THE FOLK-LORE OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

An annotated bibliography

by David Haden

2024

Version 1.9

LIST OF ADDITIONS:

Additions from version 1.8 :

CHRISTIAN | HACKWOOD (ii) (expanded) | HEWITT, M | RAVEN, M | TONGUE (expanded) | UNKNOWN (i) | UNKNOWN (ii)

Additions from version 1.7 :

ANON (iv) | BARNATT (expanded) | BUCKLAND | CORBET | DYER | JACOBS | GOMME | GROOME | INGRAM | LEESE | POOLE (expanded) | RHODES | RICKMAN | SAWYER (ii) | WEDGWOOD | WHITE | WIGFULL | WITCUTT (ii) + (iv, expanded)

Additions from version 1.6 :

ANON (iii) | BARNATT | BREEZE | CHURTON (re: Ashmole) | HACKWOOD (1924 (expanded) | HUTTON | LIVINGSTONE | MOSS (expanded) | NETTEL (expanded) | PAPE | RHEAD (expanded) | STONE | TONGUE | WRIGHT

Additions from version 1.5 :

AULT | BUCKLAND (expanded) | CLOWES | HARPER | PENMAN | SLEIGH

Additions from version 1.4:

DAVIS | HOLT | MAYER | MOSS

Additions from version 1.3:

BLAGG | BUCKLAND | CARRINGTON | HADEN | KEY

Additions from version 1.2:

BLAKE | BURNE (1896, iii) | BURNE (1914, expanded) | DAY | ELLIOT (1988) | HELM | HOWITT, M. (1845, 1859) | KASKE | MACHIN | SHIRLEY | THOMAS | WARDLE | WELLS | WRIGHT

Additions from version 1.1:

BERESFORD | DEACON

ANON, "Suggested Folk Museum for Staffordshire", *Museums Journal* 29, 1930, page 288.

[Sadly the idea never came to fruition, being pitched straight into the start of the Great Depression. By the time the funds might have become available — perhaps the later 1950s — the chance and county council inclination would have gone.]

ANON. *Legends of the moorlands and forest in north Staffordshire*, Hamilton, Adams, and Co., c. 1860.

[Local tales retold as reciting verse and in the style of the time, with "A Legend of Lud Church" in prose. Has: The Chieftain; Caster's Bridge; The Heritage; Lud Church; and A Legend of Lud's Church.

Printed locally in Leek by Hall and Son, but issued under the imprint of Hamilton, Adams, and Co. of London. *Staffordshire Poets* (1928) named the author as a 'Miss Dakeyne' and was unable to discover the author's first name, but noted "Her family were silk manufacturers, of Gradbach Mill" and a *Country Life* article on the district later added that the family had been so since 1780. Thus she was obviously able to draw on rooted local telling of the tales, as well as on her personal knowledge of their locations.]

ANON, "Up and Down the Country: Ranscliff", *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 6th December 1879, page 7.

[The Kidsgrove Boggart. Noted as of interest, in the online bibliography of the Fairy Investigation Society. 'Rancliff' is one mile N.W. of Burslem, and is today known as Ravenscliffe. Partly quoted in AULT (see below) and finally given in full in *The Boggart Sourcebook* (2022) along with a report from the *Wolverhampton Chronicle and Staffordshire Advertiser*, 16th August 1843, page 4. The latter crime report shows that boatmen using the Harecastle tunnel knew the "Kitcrew Boggart" lore in 1843.]

ANON, "A Visit to the Staffordshire Potteries", *The Leisure Hour*, 2nd June 1853.

> "In the market-place [at Longton, Stoke-on-Trent], it being market-day, we were greeted with a spectacle which we should have imagined that no town in England at the present day could have produced: this was nothing less than a perambulating quack doctor, who, with his bottled monsters and nauseous mixtures ostentatiously displayed upon a large table, had taken his stand close to an oyster-stall, and, sagely sucking the head of his cane, according to the established formula [for such men], stood awaiting consultations and fees."
>
> The word "perambulating" may allude to the practice of carrying the bottles and mixtures about in a pram for local delivery, when not at market. 'Cane-end sucking' was the sign of such a man's trade.

ALFORD, V. "Correspondence", *Folk-lore* journal, 1953, pages 364-365.

> [Detailed note on the Abbots Bromley horn dance, from someone who saw it performed three times.]

AULT, R. "How the Boggart came to haunt Kidsgrove", *The Sentinel* newspaper, 30th October 2020, online.

> [On the 'Kidsgrove Boggart', aka 'Kitcrew'. The journalist is equally interested in local murders, but the article does usefully reprint part of a presumably anonymous article on the Boggart from *The Sentinel* of 6th December 1879. From which…
>
> "It was in Ravenscliff that famous Kitcrew Boggart chiefly took up its quarters, and was for years the terror and dread of the hamlet. […Sometimes it] would meet the collier as he travelled the lonely hills, or made his way along the old deep lanes that winded through the valley. On other occasions it would appear as a light and be seen dancing and flickering through the marshy dales. And the dread which this unearthly light, as it was supposed to be, inspired was something horrible. It was even known to come at night, and sing in the dales in imitation of a nightingale, and hundreds of colliers with affrighted faces gathered to the spot to listen to

the strange bird. To them, at least, such appearances of noises had this serious aspect, that they never were seen or heard only as predicting some accident or fatality of some kind, the occurrence of which their mission seemed to forewarn and prepare."

The modern journalist notes that the 1879 writer suggested the building of the Harecastle Tunnel as 'the cause' – however, this cannot be, since *The Journals of William Clowes* (see: CLOWES) shows that the legend pre-dates the tunnel.]

The ceremonial 'Bawd Stone', Staffordshire Moorlands. A small pool rests below it, enabled by the three 'balancing' stones. Small children were dragged beneath it, for healing. If the shady pool were an abundant abode of frogs in the Maytime, then this folk-belief might actually have worked for some — since frog slime is a known and powerful antibiotic.

BARNATT, J. et al. "A Bronze Age Flat Grave at The Roaches, Staffordshire", *Staffordshire Archeological and Historical Society Transactions*, Vol. XLIX, 2017.

[In the summer of 2015 footpath repair-men struck a previously unknown Bronze Age grave located high in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The conclusion of this resulting paper also briefly

discusses the folk-use of the ancient 'Bawd Stone' which is located opposite the grave and a few yards away. The author is reliant on questionable modern sources for this, but does note… "A photograph taken in 1915" of the whitened Bawd Stone, and that "procession by local people to the Bawd Stone continued into the 1940s, showing the place remained of significance to the community". This use and annual whitewashing of the stone is confirmed elsewhere, in other sources. A pre-1800 stipple engraving, seen below, better indicates the small pool below the stone.]

BENNETT, G. and ASHMAN, G. "Charlotte Sophia Burne: Shropshire Folklorist, First Woman President of the Folklore Society, and First Woman Editor of *Folklore*. Part 1: A Life and Appreciation", *Folklore* journal, Volume 111, Issue 1, 2000, pages 1-21.

[On the life and work of a key collector of folklore and folk-song, mainly of Shropshire but also very active in North Staffordshire until c.1895 when she left the area. The short "Part 2: Update and Preliminary Bibliography", followed later in *Folklore* journal, Volume 112, Issue 1, 2001, pages 105-106.]

BERESFORD, W. "Notes on a Portion of the Northern Borders of Staffordshire: Superstitions", *The Reliquary*, 1866-67.

[Collected from the Moorlands, with a focus on rustic farm superstitions. "The belief in fairies, by the way, still lingers with some here, and in witches with many". Candle and dream omens and several petty superstitions. A methods of foretelling future husbands. There was at that time still a "popular belief in Moorland "ghosts"" — sometimes called by locals a skug, a boggart, or a tuggin.]

BIRD, S.E. "Derbyshire well-dressing: an annual folk festival", *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 1983, pages 61-72.

[Development and diffusion of the local well-dressing ceremonies, noting the changes in form over time. States that the tradition also

stretches down from the Peak into parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands (see also: HARPER and CHRISTIAN).

Rosie Morris, in "Maidens' Garlands" (2011) speculates that the Staffordshire/Derbyshire maidens' garlands may have originally been part of a long-established funerary rite for deceased virgins. On this latter point see also the book *Memorials of Old Derbyshire*, page 362 onwards: the sections "at Bradwell and Castleton…" and "In Eyam…".]

BLADEN, W.W. "Notes on the folk-lore of North Staffordshire, chiefly collected at Stone", *Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club*, 1900-1901, pages 135-185.

[Later reviewed in a book or pamphlet form (that form now lost?) in *Folk-lore* journal, 1902, by E. Sidney Hartland. Local Christian saints; lore of the moon, rainbows, will-'o-the-wisps; weather, tree and flower lore; local names for animals (a mole = *moudiwarp*) and bird names and rhymes; bee lore; fairies (in the shape of swans); the usual ghost tales and witches; the Kidsgrove boggart; Kidsgrove white rabbit (which appears to pre-date the *Alice* white rabbit from Cheshire's Rev. Dodgson); charms, cures; minor domestic superstitions; weddings and deaths; hiring times at the town's hiring fair (named the 'Gorby Market'); annual special days and feasts; 31st October Hallowmas Eve; gives lines from the souling song at Stone; the Guisers' play with text; large number of children's counting out rhymes given; many details and diagrams of children's games; and a number of local children's songs are transcribed.]

BLAGG, Charles J. *A history of the North Staffordshire hounds and country : 1825-1902*. Sampson Low, London, 1902. Pages 108-110.

[Short account and full text of the North Staffordshire dialect song "The Wooden Plough", as written down and dating from circa the 1850s.]

BLAKE M.K. *Stories from the Edge: Creating an Identity in Early Medieval North-West Staffordshire*, completed PhD thesis at The University of Leicester. June 2017, released from repository embargo 27th June 2018.

> [Focuses on the "southern half of Pirehill Hundred, Staffordshire" meaning from Stone to Stafford. "Chapters one and two discuss burial mounds, both in terms of survival and their cultural context and the lives of local saints." Later there is a discussion and "detailed case studies" of the edge-lands of watery landscapes that were often chosen for the siting of manors and churches or even 'green chapels' (as at Crakemarsh, which served as the medieval Alton Castle's 'Green Chapel'.]

BREEZE, A. "Welsh *Chwant* 'Desire' and *Trisantona* 'River Trent' in Tacitus", *Onomastic Issues*, Vol 18, No. 1, 2021. (Journal title is translated from the Russian).

> [A robust challenge to the usual interpretation of the river-name *Trisantona* (the Trent, as named by Tacitus) as something akin to 'trespasser' for the Ancient Romans. This meaning has been very plausibly assumed to refer to the river's frequent flooding and bank-breaking, and shifting ox-bows, in pre-modern times.
>
> The new suggested meaning, drawing on philology and historical evidence, is slightly different and by implication more libidinous. The author suggests that…
>
> "… reconstructed **Trisuantona* (from **Tresuantona*) would thus … mean 'she of great desire, she who is much loved.' [The new interpretation works from] the basis of Old Irish *sét* ('treasure', Modern Irish *seoid*) and Welsh *chwant* ('desire', from hypothetical Common Celtic **suanto-*)."
>
> This interpretation, I would add, is not altogether incompatible with the idea of a promiscuously 'overflowing and embracing' female river.]

BUCKLAND, I. and OWEN, J.A., "The Upper Country and its Folk: Some Gleanings from Staffordshire", *The Leisure Hour*, December 1894.

[Vivid and lengthy account of a sustained walking visit to the Staffordshire Moorlands and Leek, and also gives an extensive selection of rural dialect words to be found in the early 1890s.

