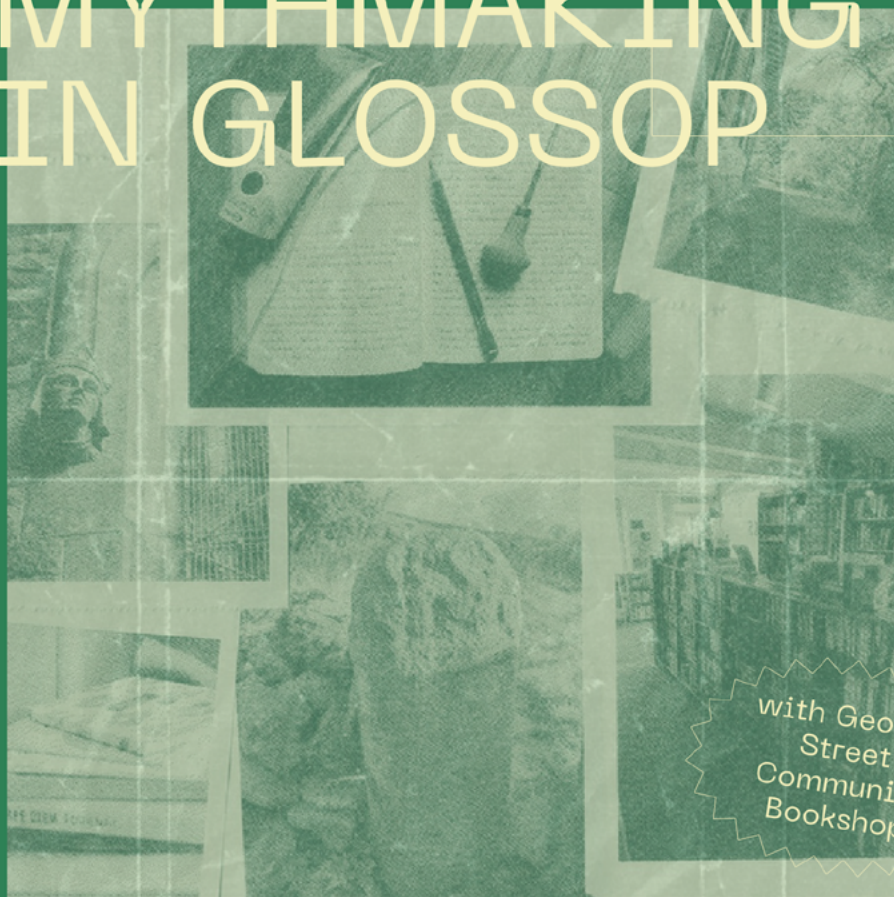


FLASH FOLK: MYTHMAKING IN GLOSSOP



with George
Street
Community
Bookshop

BOOKSHOPS FOR ALL



Hello, and welcome to this short collection of flash folk – new stories inspired by old tales!

In the Autumn of 2022, during my artist residency with George Street Community Bookshop, a few intrepid souls joined me one drizzly afternoon to 'write the weird'.

Inspired by the ancient landscape and the old gods of Glossop, these are the tales that emerged.

Step into a world of witchcraft, cursed stones and devilry... if you dare!

– **Michelle Collier**



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INVENTING LOCAL SAYINGS



CHIMNEY SOOT

BY MATT HILL

"A poultice made from chimney soot will heal the gut and bring you luck."

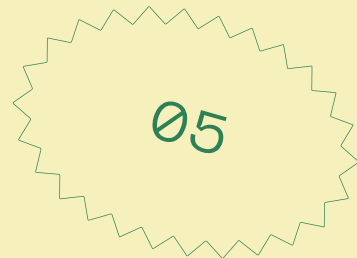
Source: Derbyshire, 17th c. Thought to originate from the village of Tideswell and inspired by a local chimney sweep called Lucky Tom.

Thomas Cresswell was renowned for both his apparent good luck and his abnormally regular bowel movements. In 1694, Cresswell had tripped on his way to work, dislodging a stone which revealed a cache of Roman gold coins. Despite his windfall he continued to tend to the chimneys of the village with locals attributing his digestive and financial successes to his contact with soot.

