

PLUCKLEY

There are several reported ghosts attributed to Pluckley, Kent. UK. With many visits and some completed investigations, further research helped to understand how the folk lore has developed.

Richard 'Dickie' Buss

Folk Lore: The black silhouette of miller Richard 'Dicky' Buss apparently haunts a ruined windmill near a house called The Pinnocks. The mill was shut down by Buss in the 1930s and was subsequently destroyed by a fire in 1939 after being struck by lightning – but it seems his spirit refuses to leave. It's claimed the ghostly presence of Buss can be witnessed prior to the arrival of a thunderstorm.

No evidence found to disprove this.



Monk

Folk lore: The supernatural presence of a monk is said to haunt the grounds of a house called Greystones although it was probably rebuilt from the Tudor version of previous years. Built around 1863, the abode was originally named Rectory Cottage – home of the curate for St Nicholas church. It was renamed Greystones in 1924, and since then no residents have reported any unusual activity inside or outside the house.

No evidence found to disprove this.



Lady of Rose Court (Tudor)

Folk lore: The Lady of Rose Court, is said to have poisoned herself in despair over a love triangle as she fell in love with the monk but he loved another. She committed suicide by eating poisonous berries. She haunts the house and the gardens between 1600 and 1700 hours and is said to be heard calling her two dogs.

No evidence found to disprove this.



The marching Colonel

Folk lore: An unnamed man travelled to Park Wood, near Pluckley, and committed suicide by hanging himself. Now his ghost is seen marching through the woods in full military costume, hence his nickname, Colonel. His ghost is completely harmless and does not appear distressing; most people who see him don't even know he's a ghost. [No evidence found to disprove this, however: additional fact, 1915:](#)



FATALITY AT PLUCKLEY.

An inquest was held at Pluckley on Thursday by Mr. C. D. Murton, relative to the death of Sergt.-Major Alfred John Baker, of 204, Godinton Road, Ashford, which occurred at the Remount Depot, Pluckley, on Tuesday evening. Deceased, it was stated, was 51 years of age, and previous to going to the Remount Depot he was a clerk. He had 22 years' military service, and was Colour-Sergeant in the Royal Irish when he retired on pension. On Tuesday he mounted a horse which had just came off the rail, but, becoming unseated, he fell to the ground, and fractured the base of his skull. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.—The funeral which was conducted by Mr. E. Wood (Hailsham) took place at the Ashford Cemetery on

Black Horse

Folk lore: The pub is also well known for its many ghosts, one of which being an invisible phantom who makes himself known by moving both glasses and possessions around the pub -which can go missing for days on end. Many customers have felt or seen the presence of a small child. This long history of happenings has been experienced by both the Landlady and landlord, and customers throughout the pub's rich history. [No evidence found to disprove this.](#)



Phantom Schoolmaster

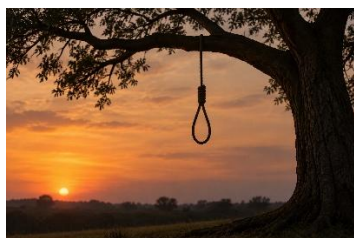
Folk lore:

Version 1 - Hanging body of a schoolmaster that is suspected of having committed suicide after World War I. The hanging body of the schoolmaster from Smarden was found by Richard Buss a few weeks after he went missing.

Version 2 - Henry Turff was the headmaster of Pluckley School. He was very close friends with the Headmaster of the nearby village of Smarden, who would travel to Pluckley every Sunday to visit Turff and discuss politics. However, one Sunday the Headmaster from Smarden went missing. He was later found on the land leading to the mills. He had hung himself in a tree. Bereaved by this, Henry Turff decided to take his life only a few days later. He did so in the same place and in the same manner as his friend. Although the Smarden Headmaster's ghost has never been seen, Turff's ghost has been seen on the lane. Hanging from the tree where he killed himself. This ghost was later seen by a newspaper journalist who said that the ghost was dressed in a green blazer and striped trousers.

Version 3 - In the 1920s, at the end of Dick Buss's lane, a group of children on their way to school came upon the body of their teacher, hanging from the branch of a tree. The reason for his suicide was never discovered, but on certain nights, when a light breeze rustles the trees and a full moon sits high over the neighbourhood, his ghostly form is clearly seen, swinging back and forth, hanging from the branch where his living form breathed its anguished last.

