

It is said that a lady visiting the card shop which used to be 'Inspirations' thought she was the only customer when she heard a child call 'Mummy!' She suggested that the assistant see to the child's needs before serving her but was told that she didn't have a child. Then a man gave an impatient cough as if he was being kept waiting but there was no one else to be served.

The next unexplained happening was experienced by a young man who occupied a flat above the Italian café. He was concerned when he said things were being thrown around and said he had been thrown down the stairs. He left the property soon after.

The barn conversion at 4 Market Street is where we hear of very disturbing incidents.

Only a few years ago a young woman visited the museum to ask if we knew of the history of the barn before it was converted. She had moved in to the newly converted flat but on a few occasions had found an old woman standing over her baby's cot uncovering the infant. We couldn't help her and she had to move home.

We now go onto the Market Square for our next sighting. Many years ago I was told that a child was seen looking out of the window above The Whittlesey Osteopaths in the white thatched building when there were no children living there at the time.



Next is 4 High Causeway also known as Vinpenter House. It is said that a baby can be heard crying in the attic rooms and that there is sometimes a smell of 'burning toast'.

Lastly, a young man told me that when he worked at the George a few years ago he saw a woman dressed in long black clothes walk through the premises.

Could this have been the ghost of Miss Elizabeth Brown who was murdered by William Green?

In 1836, thirty six year old Elizabeth Brown who was known to 'lead a reckless life of drinking and smoking to excess and had more than once been in trouble with the police for misconduct' was drinking in the George. She went to the maltings behind the George with William Green, where William worked. William then murdered Elizabeth.

He tried to push her body into the furnace to dispose of it, with her pipe in her mouth to make it look like an accident. They were both found the next morning. Although Elizabeth died of suffocation her forearm and several ribs had been broken and she was dreadfully burnt and mutilated.



MAUREEN WATSON'S WHITTLESEY GHOST STORIES

There are many ghost stories told about buildings in the town.

Is there any truth in them?
We don't know. There are no accounts of people coming to harm after an unexplained experience.

We have to keep an open mind but I listen with great interest to these stories.

Am I being taken in or is there something we are yet to understand?
Walk with me and decide for yourself...



*Maureen
Watson*

Having spoken to the various owners of buildings in Market Street and around the Market Square it seems remarkable that there are so many accounts from different people, told to me at different times.

The building adjacent to the library and information centre has a plaque on the front wall reading "Walpole House" 1924.

I was told a few years ago that a lady was having a beauty treatment in a room above the hairdressers when someone pulled her hair. As she was not having her hair attended to at the time it obviously frightened her and she quickly left never to return.



In the same building but on the ground floor there was a sighting of a man in a blue shirt seen in the kitchen. It frightened the assistant who was there on her own before opening time and there was a smell of burnt toast.

This building is on the site of a devastating fire in 1923 when properties on both sides of the street were burnt down but there were no deaths reported.

Perhaps the most reported ghost story is from The Black Bull public house in Market Street.

The Black Bull has been a public house since at least 1650 but the building could be around 600 years old.

Billy Fitzjohn slept in the 'ghost room' for thirteen years from 1906-1919 when his mother was landlady. He is said to have heard footsteps and a bedroom door latch rattling. Billy's father died suddenly in 1909 after retiring to bed without complaint.

In 1921 four steps had to be removed from the stairs so that a piano could be taken out of the building. A stone slab with an iron ring was then found.

When the slab was taken up a passage was discovered which led under the Inn to the road. It is not known what this passage was used for and it has since been blocked off.



Another unusual occurrence was when George Monks heard noises and thought it was burglars. His dog refused to go to the attic and growled and its neck hair bristled. Turning back into the bedroom there was a cold draught even though the windows and doors were closed. Other landlords have told of footsteps, noises, chains rattling and a feeling of someone being near, these occurrences mostly happen at a full moon.



In 1972 a television crew visited on a ghost hunt. Charlie was said to stamp up and down the corridors. Charlie the Ghost is still supposed to cause mischief pushing people in the back when they are in the toilet.

Is there any substance to these accounts going back a hundred years? It's certainly a good reason to visit this establishment to see for yourself.

A visitor to Whittlesey Museum said to me on leaving the Town Hall. "You do know there is a presence in the yard don't you?" Often on my own at the museum I can say that I had never been disturbed by anything unusual but no doubt there had been many deaths on the site as the yard had been the site of Alms houses in the early 19c.