

Chicksands Wood

Chicksands Wood appears to have a very strong connection with the haunting on Great Lane. Chronologically the Great Lane haunting was reported first when, just before Christmas 1969, a newsagent and his wife were delivering papers to Northfields Farm and encountered the ghost. They saw a light approaching along the road from the direction of Haynes Church End which at first they thought was a cyclist but it turned out to be a hooded figure on horseback carrying an old fashioned lamp. What made them decide it was a ghost was when the figure passed straight through their car. They were not the only people to see the ghost as a previous resident at Northfield Cottage (at the end of the drive to Northfield Farm) had eventually moved out because of the ghost.

The sighting in Chicksands Wood occurred in 1971 when a motorist driving through the wood came upon an apparition on horseback that, once again, rode through his car. There is no road through Chicksands Wood but up the centre of the wood runs Long Drive which now consists of compacted stones but did it in 1971? The track way, and in fact a lot of the paths in the modern wood, are visible on a map drawn up in 1892 and the wood is virtually identical in size and shape as it was in 1892.

If the sightings were of the same ghost then it is likely that it was heading towards Chicksands Priory, which was founded in 1150 by the Gilbertine Order. If it was heading to Chicksands Priory and was seen in Chicksands Wood then it would have had to have been north of a drainage channel which runs through the wood dividing it into two, Chicksands Wood to the northeast and Pedley Wood to the southwest

Assuming the figure was following a reasonable straight line then it must have been seen near where the two woods join, an area now occupied by a monument to Henry Robert, who was lost at sea in the collision of the steamer Comtesse de Flandres with the steamer Princess Henriette in 1889.

This monument is at the southeast end of Long Drive which is a straight line from the north end of the wood at Appley Corner. The drive to Pedley Farm follows Long Drive until about 0.25 miles from the monument when the drive spits off to the right to follow a straight line to the farm.

It is along this last section of the drive that the ghost was most likely seen as this crosses a straight line from Northfield to Chicksands. In our investigation we walked the entire length of Long Drive and walked along the last section of the track to Pedley Farm so as to cover all of the areas where the ghost would have to cross the paths to get to Chicksands.