Version 4 - The Hanging Headmaster. In life his name was Henry Turff, and he was the head of Smarden School. Every Sunday he would journey to Pluckley to meet his good friend Richard Buss – who supposedly became the phantom of the Pinnocks – and the pair would discuss politics and other topics of interest. One Sunday, however, the Headmaster did not appear. His body was later found hanging from a tree. Ever since his apparition has been spotted, still hanging from the very same tree which grows in the lane leading toward the old mill.



However, this cannot be true..

Re HENRY EDWIN TURFF, Deceased.

Pursuant to the Trustee Act, 1925.

NOTICE is hereby given that all persons having any claims against the estate of Henry Edwin Turff late of The Mount, Pluckley, Kent, Retired Schoolmaster (who died on the 11th April 1940 and whose Will was proved in the Principal Probate Registry on the 20th June 1940 by the Misses Mabel and May Essam the executrices thereof) are required to send particulars of their claims to the undersigned on or before the 23rd September 1940 after which date the said executrices will proceed to distribute the said estate amongst the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims of which they shall then have had notice; and that they will not be liable for the said estate or any part thereof so distributed to any person of whose claim they shall not then have had notice.—Dated 15th July 1940.

HALLETT and CO., Ashford, Kent, Solicitors (228) for the Executrices.

1890 Marriage solemnized at St. Peter's Church in the Parish of St. Mark's, Kent in the County of Middlesex

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
71	April 18 1890	Henry Edwin Turff	30	Bachelor	Schoolmaster	Arthur Street Battersea Park Road	Henry Turff	Publican
		Sarah Essam	30	Spinster	Schoolmistress	Fitzroy Road.	George Essam	Gamkeeper

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England by Thomas Mayley or after banns by me, Arthur King

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Henry Edwin Turff and Sarah Essam in the Presence of us, Thomas Mayley and Arthur King

1911 England Census for Henry Edwin Turff
Kent > Pluckley > ALL > 08

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Henry Edwin Turff	Head	41	Married	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Sarah Turff	Wife	41	Married	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled in to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Henry Edwin Turff
Postal Address: The Mount, Pluckley, Ashford Kent

TURFF Henry Edwin of The Mount Pluckley **Kent** died 11 April 1940 at The West Kent Hospital Maidstone Probate **London** 20 June to Mabel Essam and May Essam spinsters. Effects £1859 3s. 6d.



The Mount (left) where School teacher Henry Edwin Turff lived with his wife Sarah (Essam). He retired and moved to Newport Pagnell to live as a widower with his sister-in-law's. He died in 1939 and was not found hanging in a tree. The Black Horse was originally a blacksmith.

E.D. Letter Code DWKC		Borough, U.D. or R.D. NEWPORT PAGNELL		Registration District and Sub-district		147/1			
ADDRESS.	SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.	O. V. S. P. or I.	M. or F.	BIRTH-		S. M. W. or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION.
	No.	Sub. No.				Day.	Year.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GOTHURST "NEWPORT ROAD"	146	1	Esam, Ellen	-	F	RD 23 Nov 72	S		UNPAID DOMESTIC DUTIES
		2	Esam, Mabel	-	F	TH 25 JUL 84	S		SCHOOL MISTRESS
		3	Esam, Mary	-	F	TH 2 MAY 81	S		SCHOOL MISTRESS (RETIRED)
		4	Esam, Lily	-	F	TH 12 MAY 81	S		SCHOOL MISTRESS (RETIRED)
		5	Turff, Henry E.	-	M	TH 11 JUN 69	W		HEADMASTER (RETIRED)

TURFF Sarah of The Mount Pluckley **Kent** (wife of Henry Edwin Turff) died 19 August 1928 Administration **London** 28 November to the said Henry Edwin Turff schoolmaster. Effects £768 17s. 2d.

This story is well documented despite it being untrue for Mr Turff, however there is a reported story of a suicide in a field, found by a 13-year-old (son). The purported ghost may be attached to this fact.

