

LEGENDS, GHOSTS & TALES of Wymering Manor

THE TUNNELS

Wymering Manor is supposed to be connected to Wymering Church by a tunnel. Some authorities believe that it ran as far as Southwick Priory which was then about three miles to the north. This tunnel, it is said, could have been used for smuggling, Wymering being so close to the sea, and much more accessible in older times.

Jason Suthers writes:

"During the late seventies/early eighties I was a choirboy at Wymering church and we were allowed access to the cellar of the vicarage at weekends as there was a snooker table, dartboard, and table tennis table we could use. In the far right hand corner, there was a small doorway with wooden makeshift door blocking access. One day, being as inquisitive as young boys are, we managed to prise the top of the door open slightly and with the use of a torch we tried to see what was inside. All we could see was a dark, cold blackness that I have never forgotten. Tunnel entrance? I don't know but maybe"



AMY JOHNSON

It is often said that Amy Johnson visited Wymering Manor during the time of Leonard Metcalfe. However she died on January 5th 1941 and Mr Metcalfe did not take possession until 1946.

THE LADY IN THE VIOLET DRESS

When Mr Parr lived in the house, he awoke one night to see his cousin who had died in 1917, standing at the foot of his bed. She was wearing a full length violet coloured dress, addressed him as 'Tom', spoke of her recent religious experiences and of deceased members of the family. The ghostly visitor concluded "Well Tommy dear, I must leave you now as we are waiting to receive Aunt Em". In the morning he received a telegram stating that Aunt Em had died in the night. An aged relative who was staying in the "Blue Room" always locked her door at night for fear of burglars - that morning she was surprised to find her door ajar.

SIR FRANCIS AUSTEN

Many people assume that because Sir Francis Austen is buried in the churchyard opposite he lived at Wymering Manor. His actual residence was Portsdown Lodge near the top of Portsdown Hill. He was a churchwarden of St. Peter and St. Paul so may well have popped in for a sherry with the Vicar, the Rev. George Nugee. However, it has been reported that the Ghost of Sir Francis haunts Wymering Manor.



THE GALLOWS

Gallows once stood on the south west corner of land adjoining the house. It was removed about 1750. It is said that many highwaymen guilty of robbing coaches as they jolted between Portsmouth and Southampton, died swinging from the Wymering Gibbet a few yards from the Parish Church. It was an eerie spot on a winters night with a gale blowing in from the sea and a body jingling in the gibbet. A house now stands on this site and under its foundations is the spot where skeletons of the hanged were found during WW1.



CHOIR OF NUNS

Mr Leonard Metcalfe who died in 1958, said he often saw a choir of nuns crossing the hall at midnight and heard them chanting along to the sound of music. The family used to scoff and disbelieved his story as none of them, at that time, had any knowledge of sisters visiting the house in the middle of the last century. These were from the Sisterhood of Saint Mary the Virgin of which Mr Metcalfe knew nothing at the time of his death.

THE HANGING MAN

A guest staying in the Panelled Room dreamt that someone was hanging from the tall Chestnut tree which the small window in the room overlooked. When he awoke in the morning and looked out a body was hanging from the branch. A man had committed suicide in the night. Other visitors have experienced a similar dream.

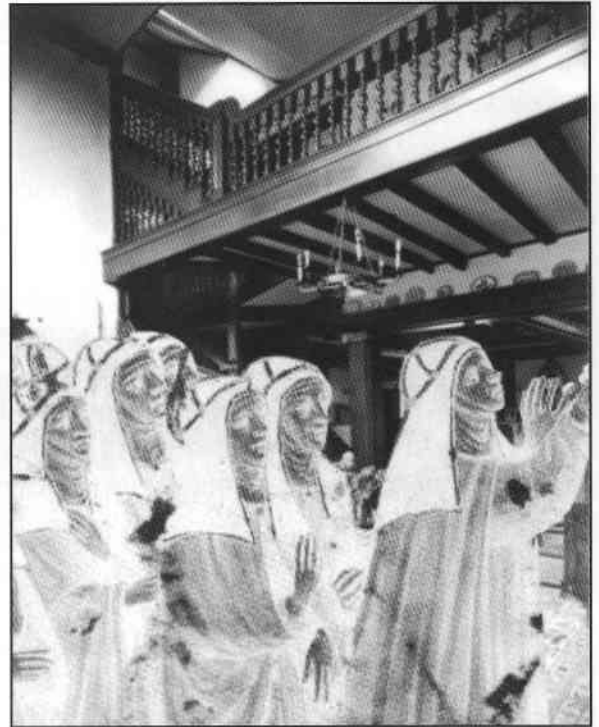


THE GHOSTLY NUN

Outside the small attic bedroom then known as "Noah's Ark" above the Panelled Room, it is said that a Nun has been seen with her hands dripping with blood, looking down the narrow staircase that leads from the attic.

