

The Tong Boggart

Tong farm house bore the date stone of 1851 and was built in the style of many Georgian houses with heavy stone mullioned windows, the roof and gables decorated with oblong stone balls. At the time of the Boggart the house was occupied by a man known as " Owd Robin O' Greaves" and his thrifty and bustling wife Mally. Robin and his family had occupied the house virtually since it was built. Whilst the Boggart did make some unwanted visits to the house it mainly concentrated it's visits around the barn and shippon attached to the house often frightening the householders out of their wits. The Tong Boggart is said to have infested the whole neighbourhood so much so that the young men of the area refused to venture out at night to visit their sweethearts. It was said that the spirit howled so dreadfully, sounding as one man described it as though two armies of cats were having a punching fight. The Bogart's dress was described as that of a white sheet draped like a Roman toga, to which some added a barbed tail. Many reason for the Boggart haunting were put forward, one such was that some unfortunate person had been murdered near the barn belonging to the farm.

Owd Robin and his wife told how the Boggart held noisy and alarming symposiums with kindred spirits in the barn at night. Walked about the house at nights turning over furniture and tipping milk dishes upside down (without however spilling any of the contents). Owd Robin was said to love his wife Mally dearly and was never slow to let other folk know of is love and admiration. However on one visit of the Boggart Owd Robin when woken from sleep by the Boggart jumped to the back of the bed and pleaded " Oh! Mistur Boggart! tak' Mally, Tak' Mally! ". It is said that Mally never forgave Robin for his readiness in making her over to the Boggart.

Jonathon Trigger and his sighting of the " Owd Lad ". In a cottage near the farm lived Owd Jonathon Trigger a hand loom weaver, known to all as Trigger as he had been a soldier fighting for Wellington in his youth. Triggers cottage was a meeting place for local gossip and tales of the war. Jonathon also regaled his visitors with tales of the Boggart and how one night whilst spying through the air-slits in the shippon wall he had seen " The Owd Lad " himself, presiding over a congress of witches and and Boggart's. He was certain that the apparition he had seen was that of the devil as he had seen the horns and hoofs and barbed tail tucked under his arm to prove it so. Jonathon was clearly of the opinion that the " Owd Lad " had been preaching.

Ormerod Butcher and his terrible fright.

On the lonely hillside near to the limits of Owd Robins farm at Tong was a shippon belonging to a Bacup butcher, who had a apprentice working for him known to all as "Ormerod Butcher". This young man was never slow to let his disbelief in the Boggart be known, and so one night with the help no doubt of Jonathon Trigger, Owd Robin and family decided to play a prank on the young butcher. The butcher was in the habit of going to his masters shippon at night time to milk the cows and on his way too and from had to pass the Boggart haunted farmhouse. One dark night the conspirators lay in wait for the unsuspecting butcher with his full pail of milk. At a stile near the farm stood two large spreading trees, in between which Owd Robin and Co had placed a rather large rocking chair upside down. The rockers of the chair in the dusk stood out, rather like two horns, and that chair having been covered with a white sheet, presented a ghost like appearance. Then the conspirators hid themselves to watch the poor unsuspecting butcher. Down the path came the innocent butcher whistling cheerily, milk pail in one hand lantern in the other. When he passed though the stile, close to the farmhouse, he came upon the frightening apparition. Speechless for a moment he then caught his breath and began shouting " The Boggart! the Boggart! " down went the pail, and lantern and down the pathway flew the terror stricken butcher, alarming the whole neighbourhood with his frantic cries of " The Tong Boggart!. It

is said that nothing thereafter could make the young butcher visit his masters shippon after dark.