The folk lore of Turff's ghost is incorrect.

Additional Fact: In 1856 John Philpot Skeer/Skier committed suicide in a field.

A known criminal (larceny) Second witness: John Cork also known criminal (larceny):

PLUCKLEY.
SUICIDE.—On Friday, an inquest was held at the Black Horse, on the body of John Skier, an agricultural labourer, in the employ of Sir Edward Dering. James Skier, a boy of 13 years of age, stated that deceased, who was his father, had been ill for several weeks, but was on Thursday morning working in the field, as usual. Witness missed him about five o'clock, and proceeding in search, found him suspended by a piece of small cord, one end being fastened round a staple fixed in a part of the hay-house, and the other end round his neck. Witness touched him, and found he was dead. Assistance was then obtained. John Cork, a labourer, also in the employ of Sir Edward Dering, deposed that he had known the deceased, and had worked with him on the same farm, for 20 years. He had spoken to him several times of late, but had noticed nothing particular. On the day in question he was called, and found the deceased as described by the last witness. The jury returned a verdict of "Temporary insanity."

Red Lady

Folk lore: The Red Lady, reputedly a member of the Dering family who haunts the churchyard of St Nicholas's Church. A small white dog has also been reported in the same location. It is said that she searches for the grave of her lost child. She is said to have dark hair and is seen wearing a red dress. No evidence found to disprove this.



White Lady

Folk lore: A second Dering lady is also said to be haunting St. Nicholas's Church. The White Lady was the wife of the Baron who owned much of the area. When she died, the Lord Dering was so distressed that he had her body buried in three lead coffins and an oak one in an attempt to stop her body from decomposing. (This 'coffin' may have been for the White Lady. It is said that tapping can be heard from the tomb in which she is buried)

Her ghost has also been seen in the Dering family house library. During the First and Second World Wars, the manor of Surrenden, Dering was host to a U.S Embassy. It was here that one well-known and particularly spooky tale took place, involving a Mr. Walter Winans (1852-1920) late one Christmas Eve. Mr. Winans had wandered the dark, foreboding rooms of the manor alone with his hunting rifle when he found himself confronted by the White Lady in the library. Petrified, he proceeded to take a shot at her! The shot passed through the apparition and she vanished through a panelled wall - an area of which supposedly led to a tunnel linking the house to the Church.

No evidence found to disprove this.



Dering Arms

Folk lore: Pluckley has two pubs connected with the Dering family, squires of the village until the First World War. At the "Dering Arms," a former family hunting-lodge which retains its ostler's bell, the resident ghost is an old lady who sits at a table in the bar, dressed in the clothes of a century ago.

No evidence found to disprove this.



Brickworks Screaming Man

Fact: A man smothered by a wall of clay who drowned at the brickworks

In the Pluckley Brickworks, a man was smothered by a drying clay wall that fell on him. His screams are said to be heard coming from the brickworks, and his ghost is said to appear sometimes as well. It was 1899, his name was Richard Bridgland (35) and he was a father of five children.



No evidence found to disprove this.

Gypsy Woman (Watercress Woman)

Folk lore: An old Gypsy woman who made a living by selling watercress at the crossroads bridge now haunts the area.

Fact: She died when a spark from the pipe she was smoking ignited the whiskey she was drinking. She set herself ablaze. **Her name was Sarah Sharp and she died (76) 1911**

Faversham News 19.8.1911

WOMAN BURNT TO DEATH.

SHOCKING OCCURRENCE NEAR PLUCKLEY.

A shocking fatality occurred between Smarden and Pluckley on Thursday, the unfortunate victim being an aged watercress seller, named Sarah Sharp, whose charred body was found by the roadside and whose clothing—some of which it was subsequently found had been of flannelette—had been accidentally ignited, probably from a smouldering tobacco pipe.

Dr. Joyce, the deputy coroner for the Cranbrook district, held an inquest on the body at the Parish Room, Smarden, on Saturday.

William Sharp, of Charing, identified several articles found near the body as belonging to his wife, Sarah Sharp, which she had with her when she left home about nine o'clock on Thursday morning. She was going to Pluckley and Smarden, selling watercress. She was 76 years of age and was in the habit of smoking. He could not recognise the body, but he identified the shoes belonging to his wife, and also the perambulator found near the body.

