



The Dead Gypsy in Carter's Lane

If you have ever driven up Carters Lane towards North Marston, on passing Quainton Dairy you may have noticed a standing stone in the passing point above Quainton Dairy. This is the Gypsy Stone, and the story behind it goes back 380 years.

In those days, Carters Lane was home to a large community of Romany Gypsies, in fact, it was commonly known as Gypsy Lane. Generally speaking, the Gypsy community was tolerated there without too much friction with local landowners or farmers, but from time to time, local constables or officers of the peace got involved when things boiled over.

Such a flash point arose in 1640 when a few of the Romany community were accused of horse-stealing: an offence punishable by death. So, it came to pass that on Friday, the 20th March 1640, three men were hanged on a scaffold erected on the Bicester Road at Griffin Lane. A few days later, their friends carried their lifeless bodies back to Carters Lane where they were buried. One of the men buried was Edward Boswell, "King of the Gypsies", and the stone erected used to carry an inscription with his name, the date of the burial and the fact he was the "King of the Gypsies". The passage of time and the effect of weathering have now obliterated the inscription.

The story goes that for centuries afterwards, until relatively modern times, flowers were left at his gravestone by visiting travellers.

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