

Blackwater Valley Countryside



The Story of The Nymphs and the Boggart



Hawley Meadows Story Trail

Hawley Meadows

Hawley Meadows is an important river floodplain site, with a wet grassland habitat supporting a wide range of wildlife. It is situated near Camberley on the border between Surrey and Hampshire and is one of the few sites in the Valley illustrating how the landscape of the area could have looked a century ago. Being surrounded by urban development, it protects the town and the nearby A331 as a natural flood defence. Conservation volunteers have worked hard to improve the habitat and landscape of the area which was grazed by cattle but now hay cut each year. As a result, the site now supports many grassland flowers, birds, and invertebrates.

Getting there:

By car: the car park is located off the northbound carriageway of the A331 between the M3 (Junction 4) and the A30, opposite Watchmoor Business Park.

By train: the nearest station is Blackwater, 1 km to north along the Blackwater Valley Path

Follow the trail of the Nymphs and the Boggart

Parking: Height barrier 1.9 metres

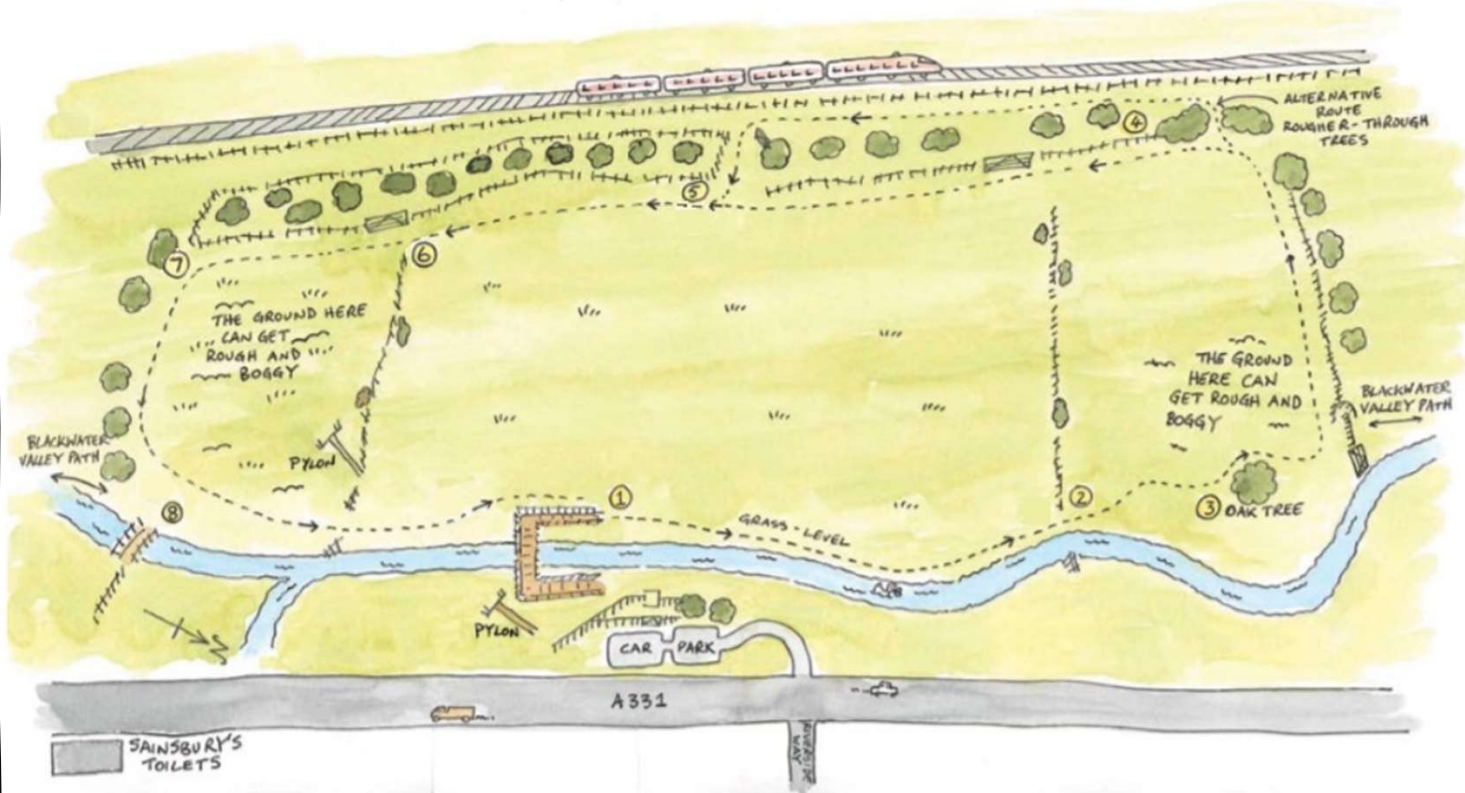
Toilets: The nearest accessible toilets are at Sainsburys supermarket, on the opposite side of the A331.