John Maxted, a young man, stated that about 1.45 on Thursday he was riding horseback along the road between Smarden and Pluckley in the direction of Smarden, when he saw a woman sitting by the roadside. It appeared to him that her pocket was on fire. She was holding her clothes in her hand and trying to put it out. The woman did not say anything and he did not speak to her. It did not occur to him that she was in danger. He rode on about 200 yards to the farm of Mr. Millen. He reported to Mr. Millen that

there was a woman along the roadside whose clothes were on fire. He then went on his way, but hearing shouting came back. Mr. Millen was going down to the gate, and he (witness) went back the way he had seen the woman. He also saw Mrs. Weeks and they all three went down to where the woman was. He then saw the body lying on the road. The clothes were all burnt off, and he believed the woman was dead. Mr. Millen had taken a bucket of water with him. About a quarter of an hour had elapsed from the time witness first saw the woman by the roadside. He had heard no cry except the one he had alluded to. After first seeing the woman he paid no attention to the matter until he told Mr. Millen.

Evidence having been given by Henry Millen, Louisa Weeks, and P. C. Clarke,

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death by burning," and expressed the view that the witness, John Maxted, showed great thoughtlessness in not going to the aid of the deceased woman when he first saw her.



Contact made (Jan 2022) with Sarah's third cousin and the response:

Thanks for the message. The Sarah was my third cousin once removed. I know Pinnock bridge well as I used to play there in my youth. As for the ghost stories they all appeared at the end of WWI. My father who was born in Pluckley says that were no stories before then. I also have a friend whose grandmother (also from Pluckley) told him the same thing. Regards.

1901 England Census for Sarah Sharp

Kent > Ashford > ALL > District 02

Household	Address	Name	Relationship	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Occupation	Place of Birth
43	16 Chellenden Range 1	Charles H. Sharp	Head	40	M	Married	Manufacturer	Kent
		Elizabeth	Wife	40	F	Married		Kent
		Edith	Daughter	11	F	Single		Kent
		Mary	Son	32	M	Married	Labourer	Kent
		Minnie	Daughter	8	F	Single		Kent
		Nellie	Daughter	7	F	Single		Kent
		Edward	Son	4	M	Single		Kent
44	2	Edward Duggan	Head	33	M	Married	Labourer	Kent
		Mary	Wife	39	F	Married		Kent
		William	Son	8	M	Single		Kent
		Peter	Son	4	M	Single		Kent
45	3	William Sharp	Head	48	M	Married	Manufacturer	Kent
		Sarah	Wife	67	F	Married		Kent
46	4	Stephen R. Sharp	Head	30	M	Married	Labourer	Kent
		Patience	Wife	20	F	Married		Kent
47	84 High St	Charles H. Sharp	Head	20	M	Single	Labourer	Kent
		John	Son	22	M	Single		Kent
48	86	John P. Sharp	Head	66	M	Married		Kent
		James M.	Son	41	M	Married		Kent
		Patience	Wife	31	F	Married		Kent
		Caroline M.	Daughter	25	F	Single		Kent
11	Total of Schedule of House and of Tenants with less than Five Rooms			13	18			

Note—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

Fright Corner Highwayman

Folk lore: A highwayman is said to have hidden behind a tree at the Pinnock (known as 'Fright Corner') and ambush intended victims as they pass. He eventually was caught by others who ran him through with a spear, pinning him to the tree. There is no longer a tree at this spot but both a tree and the highwayman is said to appear. There is one recorded instance of highwayman activity in Pluckley and no executions for this area noted at Penenden Heath.

No evidence found to disprove this.



HIGHWAY ROBBERIES.

A poor man, named Abraham Standen, who travels the country with herrings for sale, was waylaid on the 25th ult. by three ruffians, who fell upon him in a lonely spot, near **Pluckley** and, in spite of his appeals for mercy, cruelly beat and plundered him of all he possessed. He was left senseless from the effects of their brutal violence, and reviving after a considerable time had elapsed, reached home with great difficulty.

