

Mother Ludlam

Mother Ludlam is often referred to as the white witch of Waverley. There are various legends about her. She lived in a cave near Moor Park in the 19th century and helped poor people by lending them cooking utensils and furniture and was also a herbalist. Anyone who wanted to borrow an item visited the cave at midnight, turned around 3 times and repeated three times: "Pray Mother Ludlam, lend me ...(naming the article) and I will return it in two days." This person would return the next morning to find the item they required at the cave entrance. All went well until a large copper cauldron was borrowed but not returned on time. Mother Ludlam was so annoyed that she refused to take the cauldron back and refused to lend anything else again.

The cauldron was taken to Waverley Abbey where it remained until the Abbey ceased to exist and then was placed in Frensham Church. This church still has a large cauldron displayed inside.

Mother Ludlam's cave was paved and furnished with seats and turned into a 'Grotto.' William Cobbett visited the spot with his son Richard in 1825 and was shocked by the condition of the cave and its surroundings. This is a quote from his writing; "But alas! It is not the enchanted place that I knew it, that which Grose describes in his antiquities! The semi-circular paling is gone; the basins, to catch the never ceasing little stream, are gone: the iron cups fastened by chain, for people to sit on, both sides of the cave, torn up and gone; the stream that ran down a clean paved channel, now making a dirty gutter; and the ground opposite, which was a grove, chiefly of laurels, intersected by closely-mowed grass walks, now become a poor, ragged looking alder-coppice"

This information was taken from Farnham Museum collections.
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