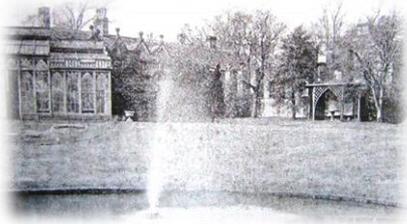


# GHOSTLY SIGHTINGS AT ST IVES.



For the last few years, the Friends of St Ives have been researching the history and archaeology of the St Ives Estate in Bingley. Increasingly we've found that we were being told stories of strange sightings and happenings that people had experienced down the years whilst visiting here. We don't pretend to understand, or feel able to comment on, the stories and experiences which follow, but feel everyone may be interested in hearing some them. People have

inhabited St Ives for about 10,000 years, firstly living and trading within a large Iron Age settlement then moving through the centuries until the present day and possibly leaving behind more than just physical evidence of their presence???

**The Land now known as St Ives**, was owned in the Middle Ages by Rievaulx Abbey and **the monks** farmed here, living in a Monastic Grange, situated somewhere on the Estate (most probably close to the existing Mansion). Throughout the centuries and into modern times there have been **many reports of ghostly monks** seen walking through the wooded areas and along the tracks. A local legend is that there is an ancient tunnel (bricked up long ago), leading from an entrance in Harden Park up to St Ives, possibly an escape route in times of persecution?

**Everyone who lived on the Estate had to pay Taxes to the Abbey. One day in 1237 William 'Cherrycheeks'**, a local woodsman, was unhappy about paying taxes and so shot the Abbey's tax collector with an arrow. The poor tax collector took 6 weeks to die (upon which William disappeared and became 'the outlaw of St Ives'). Is one of the ghostly monk figures in fact the conscientious, murdered Tax Collector still trying to collect the money? (*Do they never give up??*)



**Strangely we've just received a report that a ghostly Nun** was seen this year standing on the steps to the old building near the Coach House. Why was she there?

**In 1803, Benjamin Ferrand (the owner then of St Ives)**, died whilst visiting the Peak District. However, strangely that same night, he was seen riding his grey horse towards the gates of St Ives. Some boys ran and opened the gates and after thanking them, he rode on through. It seems he had ridden home *after death* and it's said each year on this anniversary, he returns and rides through the gates to his old home.

**A council woodsman, who is a most sensible and down to earth Yorkshireman**, told us that often when he was out and about alone in St Ives very early in the morning he had experienced, over the years, several inexplicable happenings. Only one occurrence really frightened him. He was by **the 5<sup>th</sup> hole on the Golf Course** and suddenly he heard loud, **maniacal laughter** coming from an area of grass where he could quite clearly see that no human was standing. He left the area running with the hair on the back of his neck standing up.

**There are reputedly 200 soldiers' graves** from the civil war on the Estate, resulting from a violent skirmish fought there between Royalist and Roundhead forces, and there have been various reported sightings of ghostly **Royalist soldiers** around the paths and woodland over the years. However, strangely about 10 years ago, in one of the Cuckoo Nest houses, a child woke her mother in the night, saying that she'd just seen a man sitting at a wooden desk in her room dressed in a cloak and a large brimmed hat writing with a feather. He had then disappeared. Neither the parents nor child knew about the Royalist civil war connections with St Ives. **But perhaps the most notable sighting of Royalist soldiers** is one reported by a local lady. About 20 years ago, she and her father were driving up Keighley road in the dark, with St Ives to their right. At the junction of Altar Lane, 2 strange men suddenly appeared in the road and the car was forced to do an emergency stop. The car occupants were then most alarmed upon realising that their headlights were shining *straight through* the men! They were dressed in 17thc Royalist clothes and each detail could be clearly seen. The soldiers seemed completely unaware of the car and occupants and kept looking anxiously down the road as if waiting for someone. This continued for approximately for 3 minutes before they just disappeared, with the car occupants distressed and confused. Her down to earth father asked her not to talk to anyone about their experience and she has only spoken out now as her dad has now died. **PTO** —

**A few years ago**, a group of teenage boys were sitting and talking in the gardens behind the Mansion one evening when suddenly and silently, **an older lady in Victorian clothes** emerged from some shrubbery and walked slowly across the lawns. She seemed to have no awareness of the young people and on approaching some rhododendrons; she just disappeared into thin air! Apparently, they were so terrified they rang their parents and begged them to drive there and get them asap!!

**We've also been told of sightings of a young, pale lady**, dressed in old fashioned grey clothes, seemingly very distressed, running along the driveway between Betty's Lodge and the Mansion. By a certain tree she stops and looks anxiously around and then just sinks to the ground weeping and then gradually disappears. We wonder who she was and what great sadness seems to keep her here.

**Recently a dog walker** was out for an evening walk at dusk near Cuckoo Nest Wood. He turned around briefly to call his dog to heel and then on turning back to resume his walk, he came face to face with a strange **Grey Faced man** in a hooded cloak who'd appeared suddenly, and completely silently, from nowhere. Once again, the 'man' seemed to have no awareness of the dog walker, who turned and ran back home in record time and no longer walks his dog at dusk.

**Along the back alleyways** on the small housing estate at Cuckoos Nest (below Cuckoo's Nest woods,) a skipping, **ghostly child** is said to have been seen on many occasions also running around in some of the gardens there. It is said she looks very happy.

**Several owners of the Café**, have on several occasions whilst clearing up after a busy day with the café doors closed and locked, heard the front door apparently opening and someone entering the building. Also sounds of someone moving around in the rooms at the rear of the café have also been heard and interestingly a local dog who regularly visits the café with his owner now refuses point blank to enter this area. However, always upon investigation, no (living) person was to be seen.

**We were showing a new visitor** to an area at the rear of the History Garden when he turned completely white and became most distressed. He said he could feel the presence of some **unhappy spirits** trapped under the ground there who had died many centuries ago and he asked if we could leave there asap.



**That same week, there were some very strange happenings in the Coach House itself.** A cleaning lady, knowing she was completely alone, heard doors opening and closing around the building. Extremely un-nerved she left straight away. A few days later, two ladies went across to collect papers and once again they were alone in the building, and once more, doors could be heard opening and closing around them. They too, beat a hasty retreat! All the ladies absolutely refuse to enter the building again.

**Several weeks later, a local resident was walking with a friend and both their dogs** in the evening past the Coach House. Although it was getting dark, they could clearly see there was no one about there. Suddenly both dogs started to snarl and bark with hackles raised trying to go towards the coach house and both became very difficult to control. This was totally out of character for both animals. The ladies were both quite frightened and, struggling with the dogs, got back to their cars ASAP. The dogs had also reacted strangely earlier to an area at the top of St Ives where allegedly there are 200 Civil War Graves situated. She knew nothing about either that, or that strange things had been happening at the Coach House very recently.

**Last year a young woman rang us** to say that she and her boyfriend had been sitting on a seat by Baxter's Pond at the lower part of the Estate. It was at dusk and fog was rolling in, when suddenly they saw an odd figure standing at the other side of the pond. He seemed almost to be floating slightly above the ground and seemed slightly illuminated. She said she hadn't wanted to ring us as she felt embarrassed by talking about it, but they had both been quite scared and wanted to know if others had seen the strange figure??

*It seems that at dusk, and after dark, St Ives becomes 'alive' with the Past. (or is 'alive' really the right word?)*

**WATCH CAREFULLY WHEN YOU WALK THERE.....!**