Pluckley.—A man named Russell, labourer of this place, was charged before W. P. Burra, Esq., at Ashford, with having stolen a silver watch, worth £2, from Edward Wise. The two men had been drinking together at Charing, and on returning home towards **Pluckley** prisoner advised his companion, who was the worse for liquor, to lie down under a haystack. He did so, and on waking up missed his watch, which was sold by the prisoner a day or two afterwards to a man at **Pluckley**. He was committed for trial.

Phantom Coach & Horses

Folk lore: A phantom coach and horses have been seen and heard in several locations around the village. There is no evidence to disprove this, however, there are newspaper reports of a coach and horses that bolted down the streets and into a field which caused a great fright to the villager.

No evidence found to disprove this.



Dering Woods (Screaming Woods)

Folk lore: These woods are located next to Pluckley. These woods, originally called the Dering Woods, and villagers prefer this to the alternative 'Screaming Woods'. The woods gained the nickname because at night it is said you can still here the screams of the numerous people who got lost and died. Two newspaper reports state that in 1948, 20 people were massacred and in 1998 four people went to the woods but were never seen again although this has been proven to be fake. As for other screams....

The woods sit along an historic smuggling trading route, supported by a complex network of villagers who aid the transportation for payment. Many land-owners would be rumoured to be complicit in its organisation. Baron Henry Furnese of Waldershare, was suspected and his son, Robert may have continued with this. Robert's death in 1733 saw returning funeral coaches being raided by customs officials at the Bull in Dartford. They seized 50lbs tea.

It is suggested that locals in Pluckley relayed tales of hauntings to those operating the remount service at Surrenden House, following the closure of the house at Chomeley Dering's death. Their purpose being: to continue smuggling without interference from the military.

The haunting of Screaming Wood...

No evidence found to prove or disprove it.



Untold Stories that have been missed:

A number of deaths occurred over time that have not been reported as ghostly, despite the stories having ghost story elements.

Fact 1: In 1910 the Station Master met his death being struck by the express train at Pluckley Station.

There is no mention of his ghost.



Fact 2: In 1896 Thomas Arthur Sneath (63) jumped from the bridge and onto the track and was found with his skull broken and a foot severed.

There is no mention of his ghost.



Fact 3: Again, no mention of this story

AT midnight last night stood under a dripping yew tree in the pitch black churchyard of the village of Pluckley, near here—hoping to lay a ghost.

Thirty-year-old Fred Sanders, a Chatham dockyard worker, and student of the supernatural, and Douglas Bennett, a 20-year-old workmate, had cycled 30 miles from their homes at Chatham to lay the ghost of the lovely Lady Dering which is said to haunt the churchyard.

When Lady Dering died centuries ago her husband had her body encased within four leaden coffins—he wanted her beauty preserved for all time.

Patience the two men waited. Nothing happened. Then, a few minutes after the church clock had struck midnight one of them heard, coming clearly from the direction of the vault, the notes of a woman's voice.

It was Douglas Bennett, excited watcher on his first ghost hunt, who heard the voice. He nudged his friend beside him and whispered, "Listen."

Mr. Sanders strained his ears, but could hear nothing.

"It was unmistakably a woman's voice," Douglas told me.

Mr. Sanders is disappointed that he did not hear the voice, but they are to try again.

Of course, it may be that the ghost hunters would have heard or seen more had they waited longer, for when the church clock struck midnight it was only 11 p.m. Greenwich Mean Time, and surely such long-established ghosts as that of Lady Dering do not observe Summer Time?

Fact 4: Police Constable 1934

Was he shot or was it suicide, no mention of his ghost

An inquest will be held at **Pluckley**, near Ashford, Kent, to-day, on Police Constable Harry Haynes (50), who was **found** with a gunshot wound in his head on the doorstep of his home at Pluckley. A gun was **found** by Haynes' side.

Fact 5: In 1911 Murder-suicide occurred at Pluckley Grange.

No mention of any ghosts and this was the same year as the Watercress Lady.

THE MYSTERY OF PLUCKLEY GRANGE.

**Verdict of Murder and Suicide
in Kentish Tragedy.**

**LETTER TO DEAD MAN'S
BROTHER-IN-LAW.**

**"Lily Suffers From Crazy Fancy :
Please Cremate Us Both."**

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

ASHFORD, Friday.

