half a right leg, lying in the road. The man vanished on his approach. He believed he had seen a ghost, drew what he had seen and sketched the apparition's position in relation to the road and village. What presence of mind! For a while he told no one, then wrote to the magazine to describe his experience.

Mr. Edward Greer of Havant read this story and contacted Mr. Bason; he told him he had seen the same figure in the lane five years previously, and had described it immediately afterwards at the Royal Oak as having a 'Duke of Wellington' nose. A stranger came into the bar who remembered a one-legged man with a crutch and a haversack full of Bibles who occasionally visited Langstone and had last been seen alive in 1932 or 1933. Pressed for a further description, he said the evangelist had "one of those aristocratic noses, thin and high in the middle". This tallied with Mr. Greer's memory. He showed the sketch he made at the time to Mr. Bason; it resembled Mr. Bason's sketch made during the 2nd World War, which he had shown to no one.

The water does not ripple ...

Bagwell Lane, Fleet, is said to be haunted by a White Lady. Some think she is the ghost of a woman drowned in a pond in about the

1880's. She is said to have appeared frequently, soon after the event. The haunting faded, then the lady was seen by a young motor cyclist (1968) who collided with the woman but felt no impact. Peter Underwood says many people have met this white-clad figure which appears and as suddenly disappears, and that although she seems to enter the pond, the water does not ripple.

Vanished before they could make contact ...

A young boy ghost who played the flute was described by a traveller on horseback in the 1800's. The horseman heard beautiful music, apparently coming from a tree on the road near Liphook. He thought it was heavenly music but later noticed a lad was walking beside his horse and playing a flute. After a minute or so, the horseman stopped to speak to the boy, who vanished. Several other people reported having seen this ghost, which always vanished before they could make contact, a habit ghosts seem to have.

The same story was told in about 1900: a horseman, who heard flute or pipe music coming from the top of a tree at Bramshott, realised that a fair-haired boy was playing the music whilst walking in front of the horse. A bramble twig momentarily knocked the rider's hat over his eyes; when he looked again, the boy was gone. Local people linked the apparition to the accidental death of a boy at the nearby mansion, Bramshott Court. Bramshott's spectral list includes two more horsemen (a Royalist soldier and a murdered highwayman); a potboy (from a stage coach?); a white calf which shrinks to the size of a bird when followed, then vanishes; a mother and her children; and a crowd of ghosts in sixteenth century costumes in Wolmer Lane.

They think they have run him over ...

Mrs. Eunice Longhurst of Southbourne, Bournemouth, says people she knows have seen the ghost of a tramp walking from the Straight Mile, Ampfield, towards Romsey. She writes: "They see him walking along the road in wet or foggy conditions. He walks into the road and they think they have run him over. When they stop to look there is no one in the road at all. This happened to my daughter's fiance twice, and we have heard of other people it has happened to."

The number of accidents hereabouts fell ...

A back seat ghost was seen in the rear-view driving mirror of a number of people along the Titchfield to Gosport via Stubbington road. It was first reported by an insurance salesman in 1979 near the old church at Crofton. Was it possible that the building of new housing estates disturbed it? The number of accidents hereabouts fell and the 'ghost' to whose appearance some of them were attributed appeared no more, after the road was straightened.

His bicycle lights went out ...

An Emsworth glazier told me that in about 1975 his brother-in-law, aged 16, who was cycling along a lonely bit of Hulbert Road (between Bedhampton and Waterlooville, where there are no houses to this day) when his bicycle lights went out. A car came up behind him and helped him along with its headlights.

"But you can guess what happened when he got to the end?" he said.

"It had disappeared?" I guessed.

"Yes, it wasn't there. He came home white as a sheet, you can imagine ... of course, it (the car) could have turned off, but there's nowhere to turn off along there, is there?"

I asked for his explanation.

"They say such things are ripples in time" he said.

A blinding light ...

A similar Hulbert Road ghost story was recounted to a friend, in June 1995, by the mother of a young man who was about 18 in 1974 or '75. The mother, now elderly, said that her son was on his motorbike, riding down Hulbert Road, when he saw someone whom he thought may need help, so stopped to give what assistance he could. He saw no one but there was a blinding light. He continued along the road and looked behind him in his driving mirror, in which all he could see was the light. No details are given in these two ghost stories of the sex, age or appearance of the 'ghost' behind the light or lights. I rather wonder if they spring from the same incident.

A puzzling encounter ...

Joan was a neighbour and friend of Mrs. Evelyn Davis of Bedhampton, and also of an older lady whom I shall call Mrs. T. In about 1973, Mrs. Davis tells me, Joan told them both that she had been driving at dusk along Hulbert Road from Bedhampton towards Waterlooville with her son Steve, who was about 15 years old at the time. Hulbert Road used to be surrounded by quite dense woods before it was built up at the Waterlooville end as it is now. Anyhow, Steve said:

"Stop, Mum. There's a man flagging us down."

Joan had caught sight out of the corner of her eye of a figure in a long mac. She stopped. No one came to take the lift she was willing to offer, so Steve jumped out of the car to look for the person he had seen and she had glimpsed. He was puzzled because there was no one there. "He must have run off into the woods," his mother suggested. But she thought the episode strange. When she told Mrs. Davis and Mrs. T. about the puzzling encounter, Mrs. T. said:

"My God, don't tell Steven. That's the ghost. It's famous for being seen there." Joan did not speak about it again to her son, because he was about to take his end-of-year exams and she did not want to worry him.