"Running streams in this region are termed *rindles*, and a dingle is here, as old Ben Jonson called it, a "*dimble*". A thriving child is called "*do-some*" and an idle wench is "*lozel*". The old English words "*strene*" for descent; "*sneap*" to rebuke ; "*sperr*" to bolt ; "*slat*" to dash down; "*upbrast*" to burst open; "*deck*" for a pack of cards, as used by Shakespeare and Spenser, are still familiarly used here. So are *foreby*, *fornenst*, and *anenst*. A "*shive*" of bread and "a *cantle*" o' milk are given to the passing tramp, whose hands are "*clossomed*" or "*clusent*" with cold, by the "*chuffy* housewife". […] The word "grousy" is used for shivering, reminding us of *grausen*, to make shudder. "Hill the child up i' the blankets," they say, "hers *grousy*." The "*hillin*" of the book is the cover. "Tit" is a very old-time term here for a horse. A large estate near Leek called Tittesworth is said to have its name from the fact that it was sold long ago for the value of a horse. [...] the "*squab*" is a substantial broad oak settle by the fire."

"They say that the mere [Black Mere on Morridge Edge] is fed by a "blubb" hole from the sea, and moreover that the pool is tenanted by a mermaid. On stormy nights — so the story runs — her wailing cry is heard above the moaning of the wind. Her strange form has been seen gliding over the surface of the dark waters, and woe betide any luckless mortal who chances to pass that way after midnight." [The story of the attempt to drain the pool, and its thwarting, is then told.]

"This little out-of-the-way place [Dove Head, source of the river Dove] has an unenviable reputation. Whenever any pugilistic encounter was to take place between Staffordshire professors of the noble art of self-defence, it was here that the colliers and pottery hands assembled, and it was here also that the combatants "sorted" themselves; that is to say, that if they scented the stern guardians of the peace and welfare of Staffordshire upon their track, they could step into Derbyshire, and, if the police of that county were

also upon the alert, they were able, by a short scramble up the side of Axe Edge, to pass into Cheshire. Within the last ten years such a public exhibition of fisticuffs has taken place at Dove Head."

"There are among them at the present time those who firmly believe in the Mermaid of Black Meer, and in the headless horseman who is supposed to dash along the crest of Morredge or from Onecote to Butterton at night upon a snow-white steed, and the old witch woman who used to run over the country in the form of a hare. The local conceit, too, that Axe Edge is the highest hill in England, is general ..."

"One day, when seeking the whereabouts of Thief Hole, which I knew to be somewhere near the top of the Ramshaw Rocks, a tottering old man, with the ever-courteous readiness to oblige strangers which distinguishes the moorland folk, left his work to point it out to me. Hobbling along before me through the heather, and over rocks, with an agility that was surprising in a, man of his years, the garrulous old fellow [engaged in] a long, rambling speech, in which he was deploring the fact that will-o'-the-wisps, once so frequent in that district, were now rarely, if ever, seen..."]

BUCKLAND, I. "By The Manifold River", *The Leisure hour: an illustrated magazine*, 1896, pages 116-120.

[Has the equivalent of one page on folklore and local words. Widespread belief in a mermaid who dwells in "Black Meer Pool"; and a spectral horseman who nightly rides from Onecote Bridge to Four End Roads; any strange or untoward incident is 'the work of lightning'; notes the sinkholes at Wetton Mill and the noises they made, and gives the short comic tale of a man who built a boat to go down one and along the underground river…

"Some ten years ago a duck was accidentally taken down in the swirl of a 'sink'. After traversing the gloomy [underground in summer] course of the Manifold, it reappeared at Ilam in an almost unrecognisable condition. This incident so worked upon the mind of a soft-headed fellow, who lives hard by. That he at length persuaded himself that where a duck went *he* could go; and he actually fitted out a tub-like boat, laden with candles and provisions, with the object of setting forth upon a voyage of discovery into the

cavernous depths of the earth. Fortunately, before going very far down stream, the crazy boat capsized, and the poor man was nearly drowned — a circumstance which considerably damped his zeal as an explorer. He is still of the opinion, however, that, with a properly constructed craft, the underground passage might be safely made."

I note here that a similar tale exists up in the nearby Peak, about the Bottomless Cavern: a goose was being chased and flew wildly down into the Cavern and was lost. Later the lost bird emerged from a crack at the castle at Castleton, with its wings singed as if by heat.

Buckland also gives names for the cottage instruments used for cooking pikelets and also the North Staffordshire type of oatcakes, then said to be the staple diet of most Moorlands families.]

BURNE, C.S. *Shropshire Folk-Lore: a sheaf of gleanings*, Trubner & Co., 1886.

[Mentions in passing some neighbouring North Staffordshire traditions and tales. Also has a song collected July 1885 from children of gypsies, Eliza Wharton and her brothers, habitually travelling through North Shropshire and Staffordshire.]

BURNE, C.S. "Guisers' play, songs, and rhymes, from Staffordshire", *Folk-lore* journal, 1886, pages 350-359.

[On Christmas customs in Eccleshall, as written down in 1879. Notes that an account of the event was previously given in *Shropshire Folk-lore*, page 488. See also: "Songs: Tinker's Song" from Eccleshall, in *Folk-lore* journal, 1886,pages 259-264.]

BURNE, C.S. "Staffordshire sayings from the north-western or "Pottery" district", *Folk-lore* journal, 1889, pages 294-295.

[Small collection of local sayings from Hanley (the commercial centre of Stoke-on-Trent) such as: 'you can't get more from a cat than its skin', meaning 'you can't get what a creditor hasn't got'. Perhaps the most interesting is: 'Fly round by Jackson's End', often

used by a mother sending a child on an urgent errand which had need for haste.]

BURNE, C.S. "The folklore of Staffordshire", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, new series, 1896, pages 24-33.

[Belief in witchcraft; belief in elemental spirits; belief in woodland spirits; forest rights; Abbots Bromley; 'souling' (soul-cakes) customs and dates; the 1890s folklore and song collecting work of Burne and Kearey in North Staffordshire, and their then-current gaps in local folk-lore documentation. It seems the work of the Burne-Keary pair never saw a book publication, and the whereabouts of any notes or materials are now unknown.]

BURNE, C.S. "Staffordshire folk and their lore". *Folk-lore* journal, 1896, pages 366-386.

[Belief in magic; witches male and female; mining spirits and 'knockers'; hiring times and 'souling' dates; taunts and sayings; the traditional friendliness of the folk; little belief in ghosts, much belief in magic; local sing-song proverb-spouting manner of speech; distinctive physical characteristics; supposed Saracen and/or gypsy origins of Biddulph Moor population; forest and plant superstitions; Abbot's Bromley horn and hobby dance with photos.]

BURNE, C.S. "What Folklore is, and how it is to be collected", *North Staffordshire Naturalists' Field Club, Annual Report and Transactions*, 1896.

[Of local note are:

i) "Tradition at Bagot's Park of an especially large… "Beggar's Oak, beneath whose branches, so the popular belief has it, any wayfarer has the right to a night's lodging." [It is suggested that this seems to indicate] "some prehistoric common right, disregarded at the time of the enclosure, but still existing in the popular imagination". See also the local

Gawain-poet, re: "strothe-men" sleeping under large hedges (found in his late poem "Pearl");

ii) "while the agricultural hiring-time in North Staffordshire is Christmas, the potters' (pottery makers) ancient hiring-time is Martinmas." Martinmas is 11th November, which was also the Derbyshire farm hiring time in the 19th century;

iii) the character of the men of the mid and north parts of the West Midlands, in general: "The racy humorous speech, the shrewd sense, the genial hospitable temper, are found everywhere." This being rather different from the harder stance commonly found in the north of England, above an invisible line that runs from the Wash to Chester and which Jonathan Meades (1998) has identified as 'the Irony Curtain'.

The *Annual Report* states that when this paper was read at the Cheadle meeting of the N. Staffs Field Club in 1895, the vicar, the Rev. G.T. Ryves…

"mentioned that when he first came to Tean the 'guisers' were in full force, and that he had got together as much as possible of the text of the dialogue. On piecing the fragments together, he obtained an interesting play, which had undoubtedly been handed down by tradition and memory for hundreds of years."

This provoked further audience comment that a belief in witches was still alive and spoken about in the district…

"within the last four years he met with a young farmer who positively declared that he knew a man who had bewitched all the cattle on the farm in order to spite the dairymaid."]

BURNE, C.S. "More Staffordshire superstitions", *Folk-lore* journal, 1897, pages 91-92.

[A short note on various wedding day superstitions.]

BURNE, C.S. "Presidential Address: the value of European folklore in the history of culture", *Folk-lore* journal, 1910, pages 14-41.

[Extensive discussion of May Day celebrations in the nearby Peak District; and the Abbots Bromley horn dance.]

BURNE, C.S. "Souling, Clementing, and Catterning", *Folklore* journal, 1914, pages 285-299.

[Discussion of the three main areas in the West Midlands with distinctive Hallowmas Eve rituals and songs. North Staffordshire being one of these. Useful map of the distribution of the customs, by name and type, showing a clear split between north and south Staffordshire at a point just south of Stafford. Also printed in *North Staffordshire Field Club Annual Report and Transactions*, 1915, where there is a rider thus: "Members present at the Meeting at which this paper was read testified to the existence of the practice of Souling at Barlaston, Endon, Leek, Scothay, Talke, Tittensor, and Weston-on-Trent, in addition to the places mentioned in the Paper."]

BURNE, J.C. "The Young Charlotte Burne: Author of 'Shropshire Folklore'", *Folklore* journal, Volume 86, Issue 3-4, 1975, pages 167-174.

[On the life and work of a key collector of folklore and folk-song in Shropshire and North Staffordshire.]

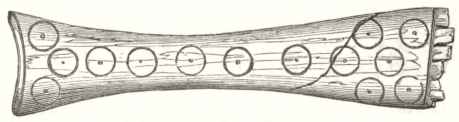
BURNE, S.A.H. 'Examples of folk memory from Staffordshire', *Folk-lore* journal, 1916, pages 239-49.

[Concrete examples of accurate folk-memory, drawn from the northern parts of Staffordshire. These are: i) memories of land division in the Needwood Forest; ii) Civil War rhyme in Harriseahead, become part of a children's song "Ding a dong ding, I heard a bird sing" etc; iii) traces of memories of the fast 'Earlsway' road from the Manifold Valley to Chester, found to be incontrovertibly supported by a land-grant document of the year 1200; iv) notes on the village of Waterfall in the Moorlands; v) Civil

War memories persisted at Barthomley on the Cheshire / Staffordshire border, with discussion of this; he also presents further evidence for the historical accuracy of several instances of folk-memory in the Staffordshire Moorlands.]

Seven remarkable implements, formed of the snags of deers' horns. These are here engraved of one-half their real size.

They have almost invariably been called whistles by those who have seen them for the first time. Some of them are cut and perforated like that instrument, with the exception of what is termed the mouth-piece, two of them are a little ornamented at their tips, and a third with cross-notches near the thick end.



Bone Comb, ornamented with circles. This is considered a very interesting specimen, and is similar to some others that have been found elsewhere.

Bone Pin, here engraved.

Engravings by Llewellynn Jewitt of a set of remarkable stag-horn bone whistles excavated from Thor's Cave, Manifold Valley, Staffordshire Moorlands. IN: "Account of the Excavations and Discoveries in Thor's Cave, Wetton Dale", The Reliquary, Vol. 6, April 1865-66.

CARRINGTON, S. "Account of the Excavations and Discoveries in Thor's Cave, Wetton Dale", *The Reliquary*, Vol. 6, April 1865-66.

