

An ANOMALIES Study

The Green Children of Woolpit



by Garth Haslam
www.anomalyinfo.com

Acknowledgements

Thanks go out to tmResearch, Rocky C. Karlage, David Yale, Brad Gilbert, and Bret Hammond (www.bretnet.com), all of whom pointed me to John Carey's translation of William of Newburgh's account in *Eyewitness to History*.

Thanks also go to Melissa Leggett for sending me her observations about the folkloric nature of the story.

This study is copyright ©1996/2015 Garth Haslam,
and was originally presented on the ANOMALIES website at
<http://www.anomalyinfo.com>

Cover: The sign for the Village of Woolpit, England, featuring the Green Children.

The photo was taken by Rod Bacon in 2009, and is generously shared at

<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/1161413>

Contents

The Legend of the Green Children

The Paper Chase

Historia Rerum Anglicarum

Chronicon Anglicanum

Some Brief Conclusions

Gervase of Tilbury's Account?

A Critical Look at the Theories

Appendix 1: William of Newburgh's Account

Appendix 2: Ralph of Coggeshall's Account

Extra: The Green Children of Banjos?

Notes

Bibliography

The Legend of the Green Children

It is told that sometime during the reign of good King Stephan [*ca. 1135-1154 CE*] two strange children were found near the village of Woolpit, England.

Workers were harvesting their fields when they heard frightened cries; investigating, they discovered two children, a boy and a girl, terrified and huddled near one of the many wolf-pits the village was named for. The children were screaming in an unknown language, and their clothes were made of a strange looking, unknown material... odder still, both children had *green skin*.

The two Green Children were taken to the home of a man named Richard de Calne, where the local populace attempted to care for them... but the children refused to eat or drink anything that was offered, until someone brought in some fresh bean stalks. The children eagerly grabbed these and opened the stalks; but upon seeing the stalks were empty, they started to cry. When shown that beans were in the pods, the children quickly ate their fill and ate nothing else for some time.

Soon after the Green Children were found, the boy sickened and died; but the girl became healthy and hearty, eventually losing the green hue to her skin. When she learned the local language, what she told of her origins only deepened the mystery. She said that she and her brother had come from a land with no sun called St. Martin's Land; the people there, all green, lived in a perpetual twilight. When she was asked how she had come to be found outside the pit, she could only say that she and her brother had heard bells, become entranced... and then the two of them were in the pit and could see the light from the mouth of it. Though the girl lived long after her discovery, eventually marrying a local man, she was never able to give any further help in solving the mystery of her and her brother's origins, nor of their odd arrival in Woolpit¹.

Many theories have been put forth regarding the matter: that the children were fairies, aliens from space, came from a parallel dimension, from an underground world, had been held captive and brainwashed as part of an elaborate hoax, or were simply from a slightly distant village with a different dialect of English and a disease that causes green skin. Imaginative though some of these theories are, all have one problem... none of them agree on the basic details of the original Green Children story -- such as how the children arrived in Woolpit, for example -- and the theories tend to rely heavily on the very same details. So what is needed is the most correct version of the story, minus the changes added over time.

The Paper Chase

Even though the story of the Green Children of Woolpit can be found in a large number of books today with just a little effort, the actual number of sources used for the original story can be quickly narrowed down to just a handful of earlier texts... to be precise, three. Most modern versions of the story are derived from Thomas Keightley's

The Fairy Mythology, published in 1850, which gets the story from the two earliest sources existent. These earliest two sources are from around the year 1200, written around sixty years after the time the Green Children are said to have been found; they are *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* by William of Newburgh [ca 1136-1198 CE], and *Chronicon Aglicanum* by Ralph of Coggeshall Abbey [?-ca 1227 CE].

Keightley's version of the story is largely a translation of Ralph of Coggeshall's account of the Green Children which also mentions some details from William of Newburgh's account... so it is a mix of the earlier two accounts. This version is the most often used because it is both easier to find than the earlier sources, and it is more accessible than the earlier Latin accounts. The fact that most modern authors use Keightley's version of the story is noteworthy because this version contains a mistake... Keightley refers to William of Newburgh as William of *Newbridge*, an error that is repeated in almost all newer accounts of the Green Children.

I was lucky enough to find translations of the two earliest works, making it possible to compare the earliest stories together and reach some useful conclusions regarding the original account of the Green Children of Woolpit.

Historia Rerum Anglicarum

William of Newburgh's account of the Green Children in *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* has been translated by two authors: Thomas Keightley gives a brief reference to William's work in *The Fairy Mythology* (1850), and Joseph Stevenson presents a full translation of William's account in *Church Historians of England* (1856).

It is William's account of the Green Children of Woolpit that places the event as happening within the reign of King Stephen; and since there was only one King Stephen, this narrows the occurrence to happening sometime within this monarch's nineteen year reign between 1135 and 1154 CE.

Though William of Newburgh was likely alive at the time the event is said to have occurred, he didn't write the *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* until 1196, at least forty years after the Green Children were said to be found. It's clear from William's account that he was not an eyewitness, nor did he ever see any physical evidence of the event -- the green girl, if she existed, had apparently already passed away before William looked into the matter -- so William had only the stories of multiple people as proof anything happened. This was enough evidence to convince William, however, as he explains: "...at length I was so overwhelmed by the weight of so many and such competent witnesses, that I have been compelled to believe."

William tells us the children were seen to emerge from one of the wolf-pits by reapers working the