

# THE BLACKSMITHS HOUSE

A Christmas tale by  
John Ellis

The following is the collected Facebook posts put up over the few weeks leading up to Christmas 2012. Comments are selected from my own comments made in response to Facebook friends comments (there were a lot!) on the posts. The story was intended to be a homage to Charles Dickens and his Christmas Ghost stories.

Post:

A very, very strange thing happened today. I was clearing leaves in my garden, in a place where I seldom venture. It's a bit overgrown, and to be honest, I've always had a little bit of a bad feeling about being in that part of the garden. I raked the leaves, put them in a big pile in the hope that a hedgehog might choose it as a nice place to bed up for the winter.

Once I'd cleared the space. I found some pretty heavy looking brambles starting to take hold, so I decided to dig them up, roots and all. As I put my garden fork into the ground to get under the bramble roots I hit something that was very solid. And I was sure it gave off a metallic sound when I hit it with the fork. Having had a very interesting archeological experience in my mum's garden recently concerning a covered floor/road, I thought I might have found something equally interesting in my own garden.

So I decided to dig away at the soil in the area. As I cleared and dug it became obvious that there was some kind of hard metal object buried in the ground. So I removed as much soil as I could with fork and spade and then got into it with my hands. Now I know that my garden was laid over an area that used to belong to a blacksmith. So I expected the metal to be maybe a large piece of pig iron connected to the smithy. As I dug and cleared more, it revealed itself to be a small metal door, lying horizontally. It's like the door of a safe, set into some brickwork that obviously extends well beyond the area that I am digging around. It doesn't have a handle, but it does have a keyhole.

Here's the strange thing. When we moved into our house, we had a new fireplace put into our living room. When the workmen removed a load of old brickwork they found a small tin. In the tin there was one key wrapped in some kind of oiled paper that had the word "garden" written on it. I've been a little disturbed all day to be honest. And about 10 minutes ago the phone rang. When I answered a voice simply said "stop" and hung up. I dialed 1471 but it was an undisclosed number. I am totally freaked by this. I have the key on the table as I type. And I can see out of my window to the place where the door with the lock is. I have a feeling tomorrow might be a very interesting day. And I have a feeling I won't be getting any sleep tonight.

Comments:

I am not writing a novel or anything similar. I have a very stiff drink in hand!

Oh fuck. I've just had the phone call again!!!!

Look folks. This isn't a stunt or anything. I don't even know if the key from the fireplace will fit the lock. I will go out in the next day or 2 and see but I've got to say those 2 phone calls have seriously messed with my head.

One of the reasons I always felt weird in that part of the garden was that I felt like I was being watched.

Post:

Had a terrible night last night thinking about yesterday's events so put the light on and started my annual read of Dicken's "Christmas Carol" to put me in the Xmas spirit. It's pouring outside so won't be going into the garden with the key. Had a nasty message accusing me of doing all this to promote my Kickstarter project. There's some very strange people out there.

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Post:

During the day I have had a lot of comments and direct messages about the find in the garden, so thank you to all of you who have done so. In particular, I have received a direct message from someone who seems to know what they are talking about. They asked me a number of questions about the location of my house and some about what trees were in the garden when we moved in (they already seemed to know the answer).

They have also warned me in NO UNCERTAIN TERMS to fill in the hole tomorrow morning and let the whole thing lie. Given how disturbed I felt last night I am going to take their advice. And I will not be taking any photos (their advice too) to bring back into the house or have on my phone or camera. I have to say I'm a bit nervous about going out there tomorrow.

Comment:

I don't think it's a door into a space like a cellar. From what I saw of it yesterday, I'd say it's more like a metal box.

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Post:

Another bad night. Couldn't get to sleep again so carried on with Christmas Carol up to the spirit of Xmas present. Then an amazing thing happened. I was overcome with a very powerful feeling of lightness, as if a weight had lifted from my shoulders and then had a really deep sleep. Police not interested in taking a look in the garden so going out later to put the removed soil back over whatever it is and then draw a line under the whole thing.

