

# Myths, Murders and Mysteries

## 'I Dreamed of The Devil...'

'If ever I ate a good supper at night I dream'd  
of the devil, and wak'd in a fright'

Christopher Anstey (1724 - 1805)



Whirly Pit 2011



Sketch from Oliver Ratcliff's 1907 Almanack



JW Mann Factory with Whirly Pit in the foreground

All images courtesy of Olney and District Historical Society

### The Bottomless Pond of Olney

At the north end of the town there is a pond known as the Whirly Pit. On certain days, with the time approaching midnight, the sound of the Devil's coach and horses can be heard approaching Whirly Pit, where it gallops straight into it.

This pond is supposed to be bottomless and fed by a mysterious spring. It is a curious fact that it never shows any signs of becoming dry. It contains numbers of carp, and it is very probable it was the fish pond to the old castle or monastery that is supposed to have stood in the vicinity. A remarkable story which connects the Whirly Pit with Sway Gog - a meadow some distance away in the direction of Weston: One night the Devil was supposed to have approached Olney

by the Warrington Road, in his chariot drawn by four headless horses. The coachmen were also without heads, while to complete the weird details, the night was dark and the hour that of midnight.

On nearing the town the coachmen drove straight into the Whirly Pit and continued the journey underground by means of a passage extending as far as Goosey Bridge. Here they emerged into the open with such violence that the meadow was seriously disturbed. And even now, if any person stands astride on this meadow, it is said to sway, as if shuddering at the recollection of that fearful night.