> [Samuel Carrington was the right-hand man of the noted antiquarian Mr. Bateman, and helped him with extensive barrow-digging in the Peak. The article opens with several pages of relevant local place-names, folk-lore, and some interesting local wolf-lore. Has engravings by Llewellynn Jewitt of a set of remarkable ancient carved stag-horn bone whistles found in the cave (see illustrations opposite).]

CHRISTIAN, R. *Well-dressing in Derbyshire*, Derbyshire Countryside, 1983.

> ["I know of only two places outside Derbyshire with a long history of well-dressing. Endon in Staffordshire [being one, and there are also] newcomers to well-dressing. Just over the Staffordshire border [from Derbyshire] there have been experiments at Newborough and Tutbury."]

CHURTON, T. *The Magus of Freemasonry: the mysterious life of Elias Ashmole, scientist, alchemist, and founder of the Royal Society*, Inner Traditions, 2006.

> [Following the Royalist defeat at Worcester in July 1646, Elias Ashmole… "returned to the area of Shallowford in Staffordshire. In September 1652, Ashmole 'took a Journey into the Peake, in search of Plants and other Curiosities.'" 'Peake' here indicates the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the Staffordshire and Derbyshire Peak District. "Ashmole's *Noates* of his journey contain short entries of peculiar words, sayings, rhymes, miners' language and customs, cookery recipes, people, inscriptions, and sights. For example, a Staffordshire oatcake was called a 'Bannock' and consisted of oatmeal and barley, baked on a griddle. A Spider was an 'Aldercrop'". The latter being a preservation of the Old English word *at(t)orcoppa* and the Middle English *attercop*, a name later used by Tolkien in *The Hobbit*.

Ashmole mentions a man called 'Wagge' from the [Staffordshire] moorland village of Wetton who 'is *Staffordshire Astrologus*,' meaning the man was a fellow astrologer. At Dove Bridge (near Uttoxeter), Ashmole actually participated in a magical 'Call,' or invocation of spirits: "I came to Mr: Jo: Tompson, who dwells neare Dove Bridge. He used a Call [under the bridge], and had [spirit] responses in a soft voyce."

'Noates in my Peake Journey' has seemingly only been printed in the five volume *Elias Ashmole: His Autobiographical and Historical Notes*, Clarendon, Oxford University Press. The set is also known by the shorthand title *Elias Ashmole, 1617-92.* Ashmole MS 1137 f. 145-147 (the *Noates*) is said to be a copy by an engraver, the original being lost. It seems this MS has not yet been scanned and placed online by the Bodleian.]

CLOWES, W. *The Journals of William Clowes: A Primitive Methodist Preacher*, Hallam and Holliday, London, 1844.

[Clowes was a preacher born in Burslem in 1780, and he came of age and was married in 1800. Very early in his career he took a post at Kidsgrove, where he heard tell of the 'Kidsgrove Boggart'…

"Mr. W. E. Miller, the travelling preacher in the circuit, strongly pressed me to lead a class at Kidsgrove, to which I consented. This place, at which there is a large colliery [coal mine], is distant about two miles from [my home in] Tunstall; and to attend every week, and especially in the winter season, when the nights were cold and stormy, was not a very easy matter. In a lonely part of the road leading to Kidsgrove, which is skirted by a wood, there wandered a ghost, as tradition and common report asserted. It was called the 'Kidsgrove bogget'. On my first induction into office as the Kidsgrove class-leader, I confess, when passing the haunted domains of this 'Kidsgrove bogget', that I occasionally felt a little fear creeping on me [...Thereafter] Very frequently my Tunstall friends would accompany me [to Kidsgrove]; and on these occasions we used to make the lonely lane to ring with shouts of glory, and singing the praises of God."

This usefully establishes a local belief in the Boggart prior to the building of the Harecastle Tunnel — as some later authors have surmised the tunnel-building as being somehow 'the cause' of the Boggart's appearance in the district.]

COLEMAN, S.J. "Staffordshire folklore: Folklore Fellowship Treasury of folklore series, No. 44", Folklore Academy, 1955.

[A pamphlet in a county series, and apparently just 13 pages long. Has unknown content and regional focus, other than "Staffordshire". A later book notes that it was "unpublished"? Which might mean it was material from formerly unpublished manuscript notes? It is in some library catalogues, so it was actually issued in print.]

COPE, E. "Some Local Fairies", in *Memorials of old Staffordshire*, G. Allen & sons, 1909.

[Old Staffordshire Moorlands farmer Elijah Cope recounts the local fairy lore, and his belief in them.]

CORBET, Bishop R., "Farewell to the Fairies" (1632). A lively poem, to be found in good form in Clay's *Old English Ballads* (1864).

[Bishop Richard Corbet, in his poem "Farewell to the Fairies", presented the fairies' vision of their perfect human folklorist and archivist, an imaginary man from Staffordshire...

A Register they have,

Who can preserve their charters;

A man both wise and grave.

[...]

To William Churne of Staffordshire

Give la'ud and praises due,

Who every meale can mend your cheare

With tales both old and true:

To William all give audience,

And pray yee for his noddle: [i.e. his head]

For all the fairies' evidence

were lost, if it were addle.

The name 'William Churne' was much later the adopted literary pseudonym of Francis Edward Paget, a churchman who lived at Elford near Lichfield in mid Staffordshire. He first published two books in his series of *Tales of the Village Children* (not folkloric, moralistic, and seemingly without any local colour). He then published a fairy-tale book in 1844, a fresh and imaginative 'fairy court' tale, just as the great fairy-tale revival began among readers. With this book Paget is said to be the first person to write a literary fairy-tale fantasy adventure book in English, as we now understand such a thing, although the final chapters do become rather moralistic. Later this book was issued illustrated and in simplified form for younger readers, as *The Self-Willed Prince* (1916). It was this book that Kipling — also an author with Staffordshire connections — later recalled and in it he found his title *Rewards and Fairies*, for the book that became the sequel to *Puck of Pook's Hill*. Together Kipling's two classics would then spark interest in Puck-ish matters for another century.]

DAVIS, J. B. "[Some Account of] Runic Calendars and 'Staffordshire Clogg' Almanacs", *Archaeologia*, Vol. 41, No.2, 1868, pages 453-478.

[Extensive paper with many good comparative plates. First section briefly discusses the firm attribution of these ancient almanacs 'sticks' to Staffordshire, being found to be unknown by the antiquaries of Cheshire or Shropshire, and the 'Derbyshire' example being said to be doubtful. Notes one example with the signs of the Zodiac on it.

A scattering of later discussions and elucidations of the Staffordshire Clogg almanacs can be found in the later society literature of the later Victorian period. See, for example, GRESLEY.

A Presidential Address by Horne printed in *Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club*, 1948-49, forms a more recent synthesis and evaluation of these curious and regionally specific items.]

DAY, M. "Introduction to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*", in Israel Gollancz, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Early English Text Society, 1940.

[A pupil of Israel Gollancz, this book was her corrected and updated edition of the master's work. Her introduction suggests the famous 'Green Chapel' is based on the cave "just at the bottom of the valley where the Hoo Brook runs into the Manifold at Wetton Mill, Staffs., there stands, above a weir, a striking cave projecting from the hillside". This is the cave in a white stone outcrop of rock, directly above the old site of the Wetton Mill railway station. She did however mistakenly confuse the cave with Thor's Cave. Her suggestion of North Staffordshire as the landscape setting for the main part of *Gawain* followed that of Bertram Colgrave (*Antiquity*, September 1938), and the Wetton Mill suggestion was later developed in some detail by KASKE, 1972. See also the extensive work on *Gawain* in the wider district, by ELLIOTT, from 1958 onwards. Then HADEN for integration with *Gawain* and much other local lore and landscape history.]

DEACON, Rev. E. "Presidential Address — Some quaint customs and superstitions in north Staffordshire and elsewhere", *North Staffordshire Field Club Transactions*, Vol. 64, 1929–30, pages 18-32.

[Summary of scraps picked up during thirty years as a vicar in the district, in the Weaver Hills and then in Stoke-on-Trent. Tradition of girls running to 'touch iron' whenever then see a preacher, still

common in Stoke-on-Trent — the reason for doing this being forgotten, other than that it might have to do with wearing a round hat (See WITCUTT, 2010, below, for the reason and a Leek example). A mouse fried in butter, as a cure for a major childhood contagious disease (also said to be common in Norfolk and India). Let a baby suck on the hind leg of a large frog, to cure the baby of a mouth disease ("thrush"), which probably is valid given the antibiotic properties of frog-skin and frog-slime. Various other old wives' remedies, of less certain efficacy. One possible relic of a belief in 'the evil eye' among women. 'Wart-charmers' said to still exist in Stoke-on-Trent, claiming to remove people's warts by 'charming' them away. Wood Anemone called "thunderbolt" and said to bring thunder when picked. Stoke children think that toads can spit poison. Well-dressing traditions continue at Endon, Marston and Tissington. Farmer's weather lore: if the autumn leaves all fall very fast at the end of the year, then a severe winter; if the leaves fall over a long period, then a mild winter. Two Stanton Souling songs are given in full. Souling was done at Christmas in blackface at Stanton, where it was called "guisering".

DENBY, M. "Staffordshire superstitions", *Folk-lore* journal, 1896, pages 398-399.

[Detailed short account of the questioning of an old Staffordshire Moorlands farmer, done by the itinerant preacher Elijah Cope . The farmer's belief in fairies, hobthursts and changelings.]

DYER, Rev. T. T. "Flowers and their Folk-lore: part X", *The Leisure hour: an illustrated magazine*, 22nd November 1879.

["There is a popular notion in Staffordshire that the devil always puts his cloven foot upon blackberries on Michaelmas Day (29th September), and on this account it is considered most unlucky to gather them during the remainder of the year. This piece of folk-lore is prevalent in Ireland as well as in various parts of England."]

ELLIOTT, R.V.W. "*Sir Gawain* in Staffordshire: A Detective Essay in Literary Geography", *London Times*, 21st May 1958.

> [The landscape around Leek is found to be related to the depictions in the 14th-century romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. This is Elliot's breakthrough *Times* newspaper article which determined the area around Leek to be a key locale for the famous tale.]

ELLIOTT, R.V.W. "Staffordshire and Cheshire Landscapes in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*", *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 1977, pages 20-49.

> [The volume was not issued until 1979, despite its stated cover date. Later collected, with his *Times* article of 1958 and other related topographical essays, in: ELLIOTT, *The Gawain Country: Essays on the Topography of Middle English Alliterative Poetry*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, The University of Leeds, 1984.]

ELLIOTT, R.V.W. "Holes and Caves in the *Gawain* Country", in: *Lexicographical and Linguistic Studies: Essays in Honour of G . W. Turner*, D. S. Brewer, 1988.

> [Uncollected in ELLIOTT's earlier book *The Gawain Country: Essays on the Topography of Middle English Alliterative Poetry*, 1984.]

GOMME, Alice. *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland : with tunes, singing rhymes and methods of playing*, David Nutt, 1898, 2 Vols. in the *Dictionary of British Folklore* series.

