



Spooky Wiltshire

As you can imagine on a dark, dismal night
Things often go bump and never feel right
Was it a vision or a trick of the mind
Or was it a ghost - just one of its kind
The eerie sound of footsteps clatter
But no one's there so what's the matter
What to do is such a worry
Leave the house - and in a hurry?
But no - to bed and dream of fairies
Or ghouls and ghosts, so very scary

Poem written by Teresa Lewis, October 2015

Wiltshire has had links to the supernatural and mystical for centuries. Where did the standing stones of Stonehenge and Avebury come from and for what purpose were they put there. Salisbury plain has often been linked to U.F.O. activity - do they come from other solar systems or are they just unidentified flying objects and unexplained weather phenomena. Of course we must remember that much of Salisbury Plain is Ministry of Defence controlled - therefore you must make up your own minds as to what you believe.

With Halloween coming upon us soon our thoughts lead to those incidents over the years that may or may not have a logical or scientific answer. Wiltshire has hundreds and here I am going to try and include as many as I can from the various parishes in our county.

Starting with the parish of **Aldbourn** some residents claim to have seen a man hanging from a tree and others say they have seen the same figure climbing the hill to the tree at Dor's Grave where a man reputedly hung himself. A second manifestation is that of a white horse galloping through the village which is said to be the mount of King Arthur riding away after the Battle of Braydon.

Aldbourn's famous Green Dragon pub is said to be haunted by Monks using a secret tunnel leading to the church from the pub.

In **All Cannings** the gates of a demolished barn behind the village hall have been heard to creak open and Campfield cottage is reportedly visited by a young lady dressed in green said to be the murdered wife of a former occupant after she had been caught in a love affair. On a canal footpath

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on the route to Allington often used as a coffin way to All Cannings Church was said to be haunted by a violent apparition which would leap out as people using the footpath even pushing some into the canal. Also in All Cannings in a house opposite Cliff Farm a neighbour saw a man named Joshua Cowdry enter his house via his garden in February 1947. It was later discovered that Joshua Cowdry had passed away that day in hospital a few miles away at around the same time as the sighting. Sightings of a hound like creature are part of the local folklore and stories about the creature are often used to scare children to stay away from certain area in the village. The spirit of Elizabeth Bynge is said to stand at the bottom of beds in the Old Rectory in the village. At White Rose Cottage, Ruth King is said to appear to wander through the rooms dressed in black. It was suggested that she returns to protect money she had hidden away but no money has ever been found, however an empty purse was found hidden behind some plaster. A vision of a man in a red cap is often reported in and around the Wickham's Lane area but always disappears on approach. On the road to Horton near the Tan Hill in October 1904 (on the night before Halloween) two lay preachers stopped their horse and trap to offer a lift to a beautiful auburn haired lady as she was out walking and it was raining. As they pulled up to a stop the figure disappeared without trace. From around the mid 1870's up to as late as the mid 1960's almost in the same area visions of an empty house (previously demolished), three shepherds in the fields watched a ghostly funeral procession pass by the coffin being drawn by horse and funeral carriage, the mourners carried torches and on the coffin was a distinct golden crown.

At Adam's Grave, **Alton Barnes**, Muriel Cobern in 1966 reported hearing the sounds of a cavalry battalion passing by and local legend has it that if you run a round the hill seven times you will awaken the giant from his grave. Not far away in **Alton Priors** the legend of Old Nick is prominent, it is said that the causeway to Knap Hill was built by the devil himself. It is also rumoured that the area is home to buried treasure.

Amesbury is known as a mystical place, famous for Stonehenge of course and the ever growing library of theories of how it came to be. The Abbey of St. Mary & St. Melor gives rise to the legend that Melor had his left foot and right hand removed by his uncle to limit his ability to become an efficient king, these body parts were supposedly replaced by a hand cast in silver and a foot in bronze both of which supposedly acted as if they were flesh and blood. Melor was executed not long after and his remains are laid to rest within the abbey. Many ghostly sightings have been reported in and around the abbey itself. A more modern day manifestation is that of a WWI soldier who frequents the George Inn where the sound of horses trotting around the courtyard have often been heard. Along the London road near to the old railway line route two friends heard the sound of steam from a railway engine one had previously heard metal banging and a whistle being blown. In the winter of 1985-86 Lord's Walk off the London Road was the location of a glowing lady in grey, she was small in stature but scared the living daylight out of a couple of friends taking a shortcut through a wooded area, they ran away in fright and on looking around the vision had vanished.