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Post:

This is unbelievable!! It's taken me several hours to get my head round what happened in the garden this morning. When I looked out of the window prior to going out to fill it all in (acting on advice from someone whose opinion I respect) the area that used to freak me out was filled with birds. On the ground and in the trees. Now, since we moved in 19 years ago, I have never seen a bird in that part of the garden. Even the neighbour's cats don't go here. So I knew something strange was going on.

When I got out there the box/trunk/door had been removed. Someone has been in my garden overnight and taken the fucking thing! And even weirder, they have left a horseshoe in the space where the thing was. Strangely, I felt really at ease when I found all this. The horseshoe had three very old looking rusty nails attached to it with wire and what looked like a bundle of hair wrapped in a rotted black ribbon attached to the top of the curve of the shoe. It had been placed in the middle of the hole which turns out to be about 2 feet deep. A load of bricks had caved in around the horseshoe.

I've filled the hole in now.

The atmosphere in that part of the garden has completely changed. I feel really comfortable and relaxed there. I don't want to call the police because there's nothing for them to see now and to be honest I don't think they'd believe any of this.

There are only 3 places anyone could have got in. From my neighbours on either side or from one of the houses at the back of my garden. I did have a quick look at the back. One of the houses has been empty for years which is pretty strange in itself given that people snap up property round here. About 4 months ago I thought I saw someone looking out of the top floor window of the empty house that overlooks my garden but I dismissed that as imagination. We have high willow panels along the back wall. Some of the panelling looked like it had been snapped and broken off. I've not noticed that before.

So as far as I'm concerned that's it. I'm not going to take it any further. The last few days have been pretty unreal and I just want to get back to my work now. I really appreciate all the support and advice from my many wonderful Facebook friends. This is a very social network and your concern has been truly touching.

Comments:

Something tells me it hasn't been stolen but taken back.

Maybe I was being watched. I don't know. And maybe it was taken back so that I didn't find whatever was inside. I'm pretty sure now from the shape of the hole that it was a box or trunk.

The voice, even though it lasted only the length of one word, was not one I recognised. My phone number is all over the place locally because of my guitar teaching.

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Post:

Just had a call from an old friend who has been watching this FB conversation who informs me the houses at the back of my garden were built on the site of the blacksmiths. And that there is an old local folk tale that the smithy had been there for many centuries and might have had Templar connections. It's certainly true that I live within a mile of an area called Temple Mills in Leyton. There were mills there that did belong to the Templars.

Comment:

If someone just nicked it on the offchance there was something valuable in it, why leave the horseshoe?

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Post:

Re: recent events. Just had an interesting conversation with my neighbour about the family that lived in my house before us. Every time the 2 kids played in the part of the garden where I unearthed the metal thing they, in her words, "went crazy and acted like they were possessed". Otherwise very well behaved.

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Post:

Just when I thought the weird stuff last week had settled down I think it just got weirder. I was in the kitchen making a cuppa when I thought I saw something out of the side of my eye. I looked but nothing there. Even looked out into the garden. We have a door into the garden with a large window in it. I had my cuppa in my office and as I was bringing the empty cup into the kitchen I saw what I thought was a young boy in the garden. I had my phone in hand too and took a very hurried pic. I put the phone down and ran off to get the key to unlock the door so that I could go out and nab the little bastard. When I got into the garden he had disappeared. 2 strange things. As I got into the garden I felt very calm and relaxed again. Now that I look at the picture, he's looking down right on the spot where I found the object last week, whatever it was.

There are a lot of new children in nearby rented houses. I'm gonna keep my eyes open to see if I spot him.

Comments:

He was definitely real. Probably just a kid looking for stuff to nick from gardens. Once again, cops not particularly interested. Nothing was stolen as far as I can see.

Yes he was looking down at the spot where the box was.

