

# Cycling UK Stevenage

## Myths and Mysteries Tales

### South Loop

<https://footpathapp.com/routes/41AE1539-0022-4993-A22B-29094DA67EE5>

#### 1. White horse at Burnham Green

White Horse Lane is said to be haunted by the ghost of a headless horse. White Horse Lane sits more or less on the boundary between Danelaw and the Saxons and one story is that the haunting dates back to a battle which took place there between the Saxons and the Vikings in 1002 when a white horse was beheaded in battle and haunts the Lane to this day.

<https://burnhamgreen.com/history/the-headless-horse>

#### 2. Clibbon's Post

Hertford's Un-consecrated Burial

On a narrow country road that runs between Bramfield and Bulls Green, about 300 yards from the Tewin Hill turn off, you'll be able to find a small solitary wooden post by the side of the road, surrounded by encroaching forest. The post has the words "Clibbons Post" carved into it, together with the date Dec 28 1782.

The post, known as Clibbon's Post, marks the site where Walter Clibbon, certainly one of 18th-century Hertfordshire's most infamous villains, was once killed and, reputedly, lies buried.

<https://www.ourhertfordandware.org.uk/content/places/hertford-places/social-issues-hertford-places/clibbons-post>

#### 3. Sally Rainbow's Dell

Sally Rainbow (18th century) was an English woman, alleged to be a witch, who lived near the village of Bramfield, in Hertfordshire.

She was feared by the local population, being fed and placated by local farmers who feared her casting spells to ruin their crops. She made her home in a copse which has subsequently become known as Sally Rainbow's Dell. (grid reference TL 29156 16348). The dell was avoided by everyone in the area, which made it an ideal place for the highwayman Dick Turpin to hide after robbing the coaches travelling along the roads to and from London.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sally\\_Rainbow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sally_Rainbow)

#### 4. Lady Anne Grimston's Grave

Lady Anne Grimston lay dying. She was a proud and obstinate woman who had enjoyed her wealth and lands as well as the society of her friends.

She believed that there was nothing else in this world except the life she had lived: her riches, her grand house, her friends, the fine dinners and elegant clothes she had enjoyed. After she passed away, there would be nothing, she claimed. There was no eternal life of the soul, no Heaven and Hell. Her friends tried to point out to her how terrible and impossible this was, how certain it was that she would live another life, just as the roses die back in the winter and then live again. Just as the trees and flowers in the field come to life again after their long sleep, so also, her friends told her, would she, Lady Anne Grimston, continue to live, and that the life that was in her would never end.

But Lady Anne Grimston was proud and unbelieving, and she said to her friends: "I shall not continue to live. It is as unlikely that I shall continue to live as that a tree will grow out of my body." She went so far as to make a challenge to Heaven, saying "If, indeed, there is life hereafter, trees will render asunder my tomb."

And today, growing right from the heart of Lady Anne Grimston's grave in St. Peter's churchyard in Hertfordshire County is one of the largest trees in England, with four trees growing from one root. The trunk of the tree has grown fast through heavy iron railing, which cannot be moved. The marble masonry of the tomb has shattered to pieces, and today Lady Anne Grimston's grave is a heap of broken stone and twisted iron bars.

For over 200 years the trunks have forced their way through the tomb to raise their branches in a silent but powerful triumph.

[https://www.traditioninaction.org/religious/h010rp.LadyGrimston\\_Galitzin.html](https://www.traditioninaction.org/religious/h010rp.LadyGrimston_Galitzin.html)

## 5. The Wicked Lady

Katherine Ferrers (4 May 1634 – c. 13 June 1660) was an English gentlewoman and heiress. According to popular legend, she was also the "Wicked Lady", a highwaywoman who terrorised the English county of Hertfordshire before dying from gunshot wounds sustained during a robbery.

The unknown circumstances of Katherine's early death have fuelled speculation. The persistent rumour is that she was shot as a highwayman on Nomansland Common on the edge of Wheathampstead, and died of her wounds while trying to ride back to a secret staircase entry at Markyate Cell. Her body was supposedly discovered wearing men's clothing before her servants recovered it and carried her home to be buried. Markyate Cell was built on the site of a 12th-century Benedictine Priory and takes its name from a cell, or smaller structure, that served the monastery. It was converted at great expense into a manor house in 1540, and then rebuilt in 1908 after a fire. When a secret chamber was discovered by workmen in the 1800s behind a false wall next to a chimney stack, it gave new life to the legend.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katherine\\_Ferrers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katherine_Ferrers)

## 6. Wheathampstead witch stone

Wheathampstead 'witch stone' is relocated after almost 600 years Cricket players who have been tripping over a nearly 600-year-old boundary stone for two centuries have won their appeal for it to be moved off-pitch.

During the 15th century the monasteries of St Albans and Westminster both contested the common, literally no-mans-land for the warring sides, for their respective parish.

And in 1429, after years of disputes, a jury agreed that a boulder of Hertfordshire puddingstone should be used to divide the two parishes. It was believed that puddingstone could ward off evil, sometimes being called hagstones or in this case Witchstone. Small pieces were carried in pockets. Larger blocks were placed on doorsteps, gate posts, on village greens and in churchyards.

Wheathampstead Cricket Club had been caught between a rock and a hard place over a historic puddingstone dating back to the rule of Henry VI, which divides the parishes of Wheathampstead and Sandridge.

But because of health and safety fears, that tooth-shaped stone has now been relocated about 20 metres on the outfield.

<https://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/wheathampstead-witch-stone-is-relocated-after-almost-600-years-5010836>

## 7. Sally Deard's Lane

Sally Deards was said to have been a witch in the 17th or 18th century who was chased by a gamekeeper and changed herself into a deer!

<https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/towns-and-villages/knebworth/knebworth-names>

## 8. Roebuck Inn

By the 16th century Stevenage was becoming noted as a significant staging post on the Great North Road, with a growing number of inns beginning to cater for travellers.

The town appeared more commonly in public discourse as Charles I was led through Stevenage on his way to London while under arrest by Parliamentarian soldiers. Samuel Pepys also recorded a journey here on 5 August 1664 and again in 1666. Charles Dickens also stayed here along with another writer, Daniel Defoe, who commented on the Great North Road as 'a most frightful way'. This was partly due to the abundance of highway robbers in the area, indeed it is rumoured that Dick Turpin escaped through a secret passage at the Roebuck Inn to escape the local Justices of the Peace.

<https://stevenage-even-better.com/history-of-stevenage/>

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