Moving on to the village of **Atworth** during the winter of 1944 a man had to brake suddenly when a horse and rider crossed his path emerging from the hedge on one side of the road and disappearing through a brick wall on the other side. At Cottles Park there used to be reports of a lady dressed in green appearing and disappearing without warning. The last report was around the end of the 19th century

Avebury is another one of those mystical Wiltshire places often associated with the legend of King Arthur (Guinevere was supposed to have been banished here) and it is also home to another stone circle which encloses the village. Legend had it that a barber or surgeon was buried beneath one of the stones which fell on him crushing him to death. In 1938 an excavation found the remains of a man who had about his person a pouch which contained silver coins dating to the first quarter of the 1300s and also a pair of iron scissors and lancet giving substance to the legendary story. One of the stones of the outer ring which is still standing has been reported on numerous occasions as having moved location from one side of the road to the other at midnight. Stories of the mysterious stones have emerged from as far back as Medieval times many depicting accidents and mishaps. Eerie monastic chanting has been heard and during WWI it was reported that whilst standing in the middle of the stones a soldier had vision of seeing a medieval fair in full swing. The grounds of Avebury Manor is supposedly haunted by the figure of a lady wearing a large hooded cape, the same figure often seen at the stone circle too. The manor house itself is said to be home to several apparitions.

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One scatters rose petals across the floor of the Crimson Room, a monk like vision seen in the library and a figure resembling a Cavalier often putting in an appearance. Several of the houses built of the locally mined stone in the village have been reported as having poltergeist activity. A bus shelter along the Swindon road is apparently where you could get a glimpse of yet another shy spirit. It vanishes upon approach one of the last sighting being in 2009. A large white nondescript figure had been spotted by a passing cyclist in the parish churchyard. In a field near Silbury Hill an off duty policeman watched what he thought to be three of his forensic colleagues dressed in white overall examining a newly created crop circle, as he approached his tall, blonde colleagues he could hear the sparking sound of electricity when he attempted to enter the field to get closer to his "colleagues" the three ran off faster than any human could run. On a footpath near Trusloe Manor (a building associated with my own family history) a manifestation of a lady in a white lace dress with a white hood was encountered by a local government officer walking from the direction of Avebury Manor. The man said the lady took him by the shoulders and spun him around finally pushing him quite violently away. Florrie as she is known haunts the Red Lion Public House, it is believed she was the wife of a Civil War soldier who upon her husband finding out that she had been unfaithful with several men strangled her and threw her body into a nearby well. Anyone who upsets this spirit is scratched quite sharply. Also outside the inn many people say they have heard the sound of a coach and horses passing by. In 2004 a photograph was taken near the public house and shows a bald man in the background bleeding heavily. Silbury Hill itself is said to have been man made to contain a great evil. On moonlit nights the ghost of an ancient king is said to ride around the base of the mound. Others believe that the mound is the burial place of a solid gold horse and its rider. There have also been reports of people seeing a headless ghost haunting the base of the mound. Avebury has also been linked for other 300 years or more with unexplained lights in the night sky and recently photographs of glowing balls of light in the sky have been documented. Of course the area also sees its fair share of the crop circle phenomena of recent years. The Lodge in Avebury is awash with ghosts which include playful children, a young woman who wanders the building, a gentleman dressed in Georgian costume and a French speaking voice emanating from empty rooms. Outside too is heard the sounds of a coach and horses. At one point it was thought possibly to be the most haunted building in the county although no incidents have been reported in recent years. The road through the tithing of Beckhampton in the parish has a highwayman reputedly haunting his former patch and the coach and horses he may have robbed has also heard at times.