It was a good few years later that Mrs. Davis noticed a piece in the *Portsmouth News*. Either a little girl had written, or it had been reported, that she had done a school project on the area and had heard rumours of the ghost story, and that when the road layout was being altered, a skeleton had been found at about the place where Steve had seen the old man in the long mac. It was thought the remains were those of a tramp who had fallen in the ditch ... and that his spectral appearances were his cry for help and a proper burial. It was inferred that, as he was never seen after the bones were found, he was at rest, no longer needing to attract the attention of passers-by once he was decently buried.

Ghostly hitch-hiker

The following eerie tales also concern Hulbert Road but in each the ghost is definitely female.

Joan Forman writes that in November 1976, at dusk, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Spensley were travelling along Hulbert Road towards

Waterlooville on a stretch which had no footpaths. He was aware of a girl standing in their way so yelled to his wife, who was driving, to stop or swerve. She saw nothing, did neither and he closed his eyes, convinced they would run the girl down. The car hit nothing. There was no explanation.

Shaken, he told his workmates of the incident. They reassured him the "phantom girl" had been seen by other drivers from time to time, that she was a girl from Leigh Park who had been killed trying to hitch a lift to Waterlooville. Rumour said she had been hit by a car.

Another driver told of a girl who had flagged him down one stormy night near the cemetery in Hulbert Road and asked for a lift. He picked her up, concerned because she was so wet; he drove to the address in Leigh Park Estate she had given, turned to open the back door to let her out, and nothing was there but a very wet rear car seat!

A man from Data Heating, a firm which services boilers in people's homes, told me (1995) that the only ghost he had heard of in the Havant area was "the one in Hulbert road" whom a number of people had told him they had seen.

"Mind, I haven't seen her personally," he told me. "She's quite a modern girl who appears near the Hulbert Road junction with the motorway (the A3(M)), hitches a lift then disappears."

He had last heard of a sighting about five years before I spoke to him.

Two years later, a Havant friend told me he had heard a story that a ghost appears at Barton's Cross, which is between Emsworth and Rowland's Castle, on the Horndean Road not far from the car park of the BUPA hospital. The tale is of a girl who hitches a lift from motorists then vanishes. This is similar to the Hulbert Road ghost story above and concerns a site a few miles to the east of Hulbert Road; it is not too far, I should think, for an active lady ghost to commute, especially if she were provided with motor transport on request by kindly knights of the road. As the story is less detailed than the Hulbert Road one, I suspect that the story has migrated rather than the ghost, an example of hearsay which is passing into legend.

The phantom hitch-hiker is a popular ghost legend and I have heard of it recently connected with motorways. Rosemary Guille says that typically the girl is beautiful, often bedraggled. She gives her address, the motorist is always going that way; when she disappears she leaves something behind, e.g. a piece of clothing. The seat may still be wet where she sat. The legend is common in America, where it often continues with the motorist knocking on the door of the address

he has been given, and there meeting the sorrowing parents of the girl on the anniversary of whose tragic death on the road the haunting incident occurred. He is shown her photograph; he goes to see her grave. If he has lent her his coat, he finds it hanging on her tombstone! "Perhaps it came over with the Yanks," suggested an Englishman to whom I told this story.

Anything is possible with ghost stories. The phantom female hitch-hiker tales I have told above all refer to events since the war when American and Canadian troops were stationed in South coast areas of England. Canadians were camped in the woods at Rowland's Castle (not far from Hulbert Road as the crow flies) before D-Day.

One storyteller actually says the ghost is "quite a modern girl". (Leigh Park estate was built since the 2nd World War and the BUPA hospital is also a modern building.) I find it intriguing that so many stories are told about the same few miles of road; it is even more intriguing that the haunting story has shifted sideways a few miles. Could the following Hayling Story be connected? Perhaps not, but I was told (summer 1997) that a lady knocked over by a car on the bend of the main road into Hayling (by Smugglers' Cottage) "comes out onto the road from time to time. People in cars think they have knocked her down but when they stop to investigate there is no one there." Hayling Island is roughly eleven miles SSE of the Hulbert Road phantom hitch-hiker and eleven miles SSW of Barton's Cross.

It does not take long for ghostly traditions to take root and to become legend; for instance, construction workers tell stories about corpses walled into bastions of motorway flyovers.

An old newspaper-seller is said to haunt Redlands Lane in West Fareham, supposedly drawn back to the lane where he was murdered. No one remembers why or when.

At Hayling, the goods yard of the old railway station on the Hayling Billy line (a route cut by Beeching) is said to be haunted by a former employee of the railway. Mr Alan Bell, who represents Hayling Railway History with his model railway layouts of the Hayling Billy line, tells me that the ghost at the old Hayling station was thought to be that of Henry Wilkinson, a former signalman; it was last seen in a station building and reported in the Portsmouth *Evening News* both in 1963 and 1973. The station was converted into a theatre in 1996.



The Meon River at Droxford: a coach is said to plunge into the flood near this spot, in a terrible re-enactment of a tragedy from long ago [see next page].

They retraced their route ...

Mr. Gerald Durrant of Tuckton, Christchurch (which used to be in Hampshire) was driving along the Ringwood to Christchurch road with his wife on their way home from a folk festival in May 1995 when he saw "a monk-like figure" approach from near some big gates at the road side. He swerved violently to avoid a collision but it "passed right through the car" he said. He felt shaken. Asked to describe the figure, he said he could not see its face, it was "going too fast", but he drew the side view of a hooded person with a long spreading robe, a kind of kerchief beneath its chin, and in his first attempt at recall, what looked to me like a wimple (was it a nun rather than a monk?). His wife saw nothing and says there was no one in the road behind them; she confirms that her husband swerved at this point and is convinced he reported a genuine sighting. The following week they retraced their route and described the spot to a friend who recognised their description of some big gates as being at Bisterne, not far from the church. I wonder whether this may be connected to Mr. Clifford's story mentioned in the chapter "Monastic Hauntings" (page 39)?