

File 4 p. 45 • A fertile ground for mystery novels

The Secret of High Eldersham, Miles Burton

Samuel Whitehead, landlord¹ of the Rose and Crown, is a stranger in the lonely East Anglian village of High Eldersham. When the newcomer is stabbed to death in his pub and Scotland Yard is called to the scene, it seems that the veil dividing High Eldersham from the outside world is about to be lifted.

1. *propriétaire*

The Measby Murder Enquiry, Ann Purser

Cantankerous¹ spinster² Ivy Beasley has quickly learned that spending her golden years in the quaint³ village of Barrington won't be as quiet as she thought. Ivy hasn't been in Springfields for long, but she's already found new friends, formed a detective agency, and solved a murder. And as autumn falls, Ivy and her team are asked to investigate a mysterious death in the village of Measby – in between card games, of course.

1. *acariâtre* 2. *vieille fille* 3. *charming*

Death in an English cottage, Sara Rosett

It is spring in England; Kate Sharp has returned to the quaint village of Nether Woodsmoor to work on a Jane Austen¹ television documentary.

When an unidentified young woman dies in a fire in a village cottage, the police investigation narrows to focus on the documentary crew².

Desperate to keep her job, Kate delves into the search for the identity of the woman. Who was she? What was her connection to the seemingly sleepy village? And who in the village is lying?

1. *famous British writer* 2. *team*

File 4 p. 46 • Desperately seeking Sue

A cryptic¹ message spotted in a field in Oxfordshire has had curious social media users – and police – searching for a mystery “Sue”. In a picture tweeted by the National Police Air Service (NPAS), the letters SUE could be seen etched² into the field in Tetsworth, near Thame in Oxfordshire. Police encouraged social media users to spread the message “far and wide” to track down Sue. For two days, she kept officers guessing. Twitter users were coming up with their own conclusions.

14:07, UK, 2017

1. enigmatic 2. *tracées*

Anna Lockwood

Alien invasion or sneaky piece of marketing? Some conspiracy theorists may wonder #WhoisSue after farmer’s message in a field goes viral:
theguardian.com/uk-news...

The farmer probably spelled the letters out by spraying weedkiller on the field.

Pete @PeteCoe74

You’re sure it’s not an advert for a local law firm?

5:57 PM – Nov 2, 2017

dylan godfroy @dylangodfroy532

Nope, could be a loved one of that person trying to get in on google maps to show how much they love her maybe?

1:35 AM – Nov 3, 2017

Peter Mendell @PSPandaBear

She must be a pilot.

8:20 AM – Nov 3, 2017

File 4 p. 47 • Yet another mystery in Oxfordshire

A new mystery has gripped the Oxfordshire settlement after a series of odd white markings started appearing on its pavements. Initially, panic spread. Locals feared the arrows and crosses could be a burglars' "Da Pinchi¹ Code" left outside homes. What followed was a flurry² of frantic messages left online. On the "Spotted: Kidlington" page, one poster worried that there had been "a few break-ins³ where these marks are" and another reported markings after they found some behind their house.

Worried residents even made several calls to Thames Valley Police.

www.telegraph.co.uk/news , 2016

1. pinch = *voler* **2.** *une vague de* **3.** burglaries

File 4 p. 48 • Murder at the vicarage

Introduction: Griselda Clement, the Vicar's wife, is organising a tea party at the vicarage of Saint Mary Mead. She and her husband are discussing who they are going to invite.

"My duty," said Griselda, "my duty as the Vicaress. Tea and scandal at four-thirty."

"Who is coming?"

Griselda ticked them off¹ on the fingers with a glow of virtue on her face.

"Mrs Price Ridley, Miss Wetherby, Miss Hartnell, and that terrible Miss Marple."

"I rather like Miss Marple," I said. "She has, at least, a sense of humour." [...]

"She's the worst cat in the village," said Griselda. "And she always knows every single thing that happens – and draws the worst inferences from it."

"I wonder what we shall have for tea," said Griselda, seating herself on my writing-table. "Dr. Stone and Miss Cram, I suppose, and perhaps Mrs Lestrangle. By the way, I called on her yesterday, but she was out. Yes, I'm sure we shall have Mrs Lestrangle for tea. It's so mysterious, isn't it, her arriving like this and taking a house down here, and hardly ever going outside it? Makes one think of detective stories. You know – "Who was she, the mysterious woman with the pale, beautiful face? What was her past story? Nobody knew. There was something faintly sinister about her." I believe Dr. Haydock knows something about her."

"You read too many detective stories, Griselda," I observed mildly.