Badbury in **Chiseldon** is a rural location and in the fields around Berricot Lane the sounds of children playing and laughing could be heard in the early 1960's the incident occurred when a woman was walking her dog accompanied by her children. The dog became very restless and the laughter stopped after they passed through a gate but on the way back passing through the same gate once more the children's laughter was once more heard.

The devil or Old Nick as the locals of **Berwick St. John** refer to him is reputed to be summoned from his fiery furnace if you walk around the hill of the Winkelbury encampment whilst muttering obscenities. Once summoned he will grant the summoner a single wish. Another legend of the area tells of a golden coffin buried in the region of the camp.

Travelling now to **Biddestone** in the north of the county there are tales of the churchyard having been haunted by a man who was hanged on the site. Several places in the locality has given rise to reports of a large black cat-like creature in 2007 a group of off-duty police officers and their families witnessed having seen the creature

Moving on to **Bishops Cannings** at the area known as Thyme Tree on the way to Coate (which is confusing as there is no such Thyme Tree in that particular location) is said to smell of thyme and is said to mark the spot where a woman was murdered. The churchyard is the reputed haunt of a headless dog, which drags its tether when crossing the churchyard. Perhaps the sightings of the fast moving man in the lane behind the churchyard is linked to being chased by the headless hound. This manifestation appears at dusk carrying a swag type bag over his shoulder

In **Blunsdon St. Andrew** at the site of Blunsdon Abbey ruins where a house has been erected the residents have reported seeing a lady wandering around the front garden she doesn't appear to have any legs!!!! Ghostly monks have also been seen.

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At the RAF Base on **Boscombe** Down it was reported in 1947 that the ghost of a pilot who had crashed into the sea was heard walking about his hut at the RAF base his slopping footsteps being clearly heard.

Between **Bowerchalke** and Woodminton the ghostly re-enactment of a battle can be heard. The sound of soldiers fighting and horses charging can be heard at times at the site of a pitched battle between the Romans and the Britons. Reports of headless horses have also been reported. At the Marleycombe Hill/Applespill Bridge it has been recorded in the past of 7 ghostly figures carry a golden coffin across the bridge. Legend has it that a coffin made of gold was stolen from a nearby barrow. Another ghost seems to follow people about in the area and he seem to carry a bag of coins which can be heard clinking together. In the churchyard in the early hours of the morning monks have been seen to walk in pairs in a procession like manner. At the crossroads to the south of the village there seems to be very little noise of birdsong and the like. It is supposedly the final resting place of a woman who committed suicide near to the spot by throwing herself into a well. The area is known as Kit's Grave. During inclement weather a shepherd from the area became lost in the snow and was later found frozen to death by fellow villagers his voice is sometimes heard calling out pitifully "I want to go home." The Lodge at Vernditch in the parish is no longer standing but the sounds of an axe chopping can be often heard. It is said that the sounds began when a murder victim was decapitated.

At the famous Great Western Railway Tunnel constructed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel at **Box**, the sound of a phantom steam locomotive can be heard trundling along the tracks. Another transport related manifestation is that of a Blue Morris Minor making appearances at midnight at the appropriately named Shockerwick Bridge. The car appears from nowhere forcing oncoming drivers to collide with it although no actual impact occurs.

At the Beehive Inn in **Bradford-on-Avon** a ghostly figure of a woman wander the inn at will. And at the Fat Fowl restaurant in the town the piano often strikes up a few notes with no-one at the ivories and cutlery often gets moved from one place to another, whilst doors shut on their own accord. At St. Lawrence (Saxon Church) in 1992 a group of tourists photographed and videoed a glowing white shape inside the church. It was only later when the photographs were processed and the video replayed that the tourists were aware of the presence. In the early 1900's a priest reported that he had seen a group of mediaeval dressed people wandering around the church other report have been made but feature only one person.

Moving on to **Bratton** the ghostly figure of a woman became quite evil and resentful towards visitors to Flower Farm. The figure seemed to guard the staircase and was dressed in dark clothing. The farm was demolished in 1967. It is also said that on occasions somewhere in the village a phantom funeral cortege is to be seen complete with horse drawn hearse.