'TIS CUSTOMARY IN GLOSSOP

BY MICHELLE COLLIER

Thi say a weddin' i'May
keeps t'Kunderman at bay
And to never toss crumbs for the crows
Set off at last calf's moo
Climb Bleaklow in moon dew
And always share swedes with your foes
But if you think I'm a-larkin'
when you should be 'arkin
'Ere's just one more thing you must know
Leave t'first strawberries at t'cairn
to please Lucifer's bairn
(And tis best to ingest this as rote!)
For if you forget
and no berries are left
Then the devil 'is sen claims yer throat.





COWN

EDGE



ROCKS

BY CLARE SAVORY

It was a cloudy, grey autumnal morning when the musician set out to climb the hills. Each and every day after breakfast, she clambered up the steep path from Simmondley to Churnal. Past the ash tree where a priest once wed a couple in the rain. The route to Cown Edge was scored clearly – follow Monks Road to the top of the Nab. And over the brow you'd find Cown Edge Rocks, shaped and curved like an arena. It was here the horn player loved to perform to no one – the sheep and cows their only audience. For an hour, the soft scales would flow across the quarry site – echoing the musician's acoustic dream, her confidence building with every note. Yet on this day – the 13th October – the wind was howling. And grey clouds surrounded her, threatening.

There was a chill in the air that made her stop playing and look out towards Tintwistle Moor. From the far distance, she saw a bird flying closer. Maybe a buzzard? She paused as it came closer. And closer. Growing bigger and bigger. Every yard it drew nearer the wind blew harder and harder, the horn player barely able to stand at the top of the edge of the quarry. And then – in the flick of an eye – the bird drew so close a thick, black, oxygenless fog swept over the musician, knocking her horn out of her hand. The bird had snatched it and taken flight towards Kinder. And the musician fell to her death in the pit of the quarry.

And so, if you visit Cown Edge and listen quietly, it is said you can sometimes hear the sound of a lone horn playing when it is windy. And just a mile away lies the shape of a horn in the nearby field hidden in the moorland among some thick heather – abandoned. Never to be played again.



THE WELTING STONE & OTHERS

BY MATT HILL



The Welting Stone

Traditional Derbyshire Folk song (16th century)

"Take care beware on the Old Monks Road
Don't dilly dally by the Welting Stone
For the Welting Stone knows all your fear
And the Devil's mark will soon appear"

Road Closures after Dig Drama

Tameside Reporter

An archaeological dig near Charlesworth ended in chaos this week with the hospitalisation of renowned academic Professor Simon Thoresby. Professor Thoresby had been excavating the mysterious "Welting Stone" source of many local legends. Thoresby was hoping to prove once and for all whether the strange stone was Neolithic in origin or as many believe, simply a clever Victorian folly.

According to a student who wished to remain anonymous, the dig was plagued by problems from the very start. "The minute the Prof stuck his trowel in the ground", he said "we all noticed a terrible sulphurous smell. Some of the group reckoned they could hear a weird hum too, although I never heard it"

The same student reported that the following day the Professor's behaviour began to change, "It was like he was drunk or something" our source reported, "we all noticed this red mark across his forehead. By the third day the mark got deeper in colour and it started to look like an old Celtic Rune symbol."

Things came to a head yesterday when the Professor was rushed to Tameside General in a critical condition after collapsing during the dig. A spokesperson for Tameside NHS Trust told us "We can confirm a 49 year old male was admitted yesterday with serious burns. He remains under observation." They refused to offer any more detail on his ailments but a hospital source told us off the record that "He's covered in the kind of marks we only usually see in nuclear accidents"

Meanwhile Army Roadblocks appeared this morning on several roads leading to the area of the dig. An MOD spokesman said "We are investigating an accident in the Monks Road area of Charlesworth. Until we can establish the cause of it we have taken the precaution of closing the area to the public and we advise local people to stay vigilant"





