

**Review: *Strumpshaw, Tincton and Giggleswick's Craftily Conjured Great British Folklore and Superstition Map***

**AND**

***Woodlands Dark and Days Bewitched: A Map of Folk Horror***

'Strumpshaw, Tincton and Giggleswick's Craftily Conjured Great British Folklore and Superstition Map'  
Marvellous Maps, 2020  
ISBN: 9781913447052  
RRP: £14.99

'Woodlands Dark and Days Bewitched: A Map of Folk Horror'  
Herb Lester Associates, 2021  
ISBN: 9781916349599  
RRP: £12.00

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I admit it; I love a good map, in part because they are often a thing of beauty in their own right, but also because it's fascinating to imagine yourself within a landscape based merely on a series of lines, patterns and symbols. I also like to know where I am, and although I rarely plan journeys in great detail in advance, preferring to wander and discover, I do like to follow my progress on a map.

I would however avoid unplanned wandering in folk horror country without the aid of a suitable map. Landscape, after all, is the first link in Adam Scovell's oft quoted *Folk Horror Chain*, followed by 'isolation'. An unknowing traveller wandering off map as dusk approaches might well encounter 'skewed moral beliefs' and accidentally stumble across a troubling 'happening or summoning' (2014). Whilst the warm glow of 'The Green Man' on Summerisle, the 'Cloven Hoof' in Devil's End or 'The Slaughtered Lamb' in the isolated village of East Proctor (1) may appear welcoming, their names carry a warning and seeking shelter in the local pub might not be the best idea. The consequences could be grave, especially when the harvest has failed or the moon is full, as David and Jack discovered when they found themselves lost on the

Yorkshire moors after ignoring advice to “stay on the road” in the opening scene of *An American Werewolf in London* (1981).

Here then are two recently published maps that might help fans of folk horror, custom and legend locate themselves within the landscape of Great Britain.

Claiming to be the ‘most legendary map of Britain’, *Strumpshaw, Tincton and Giggleswick’s Craftily Conjured Great British Folklore and Superstition Map*, published by Marvellous Maps, contains over 1400 folklore and superstition-related locations. This colourful double-sided fold out map, 100 x 89 cm in size, encased in a folded cardboard cover in the style of an Ordnance Survey map, details a vast selection of folklore and superstition-related topics, including ‘Legends and Heroes’, ‘Ghostly Goings On’, ‘Freaky Festivals and Events’ and ‘Mysteries and Magic’, along with links to videos, images and other entertaining content online.

The map’s approach and the tone of its written content, along with the numerous illustrations, are decidedly tongue in cheek and designed to amuse. Nevertheless, it contains a wealth of useful information locating a huge number of traditional customs, superstition stories and fascinating facts across the landscape of Great Britain (but excluding Northern Island).

On one side, a large map of Great Britain is densely packed with place names and descriptions accompanied by small, humorous illustrations surrounded by breakout boxes giving further detail on key locations. You can read about ‘Spine Chilling Skye’, ‘Necromantic North Yorkshire’, ‘Petrifying Pembrokeshire’, ‘Beastly Bodmin’, and numerous other locations. There are also separate breakout boxes for Edinburgh, London and The Northern Isles, and the map is edged by a line of text detailing traditional superstitions, including, for example, ‘A spoon should always be pushed through the bottom of the shell of a boiled egg once eaten, to let the devil out’.

A series of ‘epic expeditions’ are marked on the map in different coloured, dashed lines and described in short paragraphs in a single breakout box. These include ‘Dick Whittington’s voyage to London’, ‘Robin Hood’s Merry Meanderings’ and ‘The Journey of Bran the Blessed’s

severed head' (charting the travels of the bewitched, talking severed head of a mythical Welsh King!). On the rear are three further maps, one locating 'Spooky Place Names', another detailing 'Devilish Place Names', and the largest of the three providing a ghostly trip around Britain's top 50 folklore and superstition destinations.

The amount of information on the main map is so overwhelming that at times it can be hard to access, especially where points of interest lie close together, and the text and symbols mask the roads and towns of the underlying base map. Nevertheless, given the price point (£14.99 but typically available at around £12), it's good value for money and contains a huge amount of interesting and useful information for anyone interested in folklore and legend. The tone may not be to everyone's taste; however, this is a fun, informative, and nicely produced item printed on heavyweight paper. The publisher suggests framing it, and indeed, were this to hang on the wall of a pub, in your study, or even your toilet, it would provide both a talking point and keep readers entertained across repeated viewings.

In contrast, *A Map of Folk Horror*, written by Kier-La Janisse to accompany her excellent exploration of folk horror film and television, *Woodlands, Dark and Days Bewitched* (2021), also reviewed in this volume, and the related box set from Severin Films, *All The Haunts Be Ours* (2021), couldn't be more different.

The map continues the stylish graphic design and production values of the two related DVD offerings and is contained within a dark brown die cut, fold out card cover, printed with stylish graphics throughout and containing a bonus postcard. The map itself is far easier to handle than Strumpshaw's, folding out to only 40 x 69 cm. It's printed on slightly textured, heavyweight, matt stock and details 36 locations linked to important and influential films from the folk horror canon, 23 from the United Kingdom and 13 from 10 other European countries.

On one side, there is a stylised, angular map of Europe with a breakout showing the United Kingdom, on which the locations are indicated by an icon accompanied by a number.

This is surrounded by blocks of text including a general introduction, followed by descriptions for each location numbered one to 36, which continue overleaf.

Three films have the privilege of being represented by two locations, while the remaining 30 are represented by a single key location. So, for instance, *The Blood On Satan's Claw* (1971) is represented by the ruins of St James Church at Bix Bottom, Oxfordshire where the ritualistic sacrifice at the film's climax took place, while the mysterious Old Lodge Farm near Banbury in Oxfordshire where the majority of exterior scenes were filmed, also represents *Robin Redbreast* (1970). Fans of *The Wicker Man* (1973) are directed to the harbour at Plockton on Loch Carron, where the opening scene of Sergeant Howie's arrival at Summerisle were shot, and to Burrow Head, Wigtownshire, where the wicker man effigy itself was constructed for the film's climax. Each description includes the film title, director, country, date and coordinates, followed by a short description of the location and its role within the film.

Any traveller wishing to utilise the map as a guide to visiting the places contained is strongly advised to use the coordinates rather than the approximate locations shown on the map, as these are often considerably out of place. For instance, location '7', accompanied by an illustration of a white snake-like creature, indicates Thor's Cave, near Wetton in Staffordshire where a scene in Ken Russell's 1988 reworking of the tale of the Lampton Worm, *The Lair of the White Worm*, was shot. The map locates this as being somewhere in the vicinity of Worksop in North Nottingham, some 44 miles to the east of its true location. Location '9', which should mark Harrington Hall in Lincolnshire where Lawrence Gordon Clark's 1973 'Lost Hearts' was filmed as part of the BBC's *Ghost Story for Christmas* series, is erroneously located close to Hartlepool, more than 160 miles to the north!

Ultimately, the 'Woodlands, Dark and Days Bewitched' map of Folk Horror is a high-quality production, fairly reasonably priced at £12 (typically available at £9.99), giving a brief overview of 36 locations linked to 33 classic folk horror films across the UK and Europe. As such, it's a nice addition to the DVD versions of the documentary for fans and enthusiasts,

though the limited functionality of the map itself probably limits its appeal to the wider public.

Travellers, beware, you may be led astray!

## END NOTES

1 Public houses appearing in *The Wicker Man* (1973), *Doctor Who* story 'The Dæmons' (1971) and *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) respectively.

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