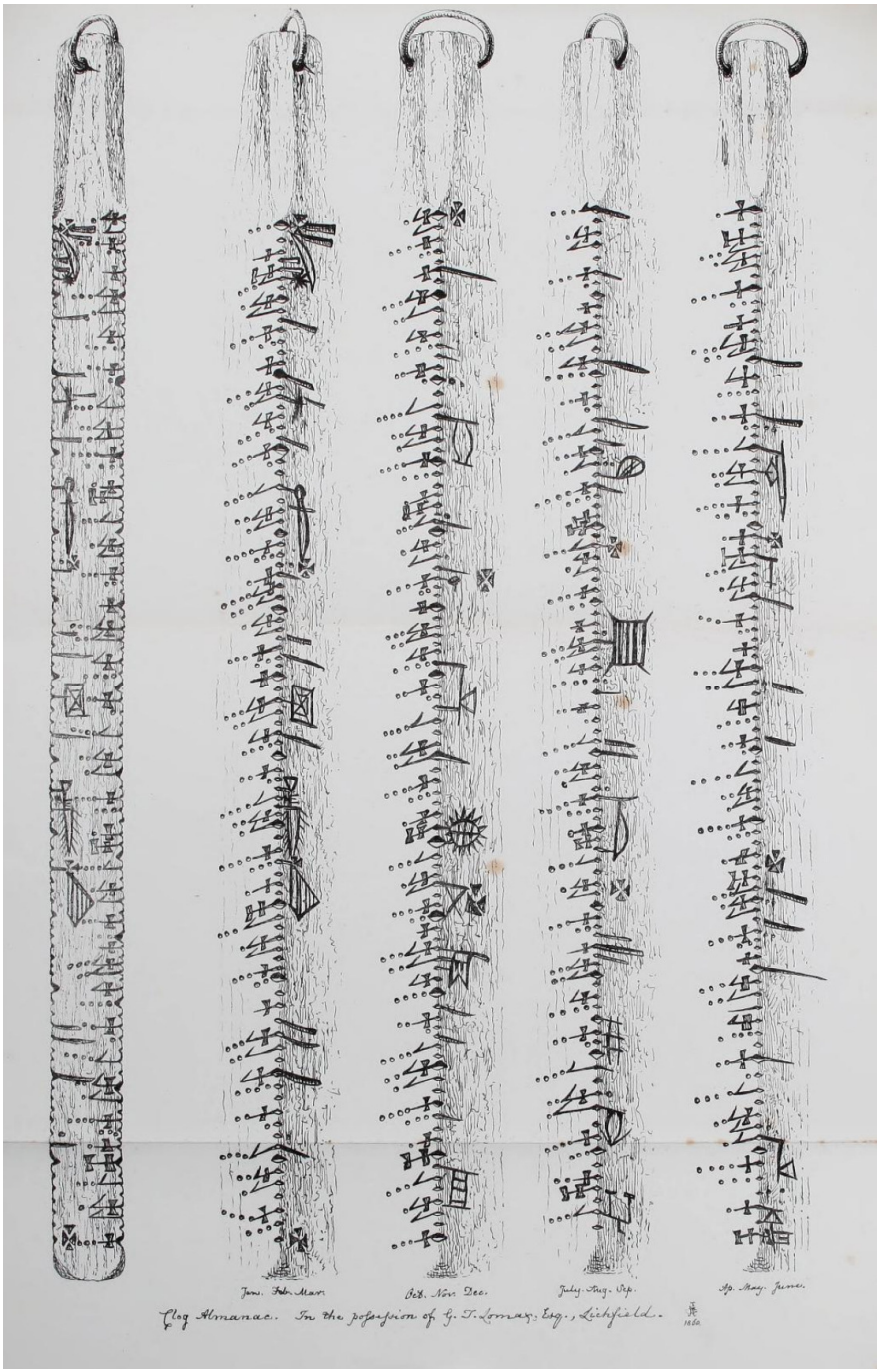
> [Details of the once nationally-popular "BINGO" song, given as the North Staffordshire version collected by Miss Keary with details of the play-singing. Has nothing to do with the modern gambling game of 'Bingo'. In Derbyshire it was a pairing-off game for young adults. Also noted are: i) the game of 'Bob-Cherry' recorded on St. Clement's Day in Staffordshire, with picture; ii) an end-of-school group playground-game "called 'Wind up the Watch' in Wolstanton,

North Staffordshire Potteries"; iii) a children's circle-game dialogue from Houghton a few miles west from Stafford:

> Centre child: What colour's the sky ?
>
> Answer: Blue.
>
> Centre child: Look up again.
>
> Answer: Like a W!
>
> Centre child: Follow me through every little hole that I go through!
>
> An informant from Sharleston (Yorkshire) then adds the game's details: "the centre child ['touches to tag' another and] runs in and out between the circle of others until the one who was touched catches her, when they change places, the former center-child joining the others in the ring.

GRESLEY, Rev. J.M. "Staffordshire Clog Almanack", *Transactions of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archeological Society*, Vol. 1, pages 410-413. Undated in the copy I have, file-name gives "1855-60".

> [Detailed account of a Staffordshire Clog Almanac, a tool mentioned by Plot, which marked and tallied local church and festival dates. A very good engraving of a Staffordshire clogg almanac, formerly in the Lichfield Museum, is in the Anastatic Drawing Society's journal of 1860, and a precise deciphering of it can be found in *The Calendar of the Anglican Church Illustrated*, 1851. This appears to be the same example described by Gresley.
>
> Note that a later paper on the subject of Clogg Almanacs appeared in *Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club*, 1948-49 and appears to be the most recent research: a bundle of papers, cuttings, and letters relating to this lecture is listed as at the Salt Library in Stafford.]



A Staffordshire clogg almanac, formerly in the Lichfield Museum, as published in the Anastatic Drawing Society's volume of fine drawings for 1860.

GROOM, R. *The Phonology of the Dialect of Biddulph Moor, in the County of Staffordshire*, University of Leeds, 1950.

> [Results of a field study, part of a wider national post-war survey. Description of the village and Moor, local word-list, full dialect details, and "Three appendices present words that occur in the Biddulph Moor dialect and are not recorded in Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*, words that occur in the Biddulph Moor dialect and are not recorded for Staffordshire in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905)". 156 pages. Unseen, but there are copies at Leeds Special Collections. May have folk-names, and even some snippets relating to local folklore re: the 'Biddle Moor men'?]

HACKWOOD, F.W. *Staffordshire Curiosities & Antiquities*, 1905.

> [Articles reprinted from the *Staffordshire Chronicle*. "Twenty-one chapters including Staffordshire Clogs, Wild Cattle of Chartley Park, Death Tokens & Death Blight". Presumably superseded by the following item from the same author?]

HACKWOOD, F.W. *Staffordshire customs, superstitions & folklore*. Mercury Press, Lichfield, 1924. In an edition of 75 copies.

> [Reprinted 1974. Cannot be OCR'd. Extensive survey and compendium. The articles originally appeared in the *Lichfield Mercury* newspaper, and the author Hackwood was a Wednesbury man, which means the lore is mostly from South Staffordshire.
>
> He does however note that: i) of mine-knocking in coal mines, "The same ominous sound [in a coalmine] was known as the Seven Whisperers in the North Staffordshire coalfield"; ii) "In some parts of North Staffordshire it is customary for householders to open their doors wide just before midnight, as if to accord the coming year a hearty welcome"; iii) "in some of the villages of North Staffordshire solitary and stealthy visits to the woods were paid by the rustic beauties intent on gathering May dew with which to bathe their

faces" [the dew was believed to have beautifying properties]; iv) he notes a report of an 1880s well-dressing at Milton, in the north of Stoke-on-Trent and shading into the Moorlands…

"Mr. G. T. Lawley gives an account of two somewhat recent celebrations in North Staffordshire of what he terms "Well Wakes," which, however, were not kept according to ancient custom on Ascension Day. One, the date of which was 1884, was held at Milton, when the New Well was beautifully decorated with green boughs and bright flowers…" with a May Queen procession. 'Wakes' were the Potteries name for whole-town holiday days, often rumbustious in nature.]

He remarks that fairy lore of Staffordshire was dealt with… "in Chapter VI of the author's work entitled *Staffordshire Sketches"* (Wednesbury 1916). This earlier 184 page work was issued in a very limited edition (said to be 25 copies) which collected his various 1915-1916 articles in the *Staffordshire Chronicle* newspaper.

Also gives "All the Bells of Paradise", a Marian carol from North Staffordshire. It was taken from the singing of a young boy who had learned it from his father. It was sent to Hackwood by a friend who lived in North Staffordshire who said it was "sung to a wild and beautiful tune" used for dancing "by the North Staffordshire Morris men". On this see also Michael RAVEN, *Folklore and Songs of the Black Country* (1965) which later gave the same tune, as "collected by Vaughan Williams in Castleton, Derbyshire [the remote Derbyshire Peak] with a similar set of words".

HADEN, D. *Strange Country: Sir Gawain in the moorlands of North Staffordshire. An investigation*. Burslem Books, 2018.

[By summarising the dialect work and other scholarship, including very recent work on the Norse dialect problem, the book makes a clear case that *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* belongs to North Staffordshire and its landscape. Then brings in play a wealth of new and overlooked local information and lore and history, almost all of it

overlooked by previous scholars. Is the first to consider the medieval Alton Castle in the Staffordshire Moorlands as the model for the Green Knight's castle, and finds it and its owner a near-perfect fit with the internal evidence and likely dating of the poem.]

HARPER, W. J. *Mow Cop and its Slopes: A Short History*, The Local Herald, Tunstall, 1907.

[Booklet by a member of the Royal Archaeological Institute, which printed a good interview had with an old man of Mow Cop. On page 12 this man recalled that the top of Mow Cop used to be heavily wooded…

"I can remember well the top of the hill being completely covered with a wood, and you could have walked the whole day and not met a man".

At 2022 it has long been barren and sheep-scoured. More importantly for memory of local ceremonies, he recalled that there used to be an annual well-dressing ceremony that attracted crowds. The book shows a drawing of the frontage of one well, the Parson's Well with its framing stone wall-work done in 1857.]

HELM, A. *Staffordshire Folk Drama,* Guizer Press, 1984.

[15 texts folk drama printed, drawn from: Armitage; Biddulph Moor; Brereton; Cheadle; Dales Green; Great Wyrley; Meir; Norton Canes; Penkridge; Upper Tean; Uttoxeter; Walsall Wood.

The book was… "completed by Norman Peacock from Helm's work in hand and published posthumously in 1984."]

HEWITT, M. *Unrespectable Recreations*, Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 2001.

["[in Staffordshire] wakes holidays provided a particularly packed festive calendar. An elderly buckle-maker from Birmingham remembered that the various parish and neighbouring wakes, provided the opportunity for working men to enjoy a wake 'nearly every month'. Even in the more isolated industrial settlements in northern Staffordshire most communities

could expect to enjoy more than one wakes holiday. By contrast, there is rather little evidence of Guy Fawkes celebrations in the region outside the largest towns. It may be that street bonfires were neglected by commentators, attracting little comment because they were relatively inoffensive compared with bull-baiting. However the wakes season extended until November, so it may be that the Fifth of November was a less important occasion for celebration."]

HOLT, D.M. *Starting from Hartshill*, Webberley, Stoke-on-Trent, undated.

[Circa mid 1970s, a substantial booklet from Stoke and North Staffordshire. Collects articles from the local *Sentinel* newspaper, and B.B.C. broadcasts, mostly arising from walks and talks with a perceptive eye to history, old trades, nature and the landscape. Only has small gleanings of lore:

i) 'Doctor Margaret', an old North Staffordshire lady in her 80s and with some herb-lore passed down to her — to cure eczema… "make a brew of goosegrass, bottle it, and take a wineglassful every day";

ii) the Grotto at Keele Hall was made with stones brought from Hulton Abbey;

iii) near Bromley Pool, Standon, a lone local child tells the writer that "the shepherd says that black lambs are lucky";

iv) an old lady whose grandfather worked for Josiah Wedgwood at Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent — was told that old Josiah had a tradition that he always gave away part of the results of a successful first-firing of a new bottle-oven, to his workers, and that she still had these old gift-pots.]

HOROVITZ, D. *A Survey and Analysis of the Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Part One and Part Two), a two-part PhD thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham, October 2003.

[Available online at 2018. Part one, in pages 21-70, has a number of short sections discussing the passing of folk-names into local place names.]

