

State Heritage Areas of South Australia



The Unseen Helper *submitted by Judith Holbrook*

Following a bout of severe illness, it seemed a good idea to move from the country into Gawler so that our two just teenage children could take themselves to school.

A house that was available at the time was on Cameron Street, in Church Hill, an area about which we had previously known nothing.

The house belonged to a single dad with two children. He had come from Melbourne to write a history of an Adelaide institution and, his task being completed, was anxious to return to a new commitment in Melbourne.

Before that owner the house had been empty for many years. Nothing had been done to it since various modifications in the 1950s, and the garden was totally neglected. One 1950s 'renovation' had been to abandon the original kitchen and use the dining room as a kitchen.

With our occupation, the dining-room/kitchen became the focal room of the house and an antique rocking chair, which I had bought with my first-ever pay some 30 years earlier, sat by the fire. Often the chair could be seen gently rocking. Husband and son were unable to see who was rocking the chair, but daughter and I could see this delightful smiling bespectacled gentleman sitting rocking by the fire, his sparse white hair moving slowly.

One day, a friend came to visit and she and I had something that needed to be carried to the front of the house. Getting whatever it was along the very long central passageway was no easy matter.

As we reached the front door my friend turned and said, "Thank you so much. Your help made carrying that very much easier."

Then she turned to me and said, "Who was that? I didn't know you had another visitor."

Our household ghost could make himself very useful!