The mystery of Pluckley Grange, where Mr. and Mrs. Louis Berndt were found shot dead, was inquired into by Mr. C. D. Minton to-day.

The jury found that the husband murdered his wife and then committed suicide.

Letters to Mr. Berndt's brother-in-law—the "mysterious visitor who could not gain admission to Pluckley Grange—and to the coroner showed beyond doubt that the husband was distraught. He pleaded that he and his wife should be cremated and their ashes buried in Berlin.

A LETTER PRODUCED.

The Coroner: What is the last communication you had with Berndt?—Mr. Osterlitz produced a letter dated March 3 this year.

The coroner said it concerned some caviare, to be supplied by a firm in Piccadilly.

"I wrote a letter last Friday to my brother-in-law announcing that I was coming," the witness added, "and that should be in the house now. It was to say I was going to London to transact business and to ask him to meet me."

Witness told his brother he was coming via Dover, and said he should arrive at Pluckley at 4.30 or 5 o'clock.

He arrived at Pluckley on Tuesday afternoon.

"I was not met; I brought a porter with my luggage. We went to the back of the house and saw a notice fastened to the door underneath the knocker. It was in English, and I could not read it."

The Coroner handed the witness a slip of paper, which he said he recognised as the notice. It read, "Send for the police."

My Dear Max.—I could not hold out any longer, as Lily, among other things, suffers from a crazy fancy that all people are her enemies, and in case it should fall to my lot to do without her while she is in an asylum, I cannot hold out any longer.

Please cremate us both. According to a will which Lily made six or seven years ago everything is yours, and my hope is that it will give you more blessing and satisfaction than it has given us.

Do please see that the animals are fed—fowls, dogs, and horse.

Messrs Ward, Bowie and Co. are our solicitors.

Mr. Colyer, of Ashford, will advise when the property is sold.

Lily has no relatives in the world. She was brought up by step-parents, and has not seen them for twenty years.

There are five Chinese and two Brazilian Bonds from the bank in the desk.

Bury our ashes in Berlin.

Mr. Brunger, a farmer, said he was with Mr. Berndt rabbit-shooting on Monday afternoon, and saw both him and his wife. He noticed nothing peculiar about them.

A BLOUSE IN COURT.

Mr. Hall, a nurseryman whose property adjoins the chicken run at the Grange, said that Mr. Berndt told him on Monday that he was expecting his brother-in-law.

On Tuesday he saw Mr. Berndt feeding the chickens, but he did not see Mrs. Berndt.

Jacob Miles, a gardener, said he saw Mrs. Berndt at the bedroom window on Tuesday morning about seven o'clock. She had a spotted blouse on.

A blouse was produced, and witness said that was the one he thought Mrs. Berndt was wearing, but he was forty yards away when he saw her.

Frederick Terry, a labourer, of Bethers-

den, told the court he saw the Berndts out driving at eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning; and a shepherd named Moore spoke to seeing a notice on the door at two o'clock on Tuesday, when he went to feed the sheep, but did not go up to the door and read it. He had known the Berndts for some years.

Mrs. Berndt was a very curious woman. She had sworn at him in a voice that could be heard for a mile, and had threatened to shoot him scores of times.

Afterwards she would burst out laughing.

"AFRAID OF HER."

"I never knew what to make of her," added the witness. "I was afraid of her pretty often."

The Coroner: Did you ever see her with a gun?—She carried one when her husband was out shooting sometimes.

Did you ever see her shoot, actually?—No, sir.

Did you ever hear her and her husband quarrelling?—No; she always seemed nice to him. She never seemed to contradict him.

A railway porter, Arthur Edwards, next described how he accompanied Mr. Osterlitz from Pluckley Station to the Grange between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Tuesday, and saw a piece of paper pinned to the door.

The Coroner: You saw this notice on the door. Did you tell anybody about it?—Yes, several people.

It is rather unusual to see a message on a door, "Send for the police."—I knew they were funny people. I did not know what to think of it. I thought it was to frighten people away.

"WOULD HAVE BEEN WISER."

Do you think a notice, "Send for the police," would frighten people?—It might do, sir.