HILDA



MCKINLEY

BY CAROLINE TURNER

Glossop Chronicle Obituaries

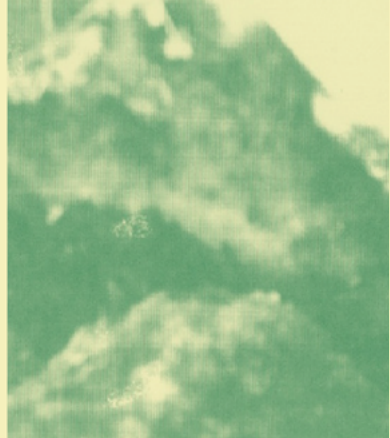
Hilda McKinley, 1900–1952

Hilda McKinley was born into the famous Glossop Apothecary family in 1900. As a young child, Hilda helped in the pharmacy, learning the basics about the power of herbs as medicine.

Unbeknownst to her family, as a young adult – whilst working as a cleaner at Volcrepe Mill – Hilda also began her tutelage with a Derbyshire coven based up at Melandra Fort. After her evening shift at the mill, Hilda would spend the night roaming the hills collecting plants to use in her potions. Soon her knowledge of plant medicine far surpassed that of her pharmacy family. Hilda gained a reputation which spread by word of mouth, with those “in the know” turning up at the shop asking if they would pass on a message for Hilda to contact them.

Hilda has passed at the age of 52 in what appears to be a poisoning, choking whilst drinking herbal tea. Hilda’s extensive knowledge of plants makes it unlikely she would have knowingly eaten something toxic. There are rumours, though, that her family recently discovered her witch background and were not happy about this.

THE



BOGGARTS

ROAD



Setting out towards higher ground, the walker pulled his coat around him against the rain and followed the road ahead. It wound towards a bend with a sign for Boggarts Lane. An old building appeared in silhouette ahead, and he remembered being told to turn at the fork near the church. He saw no more buildings, so he took the turn down the narrow track with trees stretching across it overhead. He could see only a short way ahead, and above the sound of rain, heard the creaking of trees. Then a sound something like a whistle. It grew in volume until he was surrounded with a strange bewildering sound; a sort of music and whistling tune, then a voice "Stay below the boggart's road." There was a shout on one side of him. Then a whistling behind him. He could see nothing but foggy darkness. He broke into a run and ran on, heart racing until he reached the lights of the village up ahead.

He burst into the pub, shaking, the landlord offered him a drink with a grim face. "Did no one say not to take the boggart's road?"

"They told me to bear left by the church," he replied.

"What was that?"

"The spirit of the hill doesn't like you in his place" said the landlord.

"What... what do you mean?" said the walker.

"That was what old Roper used to say. You turned by Roper's barn, not the church. He used to sing songs up there this time of year to warn against bramble picking along Boggarts Road, told stories of accidents and folks disappearing, so we locals never did, didn't want to upset him I suppose. " He paused. "I still don't go that way, even since he died a few years back poor fella, it gives me the chills you know?"

"You alright son? You look a bit pale, get another one of these down you," the landlord said, pouring another drink.

BY ANNA SEWARD





THE

WISHING

KETTLE



BY MICHELLE COLLIER

There's a little known rumour among the oldest families of Glossopdale that there's treasure to be found around here. Ancient coins entombed below the heather or drowned 'neath the muddy brooks and pools. To be sure, now and again some lucky fool makes the local papers with a tale of some accidental cache, unearthed when digging for a new patio or garden pond (or somewhere to bury the dog). Few have set out in the knowing pursuit of these riches. And even fewer have been successful. For if you listen to the low chatter of those old families as their tongues loosen around warm ale, you may hear that something else covets those coins. Something not altogether human.

But the young runaway of this story wasn't afraid of such fancies. He'd crossed paths with a troll or two in his time. Had known ogres and their fists. And though, like the children of fairy tales, he wandered as an orphan along Gnat Hole Brook that night, leaving behind him a scatter of wet footprints like crumbs, he refused to acknowledge talk of witches and their rumbling stomachs. Talk that rippled among the other young strays who lodged at the Bulls Head in town. What he did believe in was treasure. Coin was real. Could be held in your hand. Could be swapped for things more precious to him than metal. Coin was what he needed. And so, coin is what brought him to the woods that night, against the mouths of those motherless teens.

