

## **A GHOST STORY**

How many of us believe in ghosts and ghost stories? Well, I for one did not until some years ago when I experienced some strange, unusual experiences in a house I used to live in in the village. If you are of a nervous disposition do not read any further.

The house I lived in for many years, first with my parents, then with my wife, was called 'Sunnyside' in Park Walk. On one side, and attached to it was the doctor's surgery. On the other side, and part of the same building as our house, were rooms used as offices and storage rooms for the fellmonger's yard, namely Jabez Rowell Ltd. The doors common to both our house and the offices had long since been blocked up.

One evening, about twenty five years ago, I was sitting with my mother and father watching television when we heard a noise in the hall. I decided to investigate so I got up and went through the door into the hall and switched on the light – but no light came on. I fetched a torch to see what was wrong. There was no bulb in the light socket. Now, the strange part of this incident is the stairs went up the side of the hall and underneath the stairs we had a drop-leaf table, the dropped table top coming to within a few inches of the floor. The floor was tiled and a very hard surface. The light socket hung five feet away from this table and the stairs. I shone the beam of the torch around the hall looking to see where the bulb had gone, and I found the remains of it, broken, right underneath the table. What I cannot understand is how it came to be in this place. Surely it would have broken on contact with the hard floor, but that would have been right underneath the light socket. Surely it could not have fallen, without breaking, onto the floor, and then rolled this distance before breaking. Strange.

The next strange incident in this house occurred a few years later during the Christmas season. My mother had been ill so she and my father were sleeping in the front room downstairs. We had a decorated Christmas tree standing on a table in the bay window of this room. Because my mother was not well, there was a night light burning so the room was not completely dark. During the night my father was woken by the faint tinkle of a bell. He looked around the room and across at the Christmas tree. There, on one of the branches of the tree, was a glass bell swinging backwards and forwards, faintly ringing with each motion of the swing. Soon it stopped and there was silence.

My father was a bit puzzled, but assumed that a draught was coming from the window so he got out of bed and went to check the windows. No window was in the slightest bit open and the night outside was calm and peaceful. There was no draught, We also had long, heavy, fully-lined curtains. There was no draught.

Father got back into bed and lay there a long while watching the bell, but there was no more movement from it. 'Humbug' he thought and gradually fell asleep.

The final strange incident that happened to my family in that house was a few years later. By this time I was married and our son, Edward, had been born and

was six months old. He had been ill with bronchitis and the doctor had told us to keep him in constant room temperature. We happened to be in the same room, the front one downstairs, where my parents had been in the previous incident. We had put the baby's cot in the alcove next to the chimney breast, and our bed was in the same position as my parents' had been, that is facing the window. We had a night light burning so we could see the baby if he woke up.

During the night my wife woke up and she looked around the room and there, looking over towards the baby, was a most ghostly figure. It then looked at her and she immediately pulled the covers over her head and started shaking like a leaf. Thinking it must have been a dream she peeped out of the covers again – nothing was there.

The following morning she told me about it and I agreed that it was a vivid dream, until she described the face of the figure. It was a perfect, detailed description of a photograph which I had seen, but she hadn't, of Jabez Rowell, the previous owner and occupier of our house.

So, maybe I just do believe in ghosts. Now, why do you?

Carl Hector

October 1982

Bygone Brigstock Issue 4