Whoever took it is welcome to it. The atmosphere in that part of the garden has changed for the better since it was taken.

We did once have to have the house "cleared" of a spirit. We used to get really powerful smells of cigar smoke, even though we don't smoke. And when I was working on the house before we moved in, I used to put tools down and find them moved. Eventually we called someone in who reckoned it was the spirit of a sea captain who lived in the house when it was first built. She went upstairs and had a "chat" with the spirit and asked it to leave us alone. Haven't had any cigar smells since.

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Post:

Phew! Just had a lucky escape! I went shopping a couple of hours ago and when I got home I found the front door slightly opened. We do have a problem with the lock. I probably didn't slam it hard enough. I was expecting the worst when I got in. Had a good look round but nothing has been touched or taken.

Comments:

I've just had a look in the cellar. The key is still there except I'm not so sure it's the original key. It looks kind of "newer". We have a big jar of old keys on a shelf nearby. And there was a really powerful smell in the cellar. Like a mixture of coal and leather. And sweat. I think I might see if the key fits any of the old locks in the house.

My hands are actually shaking now.

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Post:

Update on the "Garden Incident". Last night I slept in my back bedroom because it's better for my back. In the middle of the night I was woken up by the sound of a baby crying. The sound seemed to be coming from right outside the window which is on the top floor of the house. Initially I thought I was dreaming and went back to sleep. What felt like an hour later the sound was back again, but louder. It was very upsetting to hear that pitiful noise so I got dressed and went downstairs to investigate.

It was bloody cold outside and when I got to the place where I thought the sound had come from, there was nothing there. I had a pretty heavy torch with me so I thought I'd go up the garden to see if I could find anything. I went beyond the spot where the object had been taken from the ground up to the back where I discovered the source of the crying sound. An urban fox jumped out of the bushes right in front of me and jumped over the fence into my neighbours garden. They can sound very human sometimes.

But here's something weird...as I said in a previous posting, the house at the back of mine which was apparently built on the site of a very ancient blacksmiths forge has been empty for several years. Don't know why. Round here every house is stuffed, so why would a house lay empty for so long?

Anyway, and don't forget, this was 3 or 4 in the morning, as I watched the fox bugger off, a light came on in the upstairs window of the "blacksmiths" house and I could see a figure in silhouette waving, presumably at me. Not only that, I could see in the moonlight some pretty thick smoke coming from the chimney (I thought I could smell coal smoke in the air) and a faint banging noise. I looked at the figure for a minute and then impulsively waved back. Straight away the light went off and the banging noise stopped. Very weird. As I walked back to the house I had a very powerful feeling that the figure in the window was the little boy I'd seen in the garden recently. Needless to say, I'm writing this in a very strange state of mind having not been able to get back to sleep.

Comment:

I intend to go round today and see what's going on.

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Post:

I went round to the house at the back of the garden today. There's a "for sale" sign outside. I'd already decided I was going to knock on the door to see if they knew anything about the thing being taken out of the garden. There was no reply. When I looked through the letterbox there was no sign of anyone living there apart from a strong smell of coal smoke. The windows are still whitewashed but there was a little bit left off so I could see into the front room. It was absolutely stripped down to the floorboards. 3 of them had been lifted and left to the side. As I was walking away a neighbour arrived home with the shopping and confirmed that the house is empty and had been for years. I asked if it was possible squatters were living upstairs but she hadn't heard anything. I think she thought I wanted to buy the house! When I asked her why the house hadn't been sold she said there had been loads of people coming to see it over the last few years but it just wouldn't sell.

Comments:

The box was taken by someone during the night and replaced with a horseshoe. The old key looks like it's been nicked too, but not sure. The key doesn't fit any locks in the house.

I understand that this weird stuff reads like a story I'm making up. But I can tell you, these strange events are beginning to make me feel like I'm being haunted. I have a terrible sense of doom lingering over me all the time. I'm trying to be positive but....