Take a walk along the Maud Heath Causeway at **Bremhill** and you may just meet the lady herself carrying her basket of eggs on her way to the market at Chippenham. Maud Heath left money in her will to build a pathway across the countryside so that others did not have to struggle along a muddy, inhospitable track. At Foxham crossroads near the church in 1936 author Hugh Brawn crossed paths with a thin black labrador, the dog crossed in front of him but vanished before reaching the other side of the road.

At **Broad Blunsdon** near the Forked Elm two men driving past the spot met a ghostly figure at the side of the road, the figure had long hair but could not be defined as male or female, the manifestation seemed to be floating about a foot off the ground.

Moving to **Broad Hinton** and the Crown Inn during the 1970s several people reported having their ears twisted by an undetected presence.

Bromham takes us to Battle House where a former resident, Mrs. Starkey witnessed the comings and goings of a young man, she described him as looking like her son when he was younger.

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Next we visit the garrison town of **Bulford** and the main road running through a woman in evening dress is often seen to cross the road oblivious to any traffic, one driver was convinced he had hit a real woman and stopped to call the emergency services only to see the figure disappear through a barbed wire fence on the other side of the road. Remaining in Bulford, on the banks of the River Avon stood a large stone believed to be cursed and immovable, the stone was moved sometime in the 1960s putting an end to the legend.

Calne has a few spooky tales to tell. One is that of the appearance of a naked male ghost legend has it that this could be the return of a highwayman who was known to strip naked and cover himself in grease so he could not be grasped in an attempt to capture him and to avoid anyone recognising him from clothing. At a place named Scot's corner reports of a man in a kilt appearing and disappearing have been made. These may be linked to the story of a Scotsman being murdered near the manifestation area.

Castle Combe is the TV and film favoured locale for many period dramas over the years so unsurprisingly has its fair share of hauntings. Firstly we visit the churchyard where an unknown girl wanders the churchyard stopping at certain headstones to exam them. One of the cottages near the iconic bridge was home to a miller who can often be seen walking from his cottage to his now demolished mill and back wearing his white milling attire. On winter nights in the surrounding woods an angry crowd can be heard if the voices continue long enough a piercing scream is heard and the voices cease.

Now to **Chippenham**. A horseman figure is reported to manifest in the grounds of a former convent. The landlord and family of the Five Alls in the town during the 1960's claim to have seen an old lady in the building although there was no-one of that age living at, visiting or frequenting the premises at the time. They often awoke to lights switched on when they had double checked before going to bed that they were switched off and occasionally would find furniture moved to different places in rooms. The Bear Hotel again in the 1960s was subjected to phantom voices in an empty bar, the barman entering the said bar on hearing the voices to serve his guests finding no-one there and a maid going about her tasks in the courtyard saw someone at one of the bedroom windows closing the curtains, knowing that the room had not been allocated she went to investigate to find the door locked as would have been expected and using her pass key entered to find the curtains closed yet no sign of anyone having been in the room recently.

Chiseldon House Hotel in the parish of **Chiseldon** was featured in a newspaper report in 1985 of having poltergeist activity. Pots and pans were hurled across an empty kitchen the clattering heard from other rooms in building and the debris clearly seen on entry and pictures hung on walls would move as if being swept passed in a hurry. To the southwest of the village is a barrow just off Gypsy Lane and it was once believed that a golden coffin was laid inside and that all attempt to remove it would fail.

In the parish of **Cholderton** we now visit Cholderton House the home of a church incumbent. The body of the missing Canon was found in the well, the official line from the Diocesan Office was that he slipped by accident into the well and drowned. For years after people reported hearing unexplained sounds of movement both in the house and in the well itself. Staying in Cholderton we move on to Yew Grove where the atmosphere always seems oppressive local people believe the site to be used by Ancient Druids for pagan sacrifice. Wilbury House lays claim to a friendly dog which greets visitors on their arrival then disappears. Also here a phantom clergyman has been said to move between the house and the gates.