The brook stretched out before him, cleaving the dense woodland with a thin stretch of reflected moonlight and the promise of silver. Soon enough the night would crawl in to eat up the land and him with it. And before then the drunks wandering the woods like ghosts locked in old habits, fighting and cawing at the shadows of birds overhead. And so the boy moved quickly, darting along the water's edge like a landlocked minnow. Every few feet he stopped to bend his knees and dredge a hand through the night-cooled water. Then out again, unclenching his fist to inspect his treasure: cigarette ends, crushed beer cans, an old set of keys too rusted now to fit any lock.

The further along the brook he searched, the steeper its banks became, till he felt as though they were a barrier to the world beyond. As if he were in his own private valley. His feet skittered on the vertiginous mud, slicking his pants with soil and clay. The night was getting darker still and the runaway was getting tired. He began to fancy that the brook spoke to him in some ancient aqueous babble, gurgling spells from its watery throat.

Presently, the brook became a waterfall and the boy slid down the muddy drop to the small pool at its base. Could this be what he was looking for – Old Nat Nutter's Porridge Kettle? His stomach rumbled one last hope. A witch's pool would make a fine old wishing well, he thought, he'd be sure to find a coin or two here. The water snapped at him through rocky maws as he plunged his hand into the pool, a chill creeping up his spine like ice. Nothing. He stretched his arm further into the pool and tried again. This time, something! The unmistakable edge of a large coin, solid and cool and ridged against his water-dimpled fingertips.

A simple pull at the wedged coin could not get it free. And so, the boy knelt on the rocks, wedged his foot into a small fissure to steady himself, and dug both hands into the muddy bed of the stream to feel out the rest of the coin.

.....

The witch's hands were on his wrists in an instant. Her fingers fibrous sludge, wrapping and tightening and pulling him into the pool. The boy gasped and tried to yank his snared arms free, sending a blistering pain all the way up to his shoulders. He thrashed this way, then that, resisting her for a long moment until – with a sickening pop at the socket – the boy screamed and buckled and merged with his own reflection, disappearing into the deep of Old Nat Nutter's Porridge Kettle.

–

Beyond the woods, all was dark save for the lights of Glossopdale flickering in the night. Now, one by one, the lights closed their eyes and the town turned to its slumber.



REACHING

UP,

BONES



THEN TO STALKS

BURIAL GROUND

BY LAUREN ENTWISTLE



So I always bring summat to eat. Cos there's nowt worse than being stuck up here, starvin', knowing there's another five hours on't clock. My missus brought a cob with ham on't it – that'll see me through to teatime.

...

Ian?

Mmf.

Ian, still there, lad?

Hrmph!

Christ, what are you doing over there?

It's dented.

Yer what?

The shovel's dented!

What did yer say?

...Fer god's sake... The bloody handle's gone. Nearly bent it clean off–

Give over. You've not gone and hit rock have you?

Listen, I've tried half the field and none of it's givin'.

I'm taitered.

Tough shite. Up top's asked for new plots and that's where we're putting 'em. I'd get the big scooper in–

Great!

–but we'd have to wait til Monday.

Ah.

Hmm. So we're breakin' ground today. Gimme that spare digger and I'll take that other side. You can start from... there. Move them twiggy things stickin' up and it'll be reet.

I'm tellin' you, none of it's good fer diggi-!

I'll be the judge o'that. Yer wasting time as it is.

...

It's not digging.

I told you!

Psssst! Keep it down!

It's not goin' in, is it... Said it was weird! Bad idea from the start. Bloody council will have us go in any old field and they pick this one-

I've not seen nowt like it. Let me go back to the truck, call Leslie and see if they can let us have the little digger. No point standin' here freezin', goin' through shovels

I'll come too-

Give over. Stay put. Keep an eye on the kit we've lugged up here - you know they'll have my head if it's left n' lost. You're easier to spot.