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Post:

To the clever dick who thought it was a good idea to post a bagfull of horseshoe nails through my letterbox just now, I am not amused!!!

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Post:

After 2 sleepless nights and lots of thinking I've come to the conclusion that the source of all the recent events is the "Blacksmith's" house at the end of my garden. I can't take the tension any more so as soon as it gets dark tonight, I'm gonna get over the fence and see if there's a way I can get into the house and find out if there is anyone living there. I went back yesterday and knocked on the door but no reply.

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Post:

I got into the house. Now I know what the new/old key was for. It opened the back door. I saw some stuff. I'm still trying to process it all. I'm reluctant to post. Too weird.

Comments:

I think I will be going back very soon. I will be going with a friend who is ex S.A.S.

I wouldn't wish this terrible feeling of dread and darkness on anyone else. I feel like I've been called to this for a long time. I remembered last night as I was laying awake (I don't sleep very well now) the day we came to view this house. We weren't very keen at all, but for some reason, I thought it would be good to look in the garden. At that time there was a child's swing. Actually, now I think about it, it was almost directly over the spot where I found the box/thing and all this weird stuff kicked off. I sat on that swing and I was overcome with a feeling that we should buy the house. I persuaded my partner to change her mind and we put in a ridiculously low offer and got it accepted the next day!

I get the feeling I'm not going to be left alone till something's been finished.

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Post:

I've just had an interesting but slightly disturbing message from someone who claims to be a degree student from Japan who is researching British and European folk customs. She is focussing on the folklore around blacksmiths, believe it or not!!

She's pointed me to some stuff on their occult significance in African society, too. She claims to be in touch with a German scholar who has told her that "Blacksmiths were connected to the magical realm because of their ability to use fire to make things of iron. Iron, because it comes from the bowels of the earth, is directly linked to the primitive forces that link men to the underworld."

She says there is a 15th Century document that refers to "The Forgemaster's Gift".

She thinks this supports an apparently long held suspicion among folklore scholars that blacksmiths, when setting up a new forge, would sacrifice an animal and bury it directly beneath the anvil. She also claims that there is an account in a monastic library of a human sacrifice of "pious lad, clean of beard, without the sin of Adam upon him". Mmm. This is either a wind up (likely) or something that might shed some light on recent events.

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Post:

To those of you who have messaged me about what happened last night in the house at the end of the garden. I really do have to think long and hard about what I saw. I'm beginning to doubt my sanity. It's all so unbelievable in many ways. If I tell the truth about what I experienced it will just add grist to the mill for those who think I'm making this up or writing some kind of story.

Comments on someone's post:

Apparently, according to a neighbour who is an amateur historian, that little bit of the street was known to locals for years as Temple Jut. I don't know if that refers to the wall or to the little patch of land around the wall. He says there's an artifact up at the Vestry House museum that was found on that patch by the Victorian builders when they were building our houses. He says it's a roughly made clay figure of a man on a horse.

I've just been thinking about this. Why would a tiny patch of land have such an extraordinary name given to it? It's just a wall with a bit of ground in front of it. I think the wall was the only thing that was kept when they built the new houses about 11 years ago. I remember seeing it before they rendered and whitewashed it. It did look pretty old. Bigger bricks than I've seen before and what I guess was a bricked up window with a pointy top.

That wall was at the end of a very old small building, pretty much falling down and covered with ivy etc when we moved in. There was a beautiful big old yew tree growing through the middle that had grown up through the old roof.

See how much this stuff has messed with my head? I completely missed the connection between Temple Jut and the strangle little building that got pulled down and Temple Mills down the road in Leyton.

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Post:

It's nearly 8.00am and I've finally had a good nights kip. I've got a black coffee in front of me to kickstart the day. Toasted whole meal bagel with banana and honey for sustenance. I am looking through my kitchen window, along the garden to the house at the center of all this strangeness.