Off we go to **Collingbourne Kingston**. Here we hear the tale of the vigilante dog. After committing a murder in the village thee two perpetrators tried to make their escape along the Marlborough Road only to be met by a large dog that appeared from nowhere and which chased them back to the village. After the two were arrested the dog vanished without trace.

Robbie Williams (yes the one with good looks and the voice) gave an interview on New Zealand TV that during his residency of **Compton Bassett** House in 2009 that he would often feel the calm

presence of which he believes to be the spirit of Catherine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII. The House was built on land that once served as the barn owned by Catherine.

On the A4 just east of **Corsham** in the late 1990s, a lorry driver swore that he had to swerve and slowed to an almost stop to avoid a figure standing in the middle of the road, as he passed the entity it jumped up clinging to the door of his cab, instead of seeing the face of some idiotic dare devil prankster he was greeted by a grinning skull which vanished after a few seconds. The Tourist Centre on the High Street is housed in Arnold House which was gifted to the Corsham Council in 1959 by Joan Pictor a local quarry owner. It is said that her ghost and that of a gentleman are responsible for turning lights and sockets on and off within the building. Naturally the churchyard is not forgotten on our journey. Three women walking through the burial ground, two of them saw what they described as an ugly little creature sat upon one of the table top tombstones, one of the ladies fainted and the second was stricken numb, the third lady saw nothing. Old buildings are often regarded as haunted as is Corsham Court. A maid carrying out her duties saw a lady at the top of the stairs to the rear of the building, the maid thinking the lady would need to pass moved aside but the lady had vanished out of sight, on checking there seemed no logical explanation for the presence of the lady at the top of the stairs at that time. At Pickwick a woman reported driving past a large American Style Car which had its headlights on full but had no driver. (The lady may have forgotten that American cars would have had the driver on the left of the car rather than on the right). During the 1890s a house that is no longer standing was the location where a young girl visiting her grandparents saw a man walk through a doorway that appeared in the stairway wall, no other witnesses saw the vision. On demolishing the house a skeleton was found hidden behind the wall where the ghostly door had appeared. At Priory house in 1946 a child whilst in the care of the housekeeper learnt the Ave Maria Prayer from someone she described as a man in white. Speculation has it that the manifestation could have been that of a White Friar from the Priory. In an unnamed private residence in the Monks Park area of the town a Roman Soldier is said to appear to the owners. Finally in Corsham at the Royal Oak pub in 2007 Paranormal investigators offered to stay in the building overnight after a barmaid reported seeing a black figure standing near her.

Chapmanslade in the parish of **Corsley** is our next venue on this tour of spooky Wiltshire. Here in the appropriately named Black Dog Woods it is said a fiery eyed hound stalks the area. Those who have seen this apparition are said to have all died within the follow year. It is thought that the dog as legend goes was owned by a man killed in a duel and that the dog took its masters revenge by ripping out the throat of the surviving duellist. In Corsley itself at the Royal Oak pub the landlady had reportedly seen the figure of a monk in a dark habit cross her bedroom. Other members of staff had also been aware of the monk appearing in other rooms of the building.

Calcutt in **Cricklade** parish has a consistent manifestation on Christmas Eve when several white piglets with red ears cross the road. Okay normally I am open minded about all things that go bump in the night but now am beginning to think that too much of the Xmas cheer is flowing in this village since also on the 24th December several sightings of a coach pulled by four horses cross the bridge almost every year!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (Perhaps it's really Santa's sleigh and reindeer). In Cricklade at Abingdon Park Lane a member of the local WI was terrified by a ghost dog in the 1940s.

Travelling now to **Crudwell** and to the hamlet of Eastcourt at dusk a mysterious blue light passes along the main street lighting up the houses as it passes by.

Derry Hill is a very rural area with high trees lining the road which links Calne to Devizes in 1968 a driver reported seeing a white figure in the middle of the road late at night which links to the village tales of the road being haunted by a white ghostly manifestation. I have travelled that road many hundreds of times with my parents. I was made aware of this legend by my dad who was a bit of a tease but for some reason my mum always kept her eyes tightly shut on this part of the journey, all I can say is that I remember that in Autumn time the road became very misty. During WWII a man at Whetham House in the village of Whetham was awoken by a presence standing over his bed. He jumped out of bed to defend himself against the tall cloaked figure which disappeared immediately. This visitation is put down to being that of a Russian nobleman killed in a duel in the area.