HOWITT, M. *My own Story, or the Autobiography of a Child*, Thomas Tegg, 1845.

[The author Mary Howitt (1799-1888) was one of the top writers of the period, though is now forgotten. Mary grew up in Uttoxeter and the chapter on "Town Customs" briefly remembers three customs including the town's bull-baiting and a child's view of it. See also her multi-volume *Mary Howitt; an autobiography* (1889) in which Chapter II is titled "Early Days at Uttoxeter"; her breakthrough adult book *Wood Leighton: A Year in the Country* (1836) set in Needwood Forest; and her *Tales in Prose* which contains a section giving a number of more or less fantastical "Anecdotes" from her childhood. Two poems of folk-life and topography: the memorable "The Fairies of the Cauldon Low", found in the collection *Ballads and Other Poems*, 1847; an early poem "May Fair" which gives a vivid poetic account of the May Fair day at Uttoxeter ("And these will go to see the Dwarf, and those the Giant yonder"). Howitt also wrote the classic macabre poem "The Spider and the Fly" (1828) although the latter appears unrelated to any local lore so far as I can see. See also her important item listed and linked below, "Sun Pictures".]

HOWITT, M. "Sun Pictures", *Eclectic Review*, 1859. Dispersed series of articles throughout the volume.

[Vivid true-life account of a journey of three nights, on foot by two ladies, through the paths and lanes of the Moorlands, with much perceptive first-hand observation of folk-life and some lore. The dispersed articles have been extracted and are available collected: https://potbanks.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/sun-pictures-1859-howitt.pdf

Most of the real place names in "Sun Pictures" are omitted or obfuscated under fictional names, which may have led to its neglect over the years.

Mary and her daughter appear to have first taken the train from Alton to Biddulph. The ornamental gardens and organ player are obviously at Biddulph Grange, though the place is not named. Then they took the train from Biddulph to Cheddleton or perhaps Leek; then walked up into the hills. After that presumably Waystones = Ipstones, Rams = Foxt; Foxholes = Swineholes; High Stone Edge = the Ipstone Edge; Wyver = Cauldon; then a walk across Wyver Lowe = Cauldon Lowe; across the unnamed Weaver Hills ("to the west … lie the great quarries"); Welstone = Ellastone; Sturton = Alton; they end the journey by entering The Dale = Rakes Dale adjacent to Alton Castle, and they arrive at their summer home base at what may have been the small village of Hansley Cross which is adjacent to Alton. Thornborough Hall may = Alton Towers or Alton Castle.]

HOWITT, W. *The Rural Life of England*, Vol.II, 1838, pages 216-217.

[Brief but first-hand details of the Guisers' play at Cauldon Low, though mentioned in passing.]

HURT, G.E. "Letters to the Editor: Staffordshire Folklore", *The Tablet*, 4th December 1897, page 21.

[Catholic newspaper. Mr. Hurt's brother, who resided at Rocester near the Staffordshire/Derbyshire border, had sent him a written version of the local 'souling song'. The song is reprinted in full.]

HUTTON, R. *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996.

[Soul-caking traditions] "proved to be remarkably resilient in rural Cheshire, southern Shropshire, and the adjoining part of Staffordshire, where youngsters still carried it on in the 1950s; although they were given fruit, biscuits, or coins, they continued faithfully to refer to these as 'soul-cakes'."]

INGRAM, J.H. *The Haunted Homes and Family Traditions of Great Britain*, 1897, Gibbings & Co.

[Expanded edition. Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent: ghostly apparition of dead mother appeared to noted pottery owner William Ridgway, and

he later talked of it. Chartley Park has the 'black calf of Chartley Park', the birth of such being a sure omen of death in the family.]

KASKE, R.E. "Gawain's Green Chapel and the Cave at Wetton Mill", *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies: Essays in Honor of Francis Lee Utley*, 1972.

[Develops and explores the broadly correct suggestion from Mabel DAY (1940) about the cave near Wetton Mill train station being the inspiration for the 'Green Chapel' of *Gawain*. Also considers an adjacent cave. Involves an early 1970s visit and some field-work, but is ultimately inconclusive.]

KEARY, A.A. 'Hark the robbers'. In GOMME, A.B. and G.L., *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 1894.

[Has one song from local collector Miss Alice Annie KEARY of Stoke-on-Trent. A children's game-song, collected in Wolstanton circa the early 1890s and obviously related to related to children's idea of pick-pockets coming through a crowd, then a common urban occurrence.]

KEARY, A.A. "Folk-lore: proposals for collecting and recording the folk-lore of Staffordshire". In McALDOWIE, A. M. (Ed.). *Staffordshire knots: the book of the bazaar,* Vyse & Hill, 1895, pages 79-81.

[Headed by a reprint of Keary and Burne's Midsummer 1892 call for local material. Miss Keary then mentions that her friend Miss BURNE has recently left the area to live in Cheltenham, and that their folk-lore project is in abeyance. Remarks on the luck of having something black approach your door (black kitten, a dark-haired man on New Year's Eve etc); gives a Penkhull children's rhyme for recitation on the child spotting a white horse; notes on blackthorn, elder, bird eggs and other hedge-lore; magical folk remedies, including passing a child 'nine times over a donkey' to cure whooping cough; and the 'souling' song at Trentham is written out.]

KEY, R. *From Adultery, Forgery and Murder to Gods, Ghosts and Pixies: A Collection of North Staffordshire Inn Signs and Tales of Folks,* Robert Key, 2015.

[Unseen by me. 258-page book by Robert Key, based on the work of Peter Key. Apparently proceeds outward from local inn signs to unearth surrounding local folklore and tales. Those interested in old inn signs and names might, at a guess, also find animal and horse sign iconography in S.G. Wildman's 1960s Arthurian investigation *The Black Horsemen: English Inns and King Arthur,* 1971.]

LEESE, P.R., *The Kidsgrove Boggart and the Black Dog: A Version of the Story and an Examination of the Written Source*, Staffordshire Libraries Arts & Archives Service, 1989.

[A 32 page booklet. Kidsgrove, north of Stoke-on-Trent. Unseen.]

LEWERY, T. "Rose, castle and canal: an introduction to the folk art of English narrow canal boats", *Folklore* journal, 106, 1995, pages 43-56.

[Painted folk-art was an integral part of the former folk-life of the Trent & Mersey and other local canals, and the craft is still extant on some boats and to be seen along the canal today.]

Painted narrowboats at work on the canal, Stoke-on-Trent.

LIVINGSTON, M. & BOLLARD, J.K. *Owain Glyndwr: A Casebook*, Liverpool University Press, 2013.

[The section titled "Chronicle of Dieulacres Abbey" observes that the abbey's chronicler noted King Henry IV's failed attempt to invade North Wales and take Owain, the attempt being foiled by a very un-seasonal and continuous 'foul tempest and rain'.

The Dieulacres chronicler acknowledged the possibility that the foul weather had been influenced by magic — meaning 'Welsh sorcery' — but then added an oblique comment implying (to the educated reader) that Henry's forces were simply not a very good army. The comments thus indicate that a belief in 'weather sorcery' was something known to a North Staffordshire religious house in the early 1400s, but was not then something that might be credited by the educated.]

McALDOWIE, R. "Notes on a Staffordshire Witch Brooch", *North Staffordshire Field Club Transactions*, 1891, pages 53-56.

[A tradition that was then still within living memory in North Staffordshire, but no witch brooches then remained in the north of the county. The author's brother, Alexander Morison McAldowie, in "Personal Experiences in Witchcraft" (*Folk-lore* journal, 1896) noted Robert later acquired a second Staffordshire Witch Brooch.]

MACHIN, B. *The Folklore of the Staffordshire Moorlands*, Seven Stones Publishing, 2018.

[The first book on the topic for many decades, the product in part of two decades of rural fieldwork and research by a local film-maker and guide. Simply told and addressed to a general audience, but informed by extensive field-work. Seen by me, but now unavailable for purchase at December 2021.]

The Mock Mayor of Newcastle-under-Lyme, from MAYER, 1851.

MAYER, J. "Account of the Ancient Custom of Electing a Mock-Mayor in Newcastle-under-Lyne", *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire*, 1st May 1851.

> [A lengthy account of the origins and enactment of the annual election of a "Mock Mayor" in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Said to have been enacted in the town for perhaps 300 years. Has good details of the characters, costumes, and the nature of the horn and horn-calls

made by the Mock Mayor. Also followed by several good drawings of distinctive local 'market hats'.]

MOORE, R. *Childhood's Domain: Play and Place*, Croom Helm, 1986.
[Major ethnographic study of middle-childhood territories, place-related beliefs and related traditions in children's own 'free range' play-culture of the 1970s and early 80s. Field researched in three places, with use of dedicated local child informants, one place extensively studied being Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent. Has many photographs, maps. Should be read in conjunction with the Opie's first-hand book *People in the Playground,* from the same period and culture-of-play.]

MOSS, F. *Folk-lore, old customs and tales of my neighbours*, self-published, 1898.

[A substantial book of 400 pages, previously overlooked in terms of its North Staffordshire lore. The author was raised at Standon Hall, some miles west of Newcastle-under-Lyme, to a long-standing local family long at… "Mees Hall, which is in Eccleshall parish, on the Staffordshire border, near to Standon church and parish." Has a wealth of carefully presented folk-lore from Didsbury (now south Manchester), where Fletcher Moss lived, but also from North Staffordshire where he 'lived the lore' when he grew up there. He writes he often returned to visit Standon Hall to visit his relations there. North Staffordshire lore includes: Souling and Mumming (with songs and play details); belief in 'breedings stones'; fox's pads hung on stables at Standon; skulls of ancestors kept in old halls and also some farms; dialect words such as *swot*; a long and vivid account of the celebration of Harvest Home at Standon, with songs; 'Blaze Night' at Standon on January the sixth…

"as soon as it was dark, all the household, servants, and visitors, took bundles of straw, tied tight like torches, lighted them in the wheat fields,

and ran shouting over every bit of ground that had been sown with wheat. This was one to scare the witches from the corn…".

"In my boyhood's days [at Standon] it was considered wicked not to have a bit of oak in one's cap on Royal Oak Day, and the neglect of it rendered one liable to be pinched, or nettled, or sodded. The horses were decorated with it, and even the church towers all sported their big bough of oak. Every child knew that it was worn to show that the oak was in full leaf on that day, so as to hide the king from the wicked men who wished to kill him."

Author Alan Garner's recent memoir *Where Shall We Run To?* confirms this Oak tradition was still alive during his childhood days in nearby Cheshire. See also: SMITH.

Moss also notes many minor superstitions, customs and sayings, of which there are far too many to mention here. The book also has a chapter on the history and folk-lore of Cheshire cheese, which might usefully be made into a new illustrated and expanded edition.]

MURRAY, P. "Oatbread in North Staffordshire", *Folk Life*, Volume 10, Issue 1, 1972, pages 134-135.

[A staple food of North Staffordshire. Interviews with 35 people on the subject of oatcakes and oatbread, with an eye to lore, the people selected being both rural and urban.]

MURRAY, P. "Oatbread in North Staffordshire", *Folk Life*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 1974, pages 48-54.

[Scholarly article on the history and tradition of oatcakes in North Staffordshire. Oatcakes being the traditional local food and (depending on preparation) delicacy, but most often fried in butter after being filled with cheese and folded in half.

See also: the early-2010s feature-length film documentary directed by Robert Burns and produced by Toby DeCann, *Oatcakes!*

See also: UNKNOWN (ii).]

NETTEL, R. "Folk Elements in Nineteenth-Century Puritanism", *Folklore* journal, Volume 80, Issue 4, 1969, pages 272-285.