Route length: 1.6km / 1 mile

Surfaces: Partially unsurfaced paths across water meadows; access easier in dry season, some areas can be rough and boggy after wet weather. Not suitable for wheelchairs but off-road mobility vehicles should be fine.

Gradients: The route is generally flat and level. There is a ramped footbridge across the river at the start and finish of the Trail.

Other information: Some of the Trail is close to open water – please take care when following the route with your family.



The Story of the Nymphs and the Boggart



Hello everyone, I'm the Story Snail.

Welcome to The Story of the Nymphs and the Boggart!

I will be your guide as you move through the story. Stop at each of my markers and read that section of the story. Enjoy yourselves and don't forget to add your own ideas to make your story unique.



Start just over the bridge from the car park.



THE BRIDGE

Once upon a time, long, long ago, water nymphs lived here. Right here in the stream. Water nymphs, sometimes called naiads, were generally peaceful creatures unless you got on the wrong side of them. Most people knew to leave them alone and to get on with their own business. There were stories of the water nymphs tempting men into the water with their incredible beauty and then never letting them free. There is also a story of how one man did manage to escape their clutches. They say that the water nymphs turned him into a boggart!



Look for where you think the nymphs might have lived.

What do you think they looked like?

Are there any other creatures that live here now?





THE BOGGART

A boggart used to live here. Was it the same boggart that used to be a man? Nobody knows. A boggart is a hairy, smelly creature often found in marshes, holes, caves and bogs. Some say that the bogeyman was a type of boggart. Sometimes, if a boggart goes for a wild wander it might get into your house and then there's trouble! It will make things disappear and turn the milk sour and it'll pull your bed sheets off you at night. The boggart will get bored and eventually move on. To keep a boggart away you can hang a horseshoe on your door or put a pile of salt outside your bedroom.

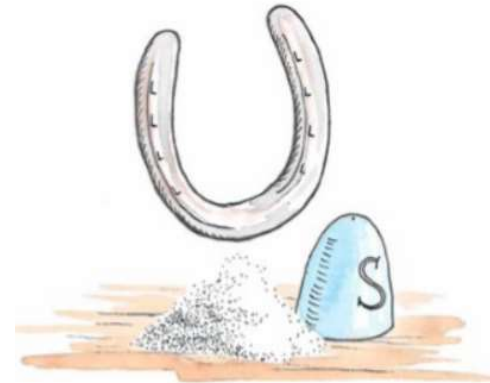


Do you think you've ever had a boggart in your house?

Do things sometimes go missing?

What do you think a boggart would look like?

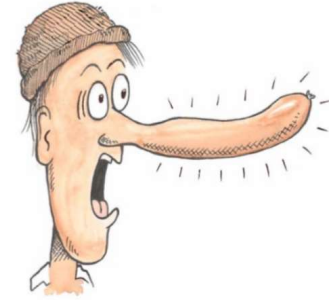
Have you heard of boggarts in other stories?





What would you wish for if you had three wishes?

Look for where you think the nymphs might have lived.



THE WOOD NYMPHS

The other creatures that used to live here were the wood nymphs, which are sometimes called dryads. A dryad was born to look after a particular tree and if the tree died, the dryad would die with it.

You may know the story of the poor wood cutter who was asked by a dryad not to cut down her tree. The wood cutter agreed and so the dryad granted him three wishes. The wood cutter was so excited he rushed home to the little hovel where his wife waited with his lunch. When he told her about the wishes she was thrilled and thought about all the things they could wish for.

“We will eat our lunch and decide what to wish for. We must be careful not to rush into things.” She said. “Here, dear, have your lunch.”

“Oh no!” exclaimed the wood cutter. “Not dry bread again. All we ever have is dry bread. I’ve had enough of dry bread... I wish I had a sausage.”

Suddenly... BING! A sausage appeared on his plate.

“You silly old fool,” shouted his wife, “you’ve wasted one of our wishes on a sausage. Oh you are daft. Do you know what... I’m so cross with you, I wish that sausage was on the end of your nose.”

Suddenly... BING! The sausage jumped up and stuck itself onto the wood cutter’s nose.

“Ow, ooh, ow! Get it off! Now you’ve wasted our second wish.”

The wood cutter’s wife pulled and pulled but it wouldn’t come off. They both knew that he couldn’t live the rest of his life with a sausage on his nose so they had to use their last wish to wish the sausage off his nose. It disappeared and they ended up with nothing.



THE HELPFUL BOGGART

The boggart lived in the boggy middle of the field and the water nymphs lived in the river and the wood nymphs lived in the trees opposite.

One day two dryads found a delicious piece of tree fungus which they were going to share for their dinner.

They needed to cut it in half but neither would trust the other to do it fairly.

“I’ll help,” said the boggart, “I’ve got a set of scales I can weigh the pieces on.”

The boggart cut the fungus into two pieces and put them onto his scales.