THE EMBALMED GIRL

It is said that a young girl died in the house shortly before the start of the social season. As the house would have to go into mourning if the death were announced, the girl was embalmed and lay in a coffin until the season was over and the face painted to provide colour. A portrait was then painted of her. At the end of the season her death was announced and her portrait was hung in the hall.



THE PANELLED ROOM

Mr Leonard Metcalfe and his wife Marion occupied the South East corner bedroom which was known as the 'Panelled Room'; On a number of occasions when Mr Metcalfe was facing the washbasin he felt a hand on his shoulder but there was nobody there when he turned around. He had always scoffed at 'ghost stories' but he, his wife and his mother, frequently felt that the room was 'closing in', that there was a presence there and that they felt the need to flee the room. The first Youth Hostels Association Warden and his wife, Mr and Mrs E. Jones, had expressed an unexplained fear of the room although they had heard nothing of the previous experiences of others.



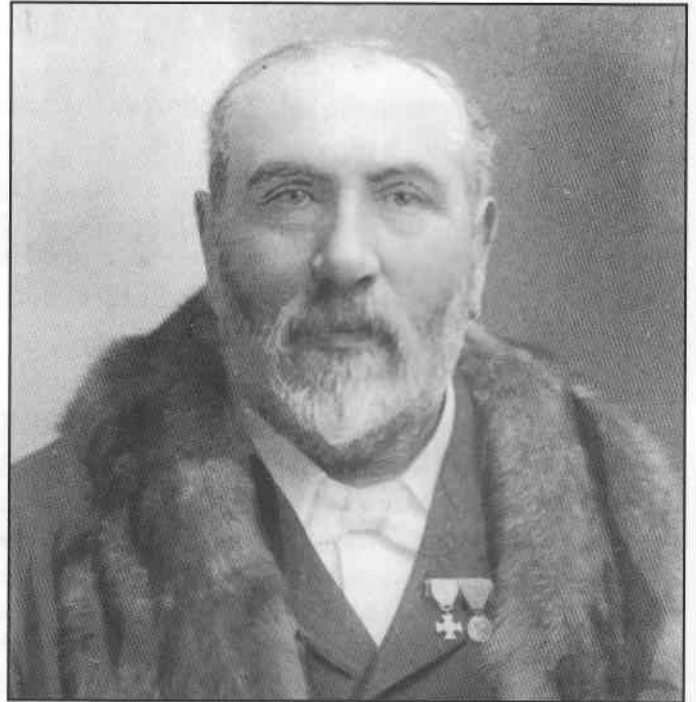
RECKLESS RODDY

Probably the most infamous legend is that of Reckless Roddy from Portchester Castle. It is said that in the Middle Ages a husband brought his pretty young wife to the Manor House. Shortly after, the husband was called away for several days. Sir Roderick of Portchester heard of this and called to visit the bride at night in the hope of seducing her. The husband returned unexpectedly and Sir Roderick - Reckless Roddy - tried to escape. The legend does not include whether or not he had been successful in his seduction but the husband slew him as he attempted to mount his horse, which then bolted up the lane.

The ghost of Reckless Roddy is said to visit Wymering Manor whenever a new wife is brought there and that she and her husband hear a horse bolting up the lane.

This happened to Leonard Metcalfe shortly after he married following World War II. He had not heard the legend and did not learn of it until many years later. The first night he stayed at the house after he married, his wife woke him and asked him about the noise of a horse outside. They both heard it gallop away up the lane. It was 2am.

In 1960 on his first night in the house, Mr Jones the first Youth Hostels Association Warden, heard a horse outside the house in the night. He did not know of the legend.



MR KNOWLYS PARR

It has often been said that Mr Parr was a descendant of Katherine Parr, wife of Henry VIII and many stories have been told surrounding this well respected man.

He once lent a brocade dress that had been worn by Katherine Parr at Court to a Portsmouth girl for a carnival at the Manor. He had 35 complete and valuable tea services stored in the cellar. During Fetes at Wymering Manor he claimed that he put out 200 silver spoons for the eating of ice creams and had them all returned; neither did he miss an apple from any of the trees.

It is claimed that Mr Parr had a relative who lived to the ripe old age of 152. Thomas Parr of Shropshire lived for 152 years and 9 months through the reigns of ten monarchs and was buried in Westminster Abbey by order of King Charles I. Thomas married his first wife Jane Taylor when he was about 80 years old and they had a son and daughter, both of whom died in infancy. At the age of 100 he did penance by standing draped in a white sheet in the parish church for being unfaithful to his wife and having an illegitimate child by Katherine Milton. He was presented at Court but the change in diet, with rich wines, and the pollution of the city were too much for old Parr and he died within a few weeks of arriving in London.