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Devizes again being a larger town has more scary tales than other places within the county. At the Black Swan paranormal investigators in 2004 made acquaintance with the spirit of Ambrose Sainsbury along with an unnamed female murder victim. Staff here report seeing shadowy figures and of hearing strange tapping sounds. Recently at the Lamb Inn, St. John's Street my nephew who is a barman at the pub asked me to research to see if anything strange had ever occurred in the pub as "strange" unexplained things are happening. On March 15th 2011 a glass flew off a shelf and smashed for no apparent reason at the Castle Hotel and music has been heard coming from the old ballroom even though it was empty of people. Staff also report that items vanish from place in the building to reappear elsewhere. Called into question, video footage taken on the 11th of August 1996 supposedly shows glowing balls of light hovering over fields near Oliver's Castle leaving a crop circle in their wake. In the 1980's the town centre was covered in a shower of hay. In 1643 the bloody Battle of Roundway Hill was fought near on 800 men were slaughtered as both men and horses were trapped by their enemy. Many times since the battle ghostly horses have been seen galloping around the area. A headless ghost was once also said to walk the area, possibly linked to a barrow on the site, as is the phantom hound which drags a chain tied to its neck. Most visitors to Wiltshire know of the story of Ruth Pierce of Potterne who in 1773 was struck down dead for lying a warning plaque is set upon the monument in the Market Place. In 2005 a photograph was taken of a strange shape in Moat Cottage in Devizes Castle, the building is believed to be haunted by the ghost of Isabella de Valois who was imprisoned in the castle. The owner of the cottage said that this ghost has appeared many times over the years he has been in residence. Devizes Museum was formerly the home of the Cunningham family after its adaptation to house the Museum a elderly lady presumed to be a female member of the family haunts the building whether in anger against its current use is not apparent. Eerie heavy footsteps are heard from empty rooms in the building that once was the Palace Cinema on the Market Place. The old Canalside Forge is said to be haunted by several ghosts which are often heard hammering against invisible anvils and their voices often raised. The Three Crowns Inn is the location of a Miss Haversham type ghost. A jilted bride once committed suicide in the building. At Upstairs, Downstairs Antiques on the Market Place paranormal investigators were called in after the sound of footsteps were heard and the smell of unexplained smoke.

Now we head to Dilton Marsh and the High Street in the parish of **Dilton**. Mostly during the months of October and November a man dressed in leather riding boots, a long coat and wide brimmed hat is often seen to saunter towards the Prince of Wales pub but disappears before reaching the entrance.

Cheney Court in **Ditteridge** is said to be haunted by a ghost believed to be that of Queen Henrietta who once resided at the House.

Watery Lane in **Donhead St. Mary** was said in the 1950s to be haunted by a blag dog. It wasn't thought to be harmful but locals avoided the area at night time.

In **Durnford** near Chalk Pit Hill a heard but not seen horse thunders along the road and in the fields nearby.

At **East Knoyle** in the south of the county a large stone once stood in the village the locals believed the devil had dropped it as he built Stonehenge.

Moving back to the north of the county we visit **Easterton** to the home of Seymour Wroughton. After the death of Seymour in a coaching accident near his home in 1789 the manor was left empty and over time became derelict. Today only his ghost travelling in a coach and four is a reminder of where his house used to stand. Near Fiddington House prior to 1869 the road that passed the farm was said to be haunted by a female apparition. When in 1869 building work to a perimeter wall unearthed two skeletons and a churchyard burial was performed then the apparition vanished and has never been recorded as being seen since.

Between Monks Well and the Priory Church at **Edington** an elderly monk has been seen wandering. One witness was made aware that something wasn't quite normal as his dog did not bark at the figure ahead, normally the dark would bark at anyone.

