

"SMALL BEGINNINGS"

No 11

Winter 2005-06

The Newsletter of the former pupils of the old Barling Primary School is aimed at all ex-pupils, staff and friends of the school.

**A group of Barling School ex-pupils, friends and partners occasionally meet for lunch.
All are welcome.**

The next lunch is on Saturday April 22nd at the Cherry Tree, Stambridge

Dates and venues for the following two lunches are:

July 8th and October 14th 2006 from 12.15 until 3.00 pm



GHOSTS IN THE VILLAGES

Barling and Little Wakering have the reputation of being haunted by various witches. Here, Olive Cooper, née Bradbury, tells some of the stories she has heard.

The Lady in Grey

Many years ago, I was at a Women's Institute meeting in the hall near Weir Pond, when we were asked to stand up and talk about any unusual occurrences that we had witnessed in Church Road, Barling. A woman stood up and said that she and her sister, both of whom lived near Barling Church, had been walking along the road there, when they had seen a little old lady in front of them. She was dressed all in grey. As they approached Weir Pond, the little old lady suddenly disappeared.

Her sister said to her: 'Did you see that?'. 'Yes,' she replied. 'I didn't like to say anything because she disappeared.'

Apparently, this little grey lady was often to be seen in that area. Six or seven years ago she was observed by a man who lived in the new chalets, not far from Weir Pond Corner. He used to walk his dog along there and saw her frequently.

So, he said to a neighbour: 'Do you know anything about the little grey lady who walks by Weir Pond?'. 'No,' said the neighbour. 'She's always there when I'm out with my dog,' said the man. But the neighbour knew nothing of her.

One night when the man was walking his dog, he wasn't surprised when the old lady appeared. She was going towards the ditch at the side of the road. As she approached it, she vanished. The man looked in there and in the hedgerow, but could see nothing of her. She had disappeared completely.

Some other inhabitants of Barling saw the lady in grey from their window. She was passing the house, when suddenly they couldn't see her anymore. They assumed that she had fallen over. But when they went outside to help her, she was nowhere to be seen. Over the years, many others have testified to having seen the lady in grey around there.

The Old Sailor

About 1950 I was taking music lessons with Mrs Bancroft in Little Wakering. After each lesson I would walk home to 6 Harris Row, Barling. We lived in the end house, which was on the opposite side of the road to the school, about 100 yards away. The families resident in the six houses of Harris Row were: 1. Mumford; 2. Carey; 3. Ebbs; 4. Ebbs; 5. Mumford; 6. Bradbury. In between Numbers 3 and 4, where the two Ebbs families lived, there was a narrow alleyway.

This particular night I was lugging my music case, as usual. As I got to Harris Row an old, bearded man came out of the alleyway. He was dressed in an old sailor's outfit, with a sailor's peaked hat, which had a band round it. I didn't know him. After he passed by, I turned round to look at him. But he'd gone! I was very frightened and rushed home and told my mum. She said: 'Don't be so silly.' Years later, I told this story to my uncle, Ted Horner, who lived at The Gables, just across the road from us. He told me: 'That's the ghost of old grandfather Carey. He was a sailor.'

Soldiers

One night in the late 1940s my sister Yvonne was coming home with her boyfriend. As they neared Harris Row they heard the sound of soldiers, marching along and singing in a foreign language as they went. They couldn't explain it. But in recent years others have reported hearing Roman soldiers marching along Little Wakering Road.

The Great Dog

About 20 years ago a man was driving his car along Little Wakering Road near The Castle. Suddenly, from the lane that runs between the church and the vicarage, a huge dog ran out. It leaped onto the bonnet of the car and then was off. The driver was so frightened by the experience that he would never drive round that way again.

Footsteps

Once I was walking home with a girlfriend along Little Wakering Road. It was dark. We turned to one another and whispered: 'There's someone behind us.' We could both hear footsteps, though we couldn't see anybody. It was so frightening that we ran all the way home. Was it a ghost? Not this time. It was my friend's father, who had been trailing us, to make sure that we got home OK.

Olive (Bradbury) Cooper

Ed's note: As a child, I heard of ghostly appearances at the junction of Barrow Hall Road with Little Wakering Road. Does anyone else know anything more, or was this just a story put about by children intent on scaring others?



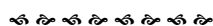
News

Here's a website that will bring back more than a few memories. It certainly did for Peter Griffiths when a friend pointed it out to him.

<http://www.joylandbooks.com/exhibition/kursaalmemories/room7.htm>

We'd all be keen to read in the Newsletter about any memories that these pictures evoke

We lost contact with David Freeman for a while when he moved to Leeds, but have tracked him down again and have an email address for him. He's OK, but I feel a little sorry for him.....I wonder if he thought he'd escaped from us!!!!



Paul Abercrombie's legacy of "Small Beginnings" continues under the united editorship of Lynne Askham (nee Marshall), Bob Avery and David Freeman.


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