Now that I've slept properly, I can think a bit more clearly. Because I don't have anyone at home to share this stuff with, I've decided to share what I saw in the "blacksmiths" house with my FB friends. That way some of you might add some light to my own reading of all this. I will be as accurate as I can based on what I remember seeing that night in the light of my little torch.

Post:

Sorry folks. I was about to tell you about the events in the "blacksmiths" house when I got really sick. I've been throwing up most of the day. I think I might have caught my daughters Norovirus. Feeling a bit better now. Will do a post tomorrow.

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Post:

Much better today. Thanks for your kind messages. To pick up where I left off. I got into the house surprisingly easily. I took a ladder down and got over the fence. I also took a big screwdriver with me but didn't need it because I also had the "garden" key. There was something about that thing that made me drop it in my pocket.

It opened the back door which got me into the kitchen.

I tried the light but all the utilities are off so I had to rely on my little maglight torch to see anything.

The kitchen has been stripped. It looks like someone has been in at some point and nicked anything they could get their hands on. Cupboard doors, fridge, lightfittings etc. The only thing left was the metal sink unit. First weird thing: The sink looked spotlessly clean, like someone has been there recently and shined it up. Please remember this. I have a small light and I'm in a hurry to have a quick lookaround and get out a.s.a.p. In the sink there was a metal bowl about 8 inches in diameter. When I think about it now I think the bowl was like something you might see in a church or museum. Very old and beautifully engraved.

It was full of small white feathers. Full to the brim. I guess they were bird feathers. I moved out of the kitchen into the main bit of the house. I had to go past a door which I reckon goes down to a cellar like in my house. It was padlocked with what seemed to be a brand new lock. Very strong smell like coalsmoke just like I smelled in my cellar recently around that area.

Now I've come to the living room. This is where it gets very strange. The 2 downstairs rooms were joined together but were once separated by folding doors by the look of it. The room towards the front of the house had also been stripped bare. However several of the old floorboards had been lifted and pulled to the side. I shone my torch in and in the space between the boards and the rubble chucked onto the ground the house was built on, there was a metal box with the lid taken off and laid next to it. About two and a half feet long, eighteen inches wide and I guess the same in depth. Don't forget. These are fleeting impressions from my hasty look round. Something tells me it was the thing taken from my garden.

In the part of the room towards the back of the house there was an artificial xmas tree. About 3 feet high standing in the middle of the room. Someone had tied on a single bright red bow. The tree and the floor around it was also covered with silver confetti, but just the horseshoe shaped ones.

And around that space there were several patches of what looked like candle wax. They seemed to form a kind of circle around the tree. Strangely there was no junk mail by the front door.

I went upstairs to the bedrooms and bathrooms. Once again all rooms stripped bare apart from the bath and sink. The bath had a few of the white feathers in it. As I was leaving the bathroom I thought I heard some scratching right above my head. It was coming from the loft. We get the same thing. It's mostly mice scurrying around. There was a small flap door



into the loft but closed up with another brand new padlock. I was getting pretty shaky so got out and locked the back door as I left and got over the fence. I'm going back with my SAS mate. I need to know what is in the cellar and the loft!

Comments:

I'm not writing a book !!!! I get the feeling some of you think I am. Perhaps I should stop posting this and get through this weird stuff by myself.

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Post:

2 interesting messages received in the last hour since I posted. It turns out that one of my FB friends is a local retired police man. He says that the police have been to that house and actually nicked a couple of kids stealing fittings etc. But interestingly, he said "when the officers got back to the station, they seemed to be a bit shaky, like something strange had happened. But they refused to say anything other than the facts of the robbery". I've also had another message from the Japanese folklore student. She says medieval blacksmiths would often mix in "organic material like fur and feathers" to the molten iron to give whatever they were making the powers relating to the animal the material had come from. So if they were making arrow heads for example, they would mix in eagle feathers to make the arrows fly better.