> [One early example of the scholarship on the curiously entangled transition of traditional 'magic' folk beliefs into what became primitive Methodism on Mow Cop in North Staffordshire.
>
> Other later scholarship on the same topic includes titles such as: "Hugh Bourne and the Magic Methodists", "Methodism, the Clergy, and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic", and "The Magic Methodists and Their Influence on the Early Primitive Methodist Movement". The latter remarks of North Staffordshire… "The Methodist authorities were obviously well aware of the supernatural beliefs held by many of their members" and points to WEDGWOOD (*Up and Down the County*, Hanley, 1880) observing that the local inhabitants at the time were terrified of the magical activities of a Mow Cop innkeeper named Zacchariah Baddeley, and further notes that *Folk-lore* journal 1968 had later added… "It is a pity that Wedgwood is not more explicit about the sort of magic that Baddeley professed to work". See also the chapter "Bemersley" in WEDGWOOD, *People of the Potteries*.]

PAPE, T. "The Ancient Corporation of Cheadle", *North Staffordshire Field Club Transations*, 1920.

> [Much interested in the relevance of the Cheadle 'mock corporations' arrangements to the nearby 'Mock Mayor' tradition of Newcastle-under-Lyme (see also MAYER), and with an appendix which usefully gives order of appearance and proclamations at the Newcastle-under-Lyme event. Author Thomas Pape (1872-1970) was the key modern historian of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and his various works deserve to be made available again.
>
> The author also notes of Stoke-on-Trent an annual Hanley Venison Feast circa the 1780s, and that circa … "the Hanley Venison Feast is

still an interesting annual function in North Staffordshire." If this had deeper historical roots than the 1780s cannot now be known, though we do know that Norman deer-hunting park was present by 1204 (at Cliffe Vale — then the lush water-meadows of the Fowlea at the foot of Hanley's hill — and up along the other side of the valley and corresponding to what is now Hartshill Park. It remained a deer-hunting park late, well into the 15th century. A nearby hilltop site in Hanley, overlooking the valley, for a venison feast is therefore not an impossibility.]

PENMAN, L. "'Singular Adventure in Staffordshire', or, The Tomb of Rosicrucius. Fact, Fancy and Folklore in the Curious History of a Non-Existent Wonder", *Staffordshire Studies*, Volume 20.

[The journal article surveys the curious and spurious notion that the 'Tomb of Rosicrucius' was once found somewhere underneath the green turf of Staffordshire. The context is that the book *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* had once given an elaborate and folkloric account of a discovery made by an adventurous Staffordshire labourer, of a hidden underground place of the Rosicrucians. The author of that book apparently cited the Staffordshire authority Dr. PLOT as the source, and noted…

"The place in Staffordshire became afterwards famed as the sepulchre of one of the brotherhood, whom, for want of a more distinct recognition or name, the people chose to call 'Rosicrucius'".

Yet others have since looked through PLOT with a keen eye, but failed to find this supposed reference.

The original tale of the labourer's discovery is however to be found, stated in a less embellished form, in the *Spectator* for 15th May 1712. This is given in Chapter XVI of Waite's *Real History of the Rosicrucians*, and is perhaps a reasonable reflection of the original ale-washed local tale.]

PLOT, R. *The Natural History of Stafford-Shire,* Oxford printed at the Theatre, 1686.

[Dr. Plot's famous early book is a key early source on the history of the county. Among his various folkloric items one can find mentions of: death omens; fairy rings; thunderstones and star stones; the Black Mere of Morridge; Staffordshire clog almanacs; the Abbots Bromley horn dance and hobby-horse. This early source has been much mined and repeated in later works.]

POOLE, C.H. *The customs, superstitions and legends of the county of Stafford*, Rowney & Co., 1875. (Possibly also had an 1883 edition).

[Description from a book-dealer's catalogue: "sections on festivals, divination, omens, fairy lore, and a variety of other customs and superstitions". Originally published in the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* newspaper. The venerable *Folk-lore* journal later called it "a poor performance" of a book, but there may have been a later revised edition since *The Antiquarian Magazine & Bibliographer* positively reviewed a copy dated 1883 in the same year, and noted the chapter on "Omens". Of unknown applicability to North Staffordshire.]

RAVEN, J. *The folklore of Staffordshire*, The Folklore of the British Isles series. Rowman and Littlefield, 1978.

[A substantial book though much material is from the south of the county, and far less from the north. In the north of the county, notable items are: "pottery bird-shaped whistles, built into old chimneys as a guards against evil spirits"; and a mention of the White Rabbit of Kidsgrove.

Lacks any Staffordshire examples of the 'Jenny Green Teeth' belief that was found in Cheshire and across into Buxton — Jenny being reputed to lurk below the surface of Cheshire meres, still Moorlands pools and old marl pits, and to drag children under the water if they ventured close to the edge.]

RAVEN, M. *Folklore and Songs of the Black Country*, Volume 1, Wolverhampton Folk Song Club, 1965.

> ["'All the bells of paradise'. This version of the Marian carol comes from North Staffordshire. It was taken from the singing of a young boy who had learned it from his father. It was sent to Hackwood by a friend who lived in North Staffordshire who said it was "sung to a wild and beautiful tune". The composition shows it to be a specimen of pure folk-song, which was used for dancing by the North Staffordshire Morris men. The tune we have printed was collected by Vaughan Williams in Castleton, Derbyshire [the Derbyshire Peak] with a similar set of words".
>
> Also found in Frederick William HACKWOOD, *Staffordshire Customs, Superstitions & Folklore*, page 51.]

RHEAD, G.W. and RHEAD, F.A. *Staffordshire Pots and Potters*, Hutchinson, 1906.

> [Gives several instances of local lore, of which two notable items:
>
> 1. A short account of the discovery of the earthenware 'speaking tubes' laid by the Elers c.1690 between Dimsdale Hall and their secretive redware pottery at Bradwell Wood. The discovery confirmed local folk-memory… "The story was for many years received with amused tolerance as an old wife's tale, more or less mythical, until accident revealed the actual existence of the pipes."
> 2. Rushton Grange sheep farm was farmed for sheep by the medieval monks at Hulton Abbey. Part of the Grange (now Grange Park, north of Festival Park) was used to bury large numbers of people, presumably during an epidemic when the Burslem churchyard could not accommodate them. "In Burslem the dead were buried in trenches in the Grange field, and for many years (the tradition still lingers) the voice of 'Singing Kate' was said to be heard at nightfall by the 'Grange.' It is not known who 'Singing Kate' was, but the story tells that she was buried

before the breath had left her body, among a heap of nameless dead." The latter point may be a later gory embellishment, but the tradition of spirits lingering around their 'home places' in the form of birds is well-known from elsewhere and there is one instance locally — on that see WHITCUTT (1944).]

RHODES, E. *Peak Scenery, or the Derbyshire Tourist*, 1818, reprint of 1824.

[Records a local saying… "still the summit of Thorpe Cloud was sometimes obscured with vapour, or, in the phraseology of the place, the "mountain had its cap on."" (page 321). Note the landscape description in *Sir Gawain*, "Each hill had a hat", describing hills of large size in a misty mid-winter morning near Wetton Mill. The recording of the phrase by Rhodes, speaking of a hill at southern end of Dovedale on the Derbyshire/Staffordshire border, is prior to the scholarly re-discovery of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* — and thus further clear proof of the poem's landscape and dialect setting.]

RICKMAN, P. *Mysterious Cheshire*, Dalesman Books, 1980.

[A 72 page book, representative of the post-war surge of interest in 'earth mysteries' and 'ley-lines'. Such matters are now largely debunked, but the text also has some serious points. For instance it notes the use of wired-jaw horse-skulls as hobby-horses in souling at Northwich, and that 1st November was still kept as the hilltop bonfire day on Toot Hill, Macclesfield (in preference to the 5th). Has a lot to say about Alderley Edge and The Bridestones, both near the northern border of Staffordshire. Offers details of a letter to the *Staffordshire Advertiser* about a farmer who tried to dig for treasure at the Bridestones (page 42) and then briefly tells the story. Notes an 1880s paper for the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, discussing the origins of the then-distinctive 'Biddulph Moor men' in Staffordshire. But the *Transactions* for the 1880s are missing from the ADS contents-listings at 2022, and no such dedicated paper can be found by examining each of the Archive.org copies for the 1880s.]

From an "Ancient Window in the House of George Tollet Esqr. at Betley in Staffordshire", about five miles west of Stoke-on-Trent. Engraving possibly made in the 1770s, for use in an edition of Shakespeare. "Eleven morris dancers and a may-pole, in hexagonal diamonds arranged in four rows of three; including a jester in top left holding a mask, a friar holding a wreath in bottom right."

SAWYER, F. E. "St. Swithin and Rainmakers", *Folk-Lore Journal*, 1883.

[Notes a royal letter of 1636, sent from the Lord Chamberlain to the worthies of Staffordshire on behalf of King Charles the First...

"His Majesty taking notice of an opinion entertained in Staffordshire that the burning of Ferne [ferns and bracken] doth draw downe rain, and being desirous that the country and himself may enjoy fair weather as long as he remains in those parts, his Majesty hath commanded me to write to you, to cause all burning of Ferne to bee forborne until his Majesty be passed this country."]

SCHOFIELD, D. "Christmas at Uttoxeter: The Guisers Made their Usual Tour", *Folk Drama Studies Today*: International Traditional Drama Conference 2002.

SHIRLEY, R. "Festive landscapes: the contemporary practice of well-dressing in Tissington". *Landscape Research*, Volume 42, May 2017, pages 650-662.

[In 2016 the annual flower well-dressings were found to be mainly a Derbyshire Peak tradition, but the author also notes… "A small number of villages that border the county in Staffordshire, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire also practice the tradition."]

Well dressings at Endon (1916), Tissington (1970s) and Tissington (possibly 1890s).

SLEIGH, J. *A History of the Ancient Parish of Leek: Including Horton, Cheddleton, and Ipstones*, Leek, 1862.

[A comprehensive survey and history book by John Sleigh (b. 1826). Overly concerned with title deeds and local worthy families, but also has a many insights on local lore. Reprinted 1883, with a then-new paper on the book by William Challinor. The book opens with a poetic observation on the large and strange rocks found in the district and — in this as in many other observations — we can now perceive the eerie winter landscapes of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

"By Alton-abbey's castle den

The Churnet hither trails her willow-locks:

It would seem those iron times had reached this glen,

When giants played at hewing mountain blocks:

So bold and strange the profile of the rocks

Whose huge fantastic figures frown above."

Further lines of poetry are later quoted re: the startling and lore-inspiring noises of the Manifold Valley, caused by action in limestone (see: WARDLE):

"Gigantic Grindon's bleak domain, —

Where yawning Thor the vale alarms,

And Beauty sleeps in Horror's arms."