“Oh,” he said, “this one’s bigger than the other one. I’ll nibble a bit off so it’s the same...that’s fair.

So the boggart nibbled.

“Oh,” he said, “I’ve nibbled too much and now it’s smaller than the other one. I’ll nibble a bit off the other one to make it the same...that’s fair.

So the boggart nibbled.

“Oh,” he said “I’ve nibbled too much off that one now and now it’s smaller than the other one...”

This went on for some time until all of the fungus was gone – into the boggart’s tummy.

“Well,” said the boggart, wiping his mouth. “I’m off now, glad to have been of help!”



Where do you think you might see a boggart?

Can you see any signs of fungus?

What else do you think boggarts might like to eat?





THROWING STONES

Another day, the boggart was sitting by the river throwing stones into the water.

“Would you please stop doing that?” the water nymphs shouted.

“Stop doing what?” asked the boggart. “I’m not doing anything. I’m only sitting here quietly throwing stones into the water. I like it when they go plop!”

“That’s just it,” said the water nymphs, “You’re throwing stones into the water and they are bashing us on the head.”

“Oh dear,” grinned the naughty boggart. “Tell you what, if I stop throwing stones into the water will you grant me three wishes?”

“No.”

“Well, in that case I’ll just carry on then. Way-hay, plop!”

“All right, we’ll grant you one wish,” agreed the water nymphs.

“Oh goody.” The boggart put down his stones and had a think. “Oh, I know, I wish that I could throw stones into the water.”

Of course the water nymphs had to allow him his wish and so from that day on they had to always wear little helmets on their heads.



What do you think they made the helmets out of?

That boggart keeps being naughty. What would you do to stop him?

Are there any nymphs hiding nearby?





THE HALFWAY HEDGE

The water nymphs and the wood nymphs had had enough of the boggart and his naughty ways. They came up with a plan to get rid of him once and for all.

“Boggart,” said the Queen of the wood nymphs to the boggart as he washed his hair with mud, “The wood nymphs and the water nymphs are going to have a race and we want you to be the referee.”

“I can do that,” said the boggart, thinking that this might be a chance to cause more trouble.

“Right,” smiled the Queen. “The race will take place tomorrow. Meet us at the Halfway Hedge.”

All of the wood nymphs and the water nymphs gathered for the great race. The fastest runners had been chosen and they lined up.

“Now then, boggart,” said the Queen, “If you do a good job of refereeing we will grant you one wish.”

“Oh goody,” said the boggart, rubbing his slimy hands together with glee. (I’ll wish that all the nymphs’ ears fall off, he thought to himself!)

“You may start the race,” said the Queen.

“Ready, steady...GO!” shouted the boggart.



What else do you think the boggart might have wished for?

Do you like races?

What do you think the Queen of the nymphs looks like?





THE RACE

All of the nymphs zoomed off up one side of the field, faster and faster they went. As they rounded the bend at the other end they suddenly became a blur as they used their magic to go even faster.

“Ooh, they’re very quick,” said the boggart as he watched, transfixed.

The racers took off and started to fly as they whizzed back towards the boggart. It wasn’t clear which nymph was winning but that didn’t matter to them. They all rushed at the boggart in a swarming mass and whooshed around and around him in such a flurry of little arms and legs that the boggart didn’t know what was happening. He became more and more confused and more and more dizzy until he fell over and landed in a heap in the mud.

The Queen sidled over to him as he rubbed his head.

“Don’t you wish you could run as fast as them?” she enquired.

“Pardon?” the boggart was so confused he couldn’t think straight.

“I said, don’t you wish you could run as fast as them?” the Queen repeated.

The boggart scratched his head and sat up, “Oh yes, I wish I could run as fast as them.”

“And so, your wish is granted!” shouted the Queen and suddenly, unable to help himself, the boggart jumped up and started to run.

How fast can you run?



How high can you jump?

How fast can you spin?





HOORAY

“Oh, help,” he yelled, “I can’t stop running!”

The nymphs cheered as the boggart ran and ran until they couldn’t see him any more.

The boggart ran and ran on the fastest wild wander that any boggart has ever done. He kept going for miles and miles until the spell wore off and he found himself in the middle of nowhere. That naughty old boggart couldn’t cause trouble any more.

The water nymphs and the wood nymphs were so pleased that the Boggart was gone that they had a big party. From that day on, the race has become an annual event and they compete for the Great Boggart Trophy.



What do you think was the moral of the story?

Did the boggart learn his lesson?

Did you have a good time exploring? What else did you see?



I hope you've enjoyed the Story of the Nymphs and the Boggart

You can contact us and also find more about the Blackwater Valley at the following places

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-  [@blackwater.valley](https://www.facebook.com/blackwater.valley)
-  [@blackwatervalleypartnership](https://www.instagram.com/blackwatervalleypartnership)
-  [@blackwatervall](https://twitter.com/blackwatervall)