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Post:

I forgot something about the Christmas tree I found. It was white. Actually quite pretty in a strange way. I had the feeling it wasn't "shop bought" but rather hand made. The bright red bow was tied right in the middle of the tree. It really stood out against the white of the tree, like it had some kind of significance being in that position. The horseshoe confetti was standard issue from a shop by the look of it.

Comment:

As I've said previously, I have been advised by someone who knows about what I might be dealing with here that taking pictures could put me in "grave danger", his words, not mine.

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Post:

Another bag of horseshoe nails mixed with horseshoe confetti through the letterbox last night!!

Comments:

It almost feels like bait, to get me to go back to that house!!

I was feeding the fish in my garden this morning. I'm pretty sure there was someone in the top floor window looking down at me. I had the distinct impression it was a young boy again but I felt he was crying or sobbing. That house was totally empty a few days ago.

I don't think there is anyone living there. It feels like the focal point of something much bigger than just that house.

Someone who knows about (I'm reluctant to use this word) paranormal activity, if that is what it is, has advised me not to put myself at risk by filming or taking photos.

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Post:

I laid awake again last night thinking about my snoop around the house at the end of the garden. Everything is bloody weird. The more I think of it, getting into the loft and cellar is important. Why would there be brand new padlocks on both places? It must be significant. So I'm going in tomorrow evening with my ex military mate Chris. He's bringing bolt cutters. I need to know WTF is going on!!

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Post:

Went into the house again a few hours ago with my now ex-mate Chris. We went in same as I did last time, over my back fence, and used the new/old key to let ourselves in through the kitchen door at the back of the house. Some of you are quite rightly concerned about me trespassing on someone elses property, but they are trespassing on my sanity and I need to get it sorted!!

Everything was mostly the same downstairs except that the bowl of feathers was gone from the kitchen sink. And there are now 2 red bows attached to the white artificial Christmas tree, so clearly someone has been in the house very recently. Chris was adamant about having a look in the loft first.

Because he is ex SAS and now working in security he knows a bit about locks. So rather than bolt cutting he thought it would be better to pick the lock and close it after we'd had a look. He got on my shoulders to do the lock and pull himself up and then released some loft steps so I could get up. As soon as I got in the loft I could tell Chris was getting nervous although he said he was OK. The roof space was totally empty but it had been floorboarded so people could walk around it, mostly stooped. And here comes more weirdness. There was something towards the gable end that looked like a table or large box has been covered with a large white cloth hanging down to the floor. I had a look at that cloth. It was embroidered all over with white stitching in the shape of horseshoes of various sizes. Really beautifully done.

And on the table or whatever it was, there was a plain silver cross about 2 feet high. Across the lateral arm was the word JERUSALEM in big embossed letters.

Chris was by now getting very agitated so we got down and closed the padlock. I asked him why he was getting worked up. He said he could very strongly sense another person in the loft with us! I couldn't see anywhere a person could be!

He was starting to get very iffy about having a look in the cellar but I told him I'd go first if he could pick the lock, which he did. So I went in with my little maglight torch. There were quite a few steps down to the floor. Before I'd even had time to have a look around Chris had bolted!! I could hear him crashing over the back fence in his hurry to get away and leave me alone. Thanks mate.

And I wasn't going to hang around but I needed to see what was there. I had a powerful sense that it was the source of everything that's happened to me recently. The cellar was like a proper room.

My torch picked out another object covered in cloth. About 2 feet high. The cloth was clearly embroidered with gold thread. Very rich looking like something from a church.

And there was something laid out on the floor in the corner that looked like something rolled up in a carpet but the same cloth of gold thread. About 4 feet long. I don't want to even think about that horrible thing. It scared the shit out of me just looking at it. I was quite close to the other object so I took a big breath and lifted a corner of the cloth. Although I've never been close to one, I'm 99% sure it was an anvil. That was enough for me and I bolted too. Tripped up the cellar stairs and now I've got a very bruised shin. I'm home now.