Don't you think it would have been wiser if you had gone straight off and told somebody? You see the notice and do nothing except tell a few gossips, is that it?—The witness did not reply.

Did you see a constable at all that day?—No.

Not until he came to you the next day?—No.

Not until he came to you the next day?—No.

Did you tell the station-master?—Yes, I told him.

The Coroner: Well, personally I think I should have done something more if I had been in your position.

The postman, Thomas Grover, who saw the paper on Wednesday morning, said that after he had finished his round he told the postmistress, who communicated with the police.

Describing how the bodies were found, Police-sergeant Payne said the woman lay on the bed with a wound in her left side. The bedclothes were saturated, and there was a pool of blood on the floor.

THE REVOLVER.

Mr. Berndt was fully dressed, and lay on his back near the back door. There was the track of a bullet through his clothing and a wound in his left breast.

Four feet from his left hand was a loaded revolver; one of its six chambers had been emptied.

The witness produced a revolver and a double-barrelled gun found in the bedroom. The gun was loaded in both barrels with cartridges, similar to two empty ones which were in Mr. Berndt's trousers pocket.

There were two revolver cartridges on the foot of the bed. On the kitchen table two letters were lying open. Two other letters were on the floor.

The coroner, holding one of the latter, explained that it was the one addressed to Mr. Osterlitz.

Dr. Ballard, of the neighbouring village of Smarden, said that Mrs. Berndt was lying in the natural position of a person asleep.

There were three wounds in the body, produced by two shots. Two of the ribs were completely smashed, and the contact had flattened many of the shots which he took

from the wound.

In his opinion Mr. Berndt took the revolver in his right hand and shot himself with the barrel held close against the waistcoat, because the clothing was singed. He was shot through the head.

Police-Superintendent Jones produced documents found when the police searched the house yesterday.

In a bureau in the dining room he found five £100 Chinese bonds, with two Brazilian bank coupons. These were in a sealed envelope addressed "Frau. K. Osterlitz."

There was a certificate for the following stocks: £250 City of Pietermanitzburg, £250 Borough of Durban, £250 City of Bloemfontein, and a certificate of transfer for part of the estate to Mrs. Berndt's will made in favour of Max Osterlitz. There was a certificate showing that Mr. and Mrs. Berndt were married at Fulham on May 18, 1898.

Mr. Berndt was described then as age thirty-seven, a financial agent, of 5, Sinclair-gardens, Hammersmith, the father's name being Bernard Berndt, of independent means.

The woman's maiden name was given as Edith Lilian Allen, twenty-nine, spinster,

address 49, Sydney-street, Chelsea, and her father's name John Allen, deceased, general merchant.

There was a box of jewellery, including two gold watches and diamond rings and earrings.

In the kitchen was a diary, the last entry in which was made on Monday. This only referred to poultry.

The Coroner said there were two letters, one in pencil and one in ink. Neither was dated. The letter in ink was addressed to the coroner, and ran:—

I have killed my wife. For days and nights some awful feeling has possessed me to do away with myself and leave my own darling alone in the world.

I simply could not do it. As it happens, my brother-in-law arrived from Berlin this afternoon at five at Pluckley Station. He will accede to the wishes of my dear Lily and myself to be cremated together.

Please inform Messrs. Ward, Bowie, and Co., of London.

May Almighty God have mercy on both our souls, but I cannot see my own darling breathe and suffer, so had to go down and

shoot her again.

The next letter, in pencil, also addressed to the coroner, ran:—

Sir,—I am calmer now, and realise more what I have done. I am waiting for my death until later, as I wish to see the animals fed till early afternoon. The night I had was frightful, and I lay awake all the time, and when early morning came I could not stand it longer.

We have been happy, very happy together, even though my darling, here and then, lost her temper, but I forgive, and hope, too, may be forgiven.