... I don't like it.

You don't 'ave to. I'll be five minutes. Ten at push. Stick yer torch so I can see ya through trees... got it?

...Yeah.

Good. Don't bend anymore o'them shovels while I'm gone.

.....

Ian! Ian...! Jesus, can't see nowt or owt... IAN! Come on lad, we're off. Grab yer stuff! Les says there's no point us plottin' where there's already plots o' sorts... they're all over the shop. Ye'd struggle gettin' the digger here. Ground's like a hard sponge...

...

IAN! Bloody cloth-ears. IAN, SHINE YER LIGHT THIS WAY! Right, got yer now! Be a minute.

...

Ian...? SHI-!

...Damn near broke my ankle!

IAN!

Jesus, that's wedged right in. How's he managed that...?

Bloody young'uns... no respect for other folks' property.

Let me... just...

S'all tangled round the torch? Damn thing's half-sunk already.

...

Lad's probably gone home. That's it. Pulled a prank on't old man and scarpered. Yeah.

No point stayin' here n' freezin'.

No point pokin' 'round where you're not wanted.

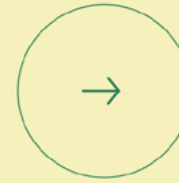




APPARITIONS
BY MATT HILL

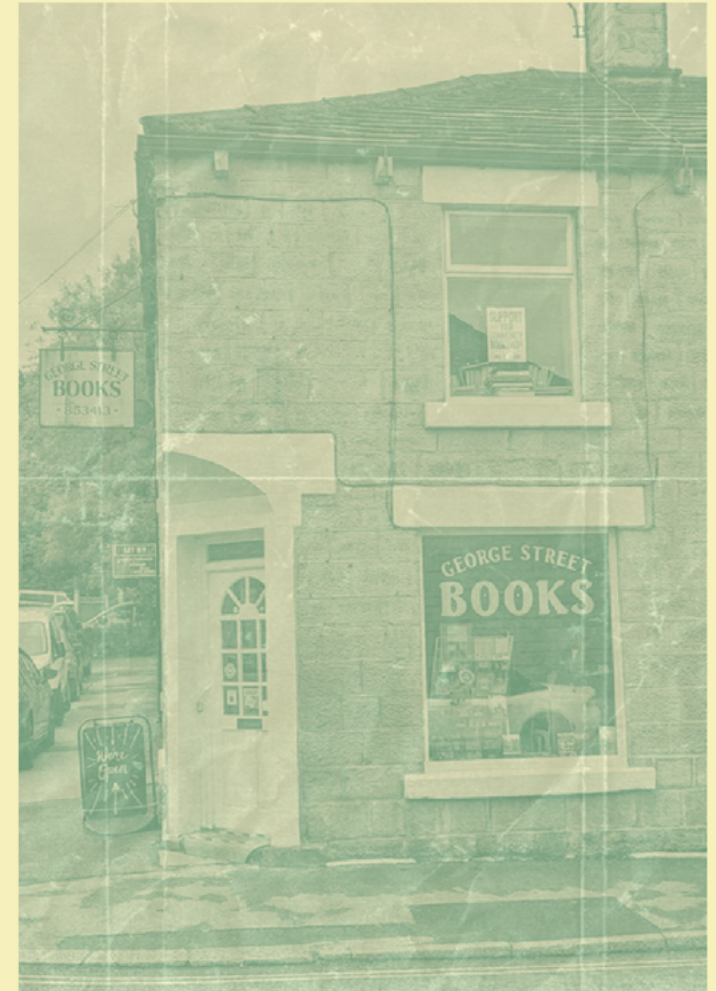
He's still wrapped in her hair
Slightly just beyond
There had been a kind of knocking
By the candle and the cross
She had gently trod the boards
Leaving just a vapour
Traced below the eye line
Rolled up in some paper

THANKS FOR READING



This zine was created as part of my artist residency with George Street Community Bookshop in Glossop. Supported by Arts Council England.

With thanks to every person that came to chat, support, WAN.DER, share stories and get creative with me.



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