

PRE-INVESTIGATION REPORT



Site Location Wilden, Manor Farm House

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Report By Bill King

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Background Information

Wilden is a scattered community to the north of Bedford. It was mentioned in the Domesday Book as Wildene. It consists of 160 homes in a largely rural area with plenty of agriculture.

The local church, St Nicholas, has been well maintained and has been dated to 1231. Next to the village green there is a school that has been in existence for four hundred years.

Manor Farm House

There are several ghosts associated with Wilden Manor Farm House. Recently the ghost of a woman has been seen walking into the now derelict house. Screams have also been heard on the site; these have been associated with a horse rider who fell into a ditch and was killed.

Many people have witnessed stones being thrown from the area around the house, some of which have reached the garden of the Victoria Arms pub opposite (grid reference: TL09495521). Stones have even been said to have reached the churchyard which is one hundred metres away. People who visited the site have heard the sound of stones hitting an old caravan which lies alongside the path. People have even seen a phantom fire which originated near the gate by the road (on a line between the house and the pub) and grew till it was nearly two metres across. It has also been reported that stones have been seen hovering in the air even in broad daylight. A taxi driver was waiting for his fare in the gateway to the house with the engine off. Suddenly the windscreen wipers started operating and the fuel gauge needle started to flick up and down by itself.

The house is a timber framed building and dates from the seventeenth century and is listed as Grade II. According to a legend handed down from a hundred years ago a witch was burned alive on the track leading to the manor. On the track there are two old caravans which, it is said, were occupied by two gypsy brothers. One died of cancer and the other died a week later of 'causes unknown'. Another story says that the house was cursed by an unknown lady.

I have had a talk with the owner of Manor Farm whose family has farmed the site for five generations and the results were not as expected. Neither the farmer nor any member of his family has experienced anything in or around the house. What is also interesting is that the original source of the occurrences (as described above) did not have permission to enter the farmer's land and had never even talked to the farmer until recently. How can you research a site without getting background data from the owner (present or past)? And worst of all what were people doing entering his land without his permission? Any true investigator would always get permission to investigate a site before entering it! Oh! And the caravan was occupied by the first member, of the present farmer's family, to own the land. When he bought the land in 1954 Manor Farm House was already dilapidated even though the previous owner had been living there. The new owner lived at the pub for a while, and then moved to the caravan to save money.

Most of the sightings, and other phenomena, are associated with one man who has studied the site, so it is possible that he is the cause, by way of poltergeist activity. People have also been responsible for some of the instances of stone throwing (mainly to scare unwelcome visitors off). So is the site haunted or is it purely the result of human activity?