Agatha Christie, *Murder at the Vicarage*, 1930

1. count one by one

File 4 p. 49 • Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of death

Introduction: Agatha Raisin, a newcomer in the village of Carsely, has taken part in a quiche competition. Mr. Cummings-Browne, her neighbour, died in the night, and Agatha is suspected of having poisoned him with her quiche. Bill, the local policeman, has come to tell her about the case.

Agatha asked all about the case, all the details she had not asked before. M. Cummings-Brown had been found dead in the morning. Then why, asked Agatha, had Mrs. Cummings-Browne gone straight up to bed?

“Oh, that was because her husband was usually late, drinking at the Red Lion.” [...]

“Anyway, how did you guess I never cooked that quiche? For you did, you know, even before I baked¹ one.”

“The minute I saw there wasn’t a single baking ingredient in the kitchen, I was sure,” he laughed. “I asked you to make one to be absolutely sure. You should have seen your face!”

“Oh, very funny.”

He looked at her curiously. What an odd² woman she was, he thought. Her shiny, well-groomed hair was not permed but cut in a sort of Dutch bob³ that somehow suited her square, rather truculent⁴ face. Her body was square and stocky and her legs surprisingly good. “What,” asked Bill, “was so special to a recently ex-high-powered businesswoman like yourself about winning a village competition?”

“I felt out of place,” said Agatha bleakly⁵. “I wanted to make my mark on the village.”

He laughed happily, his eyes closing into slits. “You’ve just done that. Mrs. Cummings-Browne knows now you cheated and so does Fred Griggs, the local bobby, and he’s a prize gossip.”

Agatha felt too humiliated to speak. So much for her dream home. She would need to sell up. How could she face anyone in the village?

M.C. Beaton, *Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death*, 1992

1. cook in an oven
2. strange
3. *coupe au carré*
4. aggressive, bad-tempered
5. *d'un air sombre*

File 4 p. 50 • Pluckley: the most haunted village in England?

When I stop at the Mundy Bois country pub and ask for directions to Pinnock Bridge, a local old man sizes me up¹ from his barstool. “You’re looking for the ghost of the Watercress² Woman, then?”

In the run-up to Hallowe’en, I’m in Pluckley in Kent because the village and surrounding area has between 12 and 16 ghosts. Guinness World Records, in 1989, named Pluckley the most haunted village in England.

Its paranormal portfolio includes a screaming man who may have worked at the village brickworks and fallen to his death, a highwayman³ who is said to have been run through with a sword and who appears as a shadowy figure, and an old woman who used to sit on a bridge, smoking her pipe, drinking gin and selling the watercress she had gathered from the stream.

What better place could there be to frighten oneself at Hallowe’en?

I set off for Pinnock Bridge on foot along a quiet country road that winds its way through pretty farmland. It is decidedly unspooky.

Pinnock Bridge is a low stone structure completely covered in ivy⁴ and partially obscured by the lower branches of trees. Now that I’m here, I’m not entirely sure what to do with myself.

With or without proof, I find Pluckley far too pretty to be spooked, although those with a penchant for the paranormal may find that it fits the bill perfectly.

Adapted from Francesca Hoyles, *www.telegraph.co.uk*, 30 October 2008

1. *jauger* 2. *cresson* 3. *brigand* 4. *lierre*

File 4 p. 55 • Lucifer over Lancashire!

It was the setting for one of England's most infamous witches' covens¹.

So the discovery of a mummified cat sealed into the walls of a 17th century cottage was yesterday described by historians as "spellbinding²".

The unfortunate animal – associated with witches for centuries – was apparently buried alive to protect the inhabitants from evil spirits. The discovery was made by water engineers on a construction project. The building contained a sealed room, with a mummified cat bricked into the wall.

Simon Entwistle, an expert on the Pendle witches, said: "In terms of significance, it's like discovering Tutankhamun's tomb. The building is in remarkable condition. You can walk through it and get a real sense that you're peering into the past. Even before we discovered the building, there were lots of jokes from the lads about broomsticks³ and black cats. The find has really stunned us all."

The Pendle witchcraft saga began in March 1612 when local woman Alizon Device was accused of bewitching a pedlar⁴ for some metal pins.

Branded a witch, she in turn accused a neighbouring family of involvement in black magic, and after the Good Friday⁴ gathering, eight women and two men were hanged as witches.

Archaeologist Frank Giecco said: "It's like discovering your own little Pompeii. We rarely get the opportunity to work with something so well preserved."

www.dailymail.co.uk, 2011

1. *sabbat de sorcières*
2. *fascinating*
3. *manches à balai*
4. *colporteur*
5. *Vendredi Saint*