Quite calm now and trying to work out what I need to do next. But I'm getting this sorted by myself. Chris has left his bolt cutters in his panic and I'm going into that scary bloody cellar as soon as I get my nerve back.

Comments:

Something tells me that me going in there by myself is part of my destiny. I have given a friend a spare key to my house if there's an emergency and he needs to come in over the fence.

I'm taking the bolt cutters.

This is the house that the police have been to that apparently freaked out the constables that investigated the place when they nicked the thieves.

Post:

Every time I sit down and shut my eyes I see the same thing. Something lying on the floor in that cellar rolled up in some exquisitely made cloth.

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Post:

I have woken up in a very disturbed state of mind. I had a vivid and distressing dream last night.

In my dream I woke up feeling incredibly thirsty so I went down to the kitchen for some juice from the fridge.

When I walked into the kitchen a young boy was standing by the door leading to my garden. He would wave 3 times then turn round and point towards the house at the end of the garden (the "blacksmiths" house. He just kept doing it over and over. I was wearing a big wrist watch. I looked at the time. Instead of numbers around the face it just spelled out JERUSALEM. I knew the boy was the one I saw in my garden recently and the one who has waved to me from the blacksmiths house.

Next thing. I am looking the boy standing in a freshly dug hole in the spot in the garden where I found the box/object. He was crying and holding a bolt of cloth just like the one in the cellar. And sometimes he would point towards the house at the end of the garden. It started to rain so I ran back towards my house. Got to the door but it was locked. I looked down at my hands and realised the rain had turned to blood.

I tried to scream but couldn't make a sound. I guess that is when I woke up covered in sweat. I'm so disturbed I don't think I can work today.

Comment:

I have to finish this!

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Post:

Another bad night of dark dreams about the house at the end of the garden.

Yesterday I saw smoke coming from the chimney again so I walked around and banged on the door. No reply of course.

This morning I have woken up with a strange feeling that finding out what is going on will alter the course of my life. So I am going in tomorrow night. I will try to get some pictures.

Comment:

I think I have to meet my fate by myself.

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Post:

Steadying my nerves with a large Talisker before I go into the house at the end of the garden when it gets dark. Something tells me this will be a life changing event.

Comment:

Still trying to summon up the nerve to go in.

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Post:

I am going into the house at the end of the garden now. Shaking.

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Post:

I got in OK. Used the bolt cutters and I'm in the cellar. No one in the house. There's a mound of earth in the middle of the cellar with an anvil on top. I know what it is. It's a fucking grave. The gold embroidered cloth has been hung on the wall. It has the word Jerusalem picked out in gold. There are some big wet patches on it. I'm crouched in the corner. Someo

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Post:

The cellar door is locked. I can't get out of the cellar. It's really hot. I can hear people chanting. It's really hot. Someone has locked me in. No phone signal. Erik. You need to come now. It's so hot. No air. Erik please come no

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Post:

So hot. Eri

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Post:

Hello to all you amazing Facebook friends. By now, many of you will have realised that all the recent events in the garden were in fact a modern Dickensian Christmas ghost story. It's the bicentenary of the great man's birth and I wanted to create a homage to him and make the story a little xmas gift to you all.

Last night the story came to an early end (there was going to be one more posting) because many of you were concerned for my safety. I was truly amazed and touched by the kindness and friendship shown by my FB friends, many of whom I have never met.

So I want you to understand that once the story started, it had to be finished. I did try to leave clues. I started one post with the line "This is unbelievable" and I referenced Dickens several times. Plus not providing photo evidence was a clue, too.

In a way, we've been writing this together. Your comments gave it all another layer of possible reality.

Most importantly I want you to know that I have not done this to hurt, distress or take advantage of any of you. Far from it. Like Dickens relationship with his readers, I've loved being on the journey with you all through the medium of my Xmas story. As I've already said, your kindness, consideration and concern has been overwhelming and a wonderful display of the best of human nature. So if you're angry and upset I can only offer you my sincere apologies.

I wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.