

"The Old Back Door"

It's not often you get someone passionately talking about their old back door, but this is exactly what I found when over at the Cropredy cottage of Steven and Verna, the stalwarts of the Banbury Hobby Horse Festival, amongst many other activities.

Steven, a one time archaeologist and schoolmaster, now enjoying the student life again of riotous behaviour and field trips to exotic locations, was explaining the craftsmanship of the back door to their cottage. It turns out it was the old post office at somewhere about the time that the Culworth Gang were terrorising the area, as holdup merchants, highwaymen and strongarm thieves, so a stout door was a must. By day the gang members worked on the land, and one was even a parish clerk, but in the evening they donned smock coats and tasteful masks, going about their business with billyclubs and pitchforks. However, they never killed anyone, or even seriously injured any of their victims over the twenty years of their reign of terror. But this didn't stop a number of the gang from being hung for their misdemeanours, although two gangmembers appear to have fled to the colonies, where they did very nicely for themselves.

So next time you see an unusual doorway, just think of what stories it could tell.