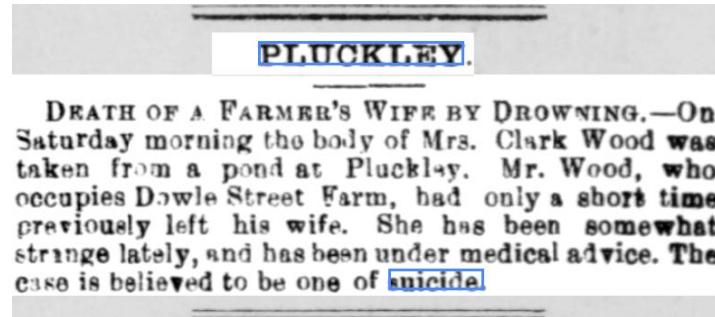
Our lonely life is at an end. My wife has no relatives in the world. She did not know her own poverty, and that, perhaps, made her feel sometimes at war with society.

The jury found that Mr. Berndt had wilfully murdered his wife, and afterwards committed suicide.

Fact 6: Farmers wife drowns

No mention of her ghost

1897



Fact 7: Previously mentioned suicide in Pluckley 1856

Additional Fact: In 1856 John Philpot Skeer/Skier committed suicide in a field.

A known criminal (larceny) Second witness: John Cork also known criminal (larceny):

Could this be the ghost attributed to Turff?

PLUCKLEY.

SUICIDE.—On Friday, an inquest was held at the Black Horse, on the body of John Skier, an agricultural labourer, in the employ of Sir Edward Dering. James Skier, a boy of 13 years of age, stated that deceased, who was his father, had been ill for several weeks, but was on Thursday morning working in the field, as usual. Witness missed him about five o'clock, and proceeding in search, found him suspended by a piece of small cord, one end being fastened round a staple fixed in a part of the hay house, and the other end round his neck. Witness touched him, and found he was dead. Assistance was then obtained. John Cork, a labourer, also in the employ of Sir Edward Dering, deposed that he had known the deceased, and had worked with him on the same farm, for 20 years. He had spoken to him several times of late, but had noticed nothing particular. On the day in question he was called, and found the deceased as described by the last witness. The jury returned a verdict of "Temporary insanity."

Fact 8: Pluckley Remount Service from 1914

Possible mention of his ghost

As mentioned above: *Sergeant Major Alfred John BAKER DCM. Pluckley Remount Depot, Army Remount Service (ARS) died 17th February 1915 aged 51 years. Alfred was thrown from his horse at the Pluckley railway station en route to the "Remount Depot". Reported in the Kentish Express on 27th February 1915. He fell in the road fracturing his skull.*

Today there are striking similarities in reports, written and video, that focus on the same tales with none of them mentioning any of the researched facts here and the question is: why not?

These factual stories would add to the mystery of Pluckley, if indeed there is a mystery. Reports tell of there being no legends or ghostly sightings until the end of WWI when

the Army Remount Service formed in Pluckley, supplying horses for the military. Perhaps new blood in the village may have been more gullible to stories over a pint at the inn.

Most Haunted Village?

This was how Pluckley was mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records in 1989.

Not only was it never reprinted, but no such claim was made for any other place following it. The given explanation was that they only deal with World Records, and it was printed as a question because there are no scientific ways to prove it.

It is also worth noting that no ghostly vision has been openly documented since. Has the overwhelming attention of television, tourists and ghost hunters left the village desperate for a more peaceful existence? Are 'bumps in the night' down-cried or no longer shared with the wider audience? Certainly, the chocolate box image would be retained without such notoriety and would allow the residents to live a calm and peaceful life.

The shame of it is that there is a story worthy of a Jane Austen novel.....

12th Baronetcy extinct with no issue to inherit 1975

1975 [[edit](#)]

- [Blake of Langham](#) (cr. 8 October 1772), extinct with the death of the sixth baronet.
- [Charles of The Abbey Grange and Manchester Square](#) (cr. 20 March 1928), extinct with the death of the third baronet.
- [Dering of Surrenden Dering, Kent](#) (cr. 1 February 1626), extinct with the death of the twelfth baronet on 16 March 1975.
- [Hawkey of Woodford](#) (cr. 5 July 1945), extinct with the death of the second baronet.
- [Mappin of Thornbury](#) (cr. 27 August 1886), extinct with the death of the sixth baronet.
- [Verner of Verner's Bridge](#) (cr. 22 July 1846), extinct with the death of the sixth baronet on 27 March 1975.

Surrenden House burned down in 1952