(*John Gisborne's 'Vales of Wever'* [1797])

Sliegh notes later in the book that many of the most formidable of the local high stones had recently been destroyed, these being the…

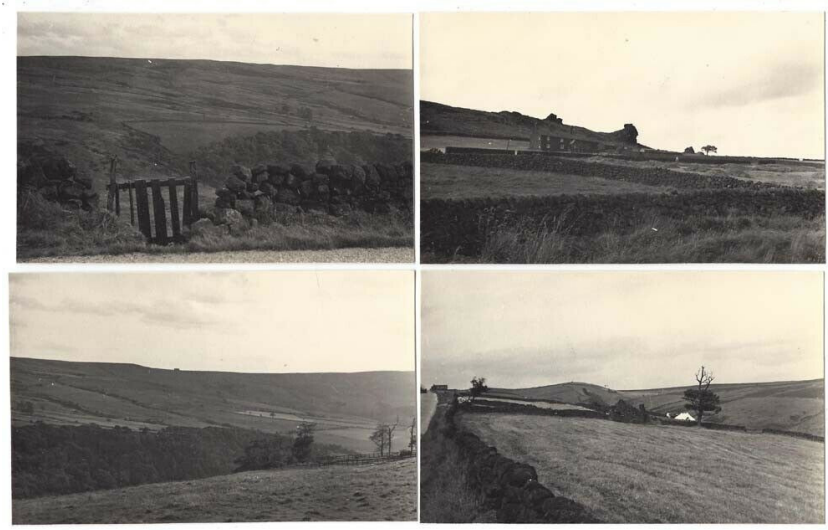
"*Cheese-press* or *Loaf-and-Cheese,* on the Hen-cloud; the *Rocking-stone,* or *Loggan-rock*, the *Sundial,* and the *Tip-cat,* four of their more fantastic and remarkable features [of the district, that], were a few years ago wantonly destroyed." Later in the book he remarks that, before stone-taking for the building of the canals… "there were four curious points jutting out of that

portion of the Cloud standing in Rushton Spencer, viz., the *Sugar* rock, the *Raven* rock, the *Mareback,* and the *Bully Thrumble,* which last-mentioned point was most remarkable, resembling a gigantic cork-screw, and rising sixty or seventy feet above its parent rock."

"An absurd tradition is still afloat that the shaft of [Leek town's ancient Saxon stone] cross sinks, though almost imperceptibly, every year; and that when it finally disappears, Leek will vanish with it."

"... my worthy friend Mr. Thomas Gent [an antiquarian interested in the old flints and arrowheads] speaks too of an axe found on Morridge [Edge], made of stone, which must have been [ancient]. [In the 1850s and 60s Morridge was locally said to have once been the edge of] a vast primeval forest ... extending to the borders of Cheshire and Derbyshire. Robert Nixon, the Cheshire prophet, who flourished in the fifteenth century, used to offer that when certain dire events came to pass in this kingdom, safety would only lie between Morridge and Mow [Cop]."

The latter belief proved vital to the whole town of Leek, during the Second World War. On this see WITCUTT (1955).



Morridge Edge in summer, possibly early 1950s.

"It is always winter on Morridge" — local saying, of the cold climate.

"Traditions of concealed wealth — as, for instance, of a golden chair — linger about these crumbling ruins [of Dieulacres Abbey, near Leek] and popular belief still exists that there is a subterranean passage running hence, and crossing under the bed of the river, to the old church at Leek, about half a mile distant. Robert Garner, P.S.A. [the leading naturalist and geologist of the district] discovered a rare and beautiful phosphorescent moss — the *Schiftoftega pennata* — growing in an excavation near the abbey. "In obscure situations it reflects a golden green light, of the same tint as that of the glow worm." (*Natural History of Staffordshire*, page 422)."

This point on the local botany may have relevance to the visual trickery used in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Later in the book Plot is quoted, as to the similar nocturnal luminescence found of nearby Gun Moor…

"If one ride on Gun in a dark night, in so wet a season that a horse breaks thro' the turf and throws up this black, moist, spongy sort of earth, he seems to throw up so much fire, which lies shining upon the ground like so many embers; by the light whereof one horse may trace another, tho' at some distance, and it be never so dark; it continuing light upon the ground, and gradually dying away, for near a quarter of an hour." (Plot).

He notes the common tradition of singing for Soul Cakes on 1st November, giving the local variant of the Souling song. Guising and "dancing with swords" used to occur on Plough Monday, but was by then observed only at Leek and a few other places, reduced to men "dragging the plough" without "the sword dance or any mumming".

Sleigh also notes the local Easter custom of *lifting* or *heaving,* and importantly he finds it recorded as an annual custom of the servants of the royal wardrobe in the time of Edward 1st, circa 1290. William Hone's popular *Every-Day Book; or Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements* (1826) states that the Easter 'lifting' or 'heaving' practice was common from Lancashire, down through Staffordshire, and into Warwickshire. It is attested in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1783, in

a detailed account from Shrewsbury (Shropshire) in 1813, and was also later found in Derbyshire at nearby Bakewell...

"at Bakewell in Derbyshire where young men lifted and kissed the girls on Easter Monday as late as the 1890s" and in neighboring Buxton... "On Easter Monday and Tuesday an ancient custom prevails at Buxton consisting in lifting a person, in a chair, three times from the ground. ... Until about the middle of the nineteenth century the heaving custom at Easter was regularly observed in South Staffordshire." (*British calendar customs*, 1936).

Possibly this was somewhat related to the way in which the May Queen was locally lifted on a chair for the May Day procession?

The May Queen, lifted aloft in her decorated chair, Ruston Spencer near Leek, 1910.

SMITH, J.B. "Bracken Lore", *Tradition Today: e-journal of the Centre for English Traditional Heritage*, No. 2, September 2012.

[A wider British history of a divination method, involving cutting through the stem of a large fern. Brief mention of North Staffordshire…

"My own variant of this practice, learnt in the early 1940s in North Staffordshire, involved rather cutting across the stem to reveal an image of the oak in which Charles II hid."

Presumably this was a Royal Oak Day tradition, and may have involved using the stem as a 'telescope' to find an oak tree that 'fitted' the oak shape in the cut stem? See also: MOSS and SAWYER (ii).]

STONE, E. *God's Acre, or Historical Notices Relating to Churchyards*, John W. Parker and Son, 1858.

[States that in the 1840s-50s the herb Rosemary was commonly used nationwide in weddings, being worn rather than strewn. But curiously, according to Stone, the plant was in… "greater request at funerals in Staffordshire" than elsewhere. The *British Flora Medica* (1838) usefully elaborates that… "It is not uncommon in some parts of England to put rosemary in the coffin, and to distribute sprigs of it among the mourners , who throw it into the grave". Presumably the "some parts" included Staffordshire then, if Stone is to be credited.

STONE, Rev. J.S., *Woods and dales of Derbyshire*, George W. Jacobs, 1895.

[Long description of a railway and horse-coach journey to the Peak from Derby, going first through Staffordshire, in the early 1890s. Notes a country-folk saying at Uttoxeter… "smiling like a basket of chips", presumably referring to long thin chips curling into a 'broad smile' when fried. Refers to a long 1723 poem "attributed to Ambrose Phillips" which vividly described the bull-running and festivities at Uttoxeter, titled "The Pedigree, Education and Marriage of Robin Hood with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast". Further notes the local folk belief that woodpeckers would only drink from rain-drops caught on branches.]

THOMAS, D. & THOMAS, M. "Leather shoes from a Staffordshire Roman well", Stoke-on-Trent Museum Archaeological Society report, 2010.

[Ritual deposits of shoes found at a Romano-British rural site near Uttoxeter, Staffordshire. For details of the folk and religious-astronomical significance of this practice, and the relation to wells / water / the underworld, see several papers by Ceri Houlbrook on the topic.]

TONGUE, R. *Forgotten Folk-tales of the English Counties*, Routledge 1970, reprinted 2020.

[Routledge has recently reprinted an important 1970 volume. Stories reconstructed from the author's surviving notes after a devastating house fire, which destroyed much of her collection of notes on unprinted post-war oral folk tales. Has just the one tale from Staffordshire, with more from neighbouring Shropshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire. The most interesting is "The Asrai" (Cheshire/Shropshire, large mere pools) with supporting evidence given from other sources.]

TOWNSHEND, D. "Correspondence: Version of the All-Souls' Day rhyme", *Folk-lore* journal, 1897, page 70.

[Gives the Souling song from Hilderstone.]

UNKNOWN. "A Collection of Cumberland", *Publications of the Folk-lore Society*, Volume 29, 1891.

Sayings and lore relating to the northern English county of Cumberland. Quotes the saying "He that fetcheth a wife from Shrewsbury must carry her into Staffordshire, or else he will be driven to Cumberland." Suggested as probably a play on words. *Shrew*.. (a peevish, unsatisfied and petulant woman) | *Staff*.. (a stiff rod, either meaning a cane or the sexual meaning of 'a man's manhood' | *Cumber*.. = old word for 'trouble' . Meaning thus in modern parlance, 'if you take a shrew as a wife, then take a stiff staff to her (one way or the other), or she'll drive you to despair.'

A related item of marriage lore is from Cheshire, "Better wed over the mixen [i.e. from across the other side of the village dung-pile] than over the moor", given by T.F. Thiselton-Dyer in his *English Folklore*. Meaning, 'marry locally and have no illusions about what you're getting, rather than take a fancy to wed an unknown girl from the neighbouring Staffordshire moorlands'.

UNKNOWN. Review of *The Reliquary in The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, Volume 2, 1866.

On the origin of the slang term 'Flash Harry', the reviewer remarks…

> "the village called Flash [highest village in England, in the Staffordshire Peak District] — named, it is said, from the flashing out of its whitewashed cottages to all the country round. In this place, strange to say, a thriving manufacture of button grew up about two centuries ago, which flourished till [nearby] Birmingham, with its machinery, undersold the poor mountaineers. The buttons were made of wood, dyed [dark] in the mineral springs of the neighbourhood, and covered with cloth by the women. They were hawked over the country by the men of the place, who, by their wild ways and roving habits, became known everywhere as 'Flashmen', and thus introduced the word 'Flash' into the slang vocabulary.

The review also notes that: i) oatcakes were marked with a cross when "laid out for leavening", to ward off evil influences; ii) he notes the absence from a list of the "north-Midland" word "nook-shooting", known personally to the reviewer and meaning "to cross a field diagonally, from corner to corner"; and iii) that the girl's name *Annice* still survives in the more remote parts of the Derbyshire / Staffordshire region.

WARDLE, Sir T., "Notes on the Explosions and Reports in Redhurst Gorge, and the Recent Exploration of Redhurst Cave", *North Staffordshire Field Club, Annual Report and Transactions,* 1898-99, pages 96-116.

> [Long excavation report on Old Hannah's Cave near Wetton Mill. Notes local folklore relating to the noises of the small valley and the Cave, caused by geology relating to the underground river.

These flashes and startling "explosions which take place in the limestone" are documented, with eyewitness accounts from locals and geologists. Unusual remains are found during excavation:

"All the adult bones [in Old Hannah's Cave] are large, and some especially so, considerably larger than those of an average man of the present day, the vertebrae and hip-bones being those of an individual above the average height." with these finds validated by "Mr. Newton, of the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street, London, the best authority on recent and extinct bones".

Also gives a local story he collected about the old firewood collectors who knew the inhabitant of the cave by the name of "Hob! Hob! King of the Woods".

Sir Wardle appears to have been utterly unaware of the relevance, of factors such as the noises and the bones of a giant man, to the ending of the tale of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The famous poem was then little known or regarded, and was tentatively assumed to have been from Lancashire.]

WEDGWOOD, H.A., *People of the Potteries*, A. M. Kelley, 1970.