At **Erlestoke** Prison and also in the village the prison staff and villagers have reported seeing the spirit of Lady Charlotte Watson-Taylor wandering the grounds as if inspecting the development. She is also sometimes seen riding on her horse and carriage over a road where there was once a bridge.

Supposedly a tunnel under the church at **Fifield Bavant** is said to be haunted but no-one seems to know what kind of manifestation it is.

Fovant Manor House has been the site of soft footsteps being heard and the creaking of floorboards. A former resident during the 1920's saw his brother in the living room, his hero sibling had been killed in WWII ten years earlier. At Oakhanger Barn since the 1950s an elderly lady dressed in a grey enter through the front door makes her way to the living room then disappears.

At Devil's Den, **Fyfield** it is said that as the bells strike midnight the devil appears and tries to demolish the stone structure by using eight white oxen, often a white hare or rabbit joins them pointing out ways Old Nick could achieve his goal. A variation on this tale is the oxen are reduced to four and a black dog with red fiery eyes watch them. A further legend of the standing stones here is that if water is poured onto the table stone the water is absorbed very quickly giving rise to the belief that a horrible entity drinks the water in a frenzy.

Wolfhall in Grafton, **Great Bedwyn** birthplace of Jane Seymour third wife of Henry VIII although no longer standing was reportedly haunted by a man with a white beard.

Move across to **Great Cheverell** and to the manor house which is supposed to have been haunted with the usual reports of bangs, crashes and of people moving around the building for centuries.

At Ford near **Laverstock** on 23rd February 1977 every resident in the village was left a little bewildered after an unexplained explosion shook houses. One resident said he first heard a whooshing sound engulf his house followed by the explosion and a blue-green flash.

Crockerton in the parish of **Longbridge Deverill** lies on the outskirts of historic Longleat House and grounds. A headless horse reputedly gallops along Church Lane and in other parts of the village it is said that a beastly hound is seen exuding fire from its nostrils.

On to Bradenstoke in the parish of **Lyneham** at the abbey you may encounter the black monk and his dog.

Between **Marlborough** and **Hungerford** on the A4 there stood a memorial to Alfred Watts who had been killed in a carting accident at the spot in 1879. The memorial had been erected by the family. A figure of a man had been seen at the memorial and vanished when passers-by stopped their car in 1956. Not long after the road was widened and the memorial re-located there has been no further sightings since.

The old forge in Braydon in the parish of **Purton** was converted to a private residence some time ago, however a group of youths saw a man outside the house dressed in working clothes and carrying a large heavy sack on his shoulders. From the clear description more elderly residents deduced it to be the ghost of John Aldridge who was the village blacksmith. The manifestation lasted just a minute or so but long enough for the group to describe the person they saw in great detail.

Salisbury Plain is shared by several parishes so here it can have its own little spot. At Dean Water Bottom between Upavon and Enford there have been sightings as recently as 2008 of a phantom black dog. It has been described by some as having a very shiny coat and a spiked collar. Previously it was believed to have been the re-incarnation of a murderer from the area or even the devil incarnate. It was thought that the sightings had ceased after a local vicar in 1931 had buried some bones in the churchyard that had been found in a cottage not far away.

In fields between Cadley in **Savernake** and Marlborough is the location of sightings for many decades of a black dog reports indicate that the sightings follow the same route across the fields from decade

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to decade. An oak tree in Savernake Forest known as the Big Bellied Oak is said to be the portal for the devil if it is ran around seven times at midnight.

At **Southbroom** House it is believed that the ghost of Maria Heathcote once haunted this building. The house is now a school.

In Avoncliff in the parish of **Westwood** stands the famous Cross Guns Public House which is reputed as being haunted by three ghosts:- a woman in blue, a lady in grey and an elderly man. The manifestation were reported more during building works at the site. At Iford Manor in the parish is housed a copy of the Geneva Bible it is known as "The Luck of Iford" and legend has it that if ever it is removed from the building the manor will collapse to rubble and be carried away by the River Frome. Also at the manor during the 1970's a young blonde girl in a blue dress appeared briefly and the sound of a young person humming has been often heard. Quiet whispering has been heard in other parts of the building.