



Upton's Ghost

Thomas Bound, who came of an old Upton family, a puritan in religion and politics, was churchwarden in 1640 and 1641. He became Captain of an Upton volunteer corps in the Civil War and helped to turn out the popular rector, William Woodforde. He probably devised the scheme by which the bridge and the church were captured in 1651.

Bound, a grim and covetous man, is said to have disposed of two of his three wives, forging the will of his last wife on her deathbed. He took his own life by drowning in the Causeway pool between his homes at Soley's Orchard in Rectory Road and Southend Farm. There are many legends of his haunting the neighbourhood, sometimes on horseback, and frequent fancied sightings; so, eventually his ghost had to be exorcised.

His bones were later removed from the parish church; his skull was taken by a tradesman and became a drinking cup. Even now, when a pony gets out on the road, there are people who shut their doors exclaiming "Here he comes again!"

The Ghost of Thomas Bound's Cat lurks around every corner. The one eyed cat who travelled extensively around England, at the time of Oliver Cromwell, was a fiddler of the first order. He reached notes other fiddlers could not reach, he jugged and reeled in a manner unaccustomed to his feline breed, and he danced his way from tavern to tavern following the sound of music, song and laughter. Thomas Bound may still be seen riding on his horse in Rectory Road by Soley's Orchard, but the cat is only seen these days on the occasion of Upton's Folk Frolics on May Day Bank Holiday. His wooden leg is heard thumping the boards in time to his jigs and reels. His tail flaps wildly at the feet of a Morris Man (whose dancing steadily diminishes with the passing of time and beer).

Losing his leg in a Worcester fight, his present leg was a gift of oak from a tall dark cavalier who hid in an old tree.

With thanks to Roger Davies, who collected the story from an unimpeachable local source.