[American modern reprint of a classic mix of genuine reminiscence and obvious 'tavern tales' about the early Potteries circa 1760s-1820s, presented in a journalistic manner in the 1870s by a local lawyer. Useful and indeed unique and vivid, but the core 'tales' are perhaps not to be taken at face value. Two sections are of interest:

i) "A Etruria Ghost". The narrator talks of the old Etruria Grove, a lonely wooded section that ran down toward the often-flooded Fowlea Brook and canal and became water-meadow. (To be distinguished from the modern-era 'Etruria Woods' identified by Warrillow, on the other side of the Fowlea Brook). On the tracks through the Grove, "The voice of a boy was sometimes heard piercing the stillness with piteous cries for help, that made the lonely pedestrian shiver with horror, for no sooner was the cry heard than a

beautiful milk-white rabbit was seen to cross the pathway. It seemed to be in no hurry, but went quietly along: sometimes the horrid cry for help breaking out before it appeared, and at others after it had escaped from sight." Said by the author to be the ghost of a young boy, John Holdcroft, who had been murdered over a coin while involved in gambling with another older stronger boy on the nearby lovely Crabtree Field or 'Meadow' alongside the canal. Crabtree Field later the site of the Ironworks' Blast Furnace at Etruria. The 'White Rabbit' was also known to local folklore in Kidsgrove, some miles north of Etruria, and appears to pre-date the famous white rabbit of the 1865 *Alice* book. Wedgewood's Etruria murder tale is rather similar to Tolkien's origin-tale of the ring, re: the fatal fight between Smeagol and Deagol over the ring, beside an idyllic river.

ii) The chapter "Bemersley" has many details of a one-time Mow Cop innkeeper named Zacchariah Baddeley, who professed to work magic. He was one of the so-called 'magic methodists' of the Staffordshire Moorlands.]

WELLS, H.G. *Certain Personal Matters*, Lawrence & Bullen, Ltd, 1898.

[First publication of his short memoir "How I Died", recalling his long convalescent stay in a schoolfriend's home at Basford, Stoke-on-Trent, at a time when the young Wells he believed he was dying...

"Quite casually I happened upon a girl clambering over a hedge [at Etruria Woods], and her dress had caught in a bramble, and the chat was quite impromptu and most idyllic. I remember she had three or four wood anemones in her hand — "wind stars" she called them, and I thought it a pretty name."

A chat with the charming innocent revived in him the will to live, and he later passed on her local flower-name for posterity. The plant name is somewhat different from other such recorded names nearby.

This incident I have elsewhere suggested as an inspiration for Weena and her far-future flowers, as famously depicted in Wells's famous romance *The Time Machine* — for a detailed investigation of this point see my book *H. G. Wells in the Potteries: North Staffordshire and the genesis of The Time Machine* (2017). This also finds in passing that Wells transferred the 'Buxton Mermaid' folk-taxidermy to the Burslem Wakes for fictional purposes, in his story of the same period titled "The Triumphs of a Taxidermist" (1894).]

WHITE, W. *All Around the Wrekin*, Chapman and Hall, 1860.

[The book's title uses the popular saying, well-known in and around Birmingham and into Shropshire. The first half of Chapter XXXI is a sympathetic account of a relatively sustained and open-minded visit to the Potteries. Recounts the usual local tradition of the supposed Saracen origins of the 'Biddlemoor men'. Notes that cockfighting is still quietly practiced "on the Cheshire border" with Staffordshire. In the Potteries at the end of the 1850s one... "may often see the tobacco-pipe between the lips of the gentle sex". The author is spurred to tell an amusing tale he personally knew of Barthomley, a village located some 4 miles NW of Newcastle-under-Lyme and toward the border...

"An unworthy clerk of the church was once conveying to the local colliery the vicar's annual gift of a cask of ale, and made such loving acquaintance therewith on the way, that he was found fast asleep in the cart on arrival at the pit's mouth. The miners seeing his condition and the depletion of the cask, took him down into the pit and there left him to snore away his 'bezzlin' fit. After some hours the thirsty soul began to hear strange and fearful noises, and opening his eyes was amazed and horror stricken to find himself lying in a dismal place, black as night, lit only by a few wandering lights, tenanted by uncouth beings, who on seeing him move, gathered round with terrific demonstrations. What did it all mean? Had he then died unawares, and was this the result? Suddenly, one of the tormentors cried, "Who be ye? whats yer neam?" To which followed the answer in a

trembling and submissive voice: "When I was alive, I was clerk of Barthomley; but any name you like to call me now, good master devil.""

WIGFULL, Chas. S. 'Alton Addenda', *Derbyshire Advertiser*, 6th May 1927, page 31.

[Referenced by the reliable *Boggart Sourcebook* (2022) as citing a "Barberry Gutter Boggart" living in the Barberry Gutter, aka Barbary Gutter, a very lore-haunted location adjacent to Alton Castle. The Gutter also has the locally well-known 'Chained Oak', and according to *Folk-lore* journal (1941) also a 'headless horseman' in armour on a white horse located "on the road from Alton to Farley". This would have the horseman being encountered at the eastern end of the Gutter, and some might then see a link with nearby Alton and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The home of this 1920s boggart was presumably deemed to be one of the bridges further back into the wooded Gutter. along a woodland ride.]

WITCUTT, W.P. "Notes on Staffordshire folklore", *Folk-lore* journal, 1941 page 236-237, & part two in 1942, pages 126-127.

[The 1941 item was on 'hopthrust' fairies of the Staffordshire Moorlands. In 1942 his part two had an item on the oft-told coach-road tales of spectral 'black dogs', headless horsemen, and phantom coaches of the Moorlands; he also notes that touching metal was thought to be a talisman against sorcerers.]

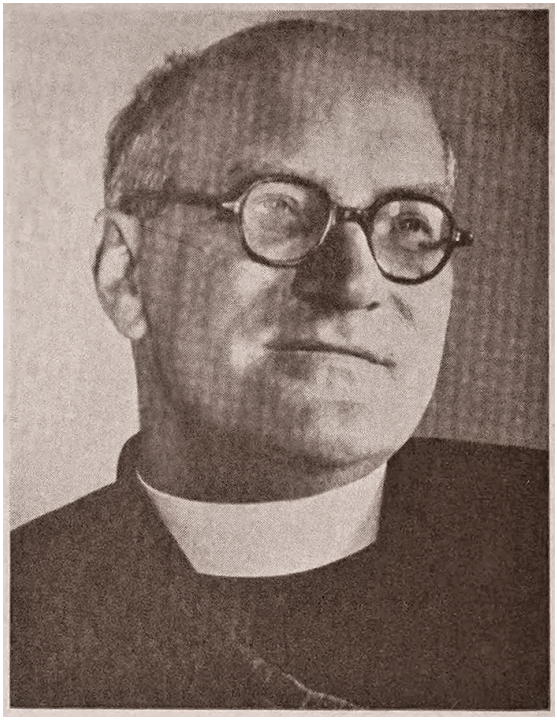
WITCUTT, W.P. "The Black Dog", *Folk-lore*, 1942, page 167.

[A very short note outlining the concept of the English 'Black Dog', with some local examples…

"He guards the graves of those who die by violence, or appears as a premonition of coming death. Hence the Black Dogs of the graves of the slain Jacobites in the Staffordshire Moorlands, or the 'greyhound' of Mucklow Hill near Stone who walks by the suicide's pool."]

WITCUTT, W.P. "The Horsley legend", *Folk-lore*, 1944, pages 73-75.

["The stretch of countryside between Morridge and Ipstones Edge in the North Staffordshire Moorlands is a place where the overpowering influence of tradition can positively be felt." Spirit of a dead man still believed to linger locally in the form of a bird. Legend of the Horsley stone, at Coombs Valley between Leek and the Peak town of Ashbourne. Both are expanded on in WITCUTT (1955).]



W. P. Witcutt (1908-1972)

WITCUTT, W.P. *Return to reality*, Macmillan, 1955.

[A late autobiographical book by the South Staffordshire / Birmingham man William Purcell Witcutt. One of his lectures in Birmingham had cast doubt on the worthiness of the church in the Reformation period, and he was thus 'exiled' by the church and

packed off to become the Vicar of Leek. He rather enjoyed this terrible punishment, and in the chapter "The Valley of Phantoms" he gives his vivid and thoughtful memories of living and working in Leek and its environs from 1938-1941. The chapter has a strong focus on the Moorlands folk beliefs which had survived into the late 1930s and 1940s. He notes the lilting local dialect… "They spoke with a curious kind of sing-song accent, the sentences rising to the last syllable but one, and then sinking again by a half-tone. (See also: BURNE, who also comments on the 'sing-song' local way of speaking); he was astounded to find a common belief in the supernatural, and that Leek… "swarmed with ghosts and bogies, and the people still believed in them"; and that this was not only rural, as in the case of… "Ball Haye Jack, who could be observed — an omen of bad luck — standing on the wall in front of one of the [textile] mills in the form of a little grey man. For this was Leek, where phantoms gibber in front of factories."; he found there was a practice of touching iron to belay the power of an approaching sorcerer (or vicar, as apparently the two were easily confused in Leek); and that paper 'bee' spells/charms were attached to textile machines in the Leek silk trade, these believed to make the machines work faster; he even found that near Leek witches of a sort still existed, though… "the witches of Leek have simply changed their methods. They deal now in crystal globes instead of incantations — I met one of them. ... in her stone cottage"; and when war broke out he found that the whole town believed that Leek was invisible from above, and with more perfect…

"assurance than ever the townsfolk quoted their [old] prophecy: "There will come a time when there will be no safety in the land save 'twixt Mow Cop and Morridge." Voices and laughter would fill the streets of Leek even when the enemy was directly overhead. These people had perfect confidence that no harm would come to them. … We have lost belief in the efficacy of

collective prayer, but the fact remains that the people of Leek believed that no bombs could explode in their town, and no bombs did."

Ghost of a murdered man in Coombs Valley, specifically Clough Meadows and 'Ghost Ridge', had directly from the farmer…

"Seven priests came to lay him, and all but one fled, who held up the [apparently ancient] Stone [which had been lain] in the brook. "Do not lay me in the Red Sea", the ghost implored, but the priest was inexorable and laid him under the Stone. But he was dissatisfied and (to use the farmer's words) "he walked again, so they laid him under a haethorn tree" at Spirit Hole, where the larches grow. Now he haunts the valley in bird form, and you can hear him singing as dusk falls. … I waded across and found the Stone beneath which the spirit was laid. It was once a Stone of sacrifice, the farmer had said."]

WRIGHT, L. "'What a troupe family does': Family as Transmission Narrative in the British Carnival Troupe Dancing", *Dance Research*, Volume 37, Issue 1, May 2019.

["Drawing on recent fieldwork with members of entertaining troupes in Staffordshire and Greater Manchester, this article outlines some of the ways in which the 'troupe family' is invoked at troupe dancing events". The author also notes their associated family traditions and rites-of-passage. Compare with George Moore's seminal novel *A Mummer's Wife* (1884, revised 1886). Philip Edwards, in *Threshold of a Nation* (1983) remarked of Moore that... "He had travelled for some weeks with a touring company [of actors] in the Potteries in order to give authenticity to *A Mummer's Wife*."]

WRIGHT, M.E. *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, Oxford University Press, 1913.

[Page 105-6 establishes the rare survival from the ancient Roman period of a Staffordshire and Cheshire word, *tallet*, meaning the hay-loft above a stable. The author was the wife of one of J.R.R. Tolkien's key tutors when he was an undergraduate at Exeter

College, Oxford, and the discovery later influenced Tolkien's Elvish word *talan*. *The Lord of the Rings* has *talan* as the name used by the elves of Lothlorien for an elevated wooden sleeping/watchout platform built high in a tree — not dissimilar to a hay-loft. Tolkien also slipped other local words into his great epic. In his detailed scholarly work on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* he rediscovered the local dialect words *wodwos* (philologically taken back by him to *wudu-wasa*, 'wood-trolls') and *etaynez* (taken back to *eten*, *ettin* , a sort of 'ogre-giant'). In *The Lord of the Rings* these then informed the names of the fictional troll-haunted land called the Ettenmoors and the forest tribes of moss-tangled Woses or Wild Men of the Woods.

The Hobbit also uses *attercop* for a spider, an old spider name well attested in the Staffordshire/Derbyshire Peak and recorded there in 1652 by Ashmole as *aldercrop*. Bilbo devises a teasing song to the attercops, in the dark depths of Mirkwood.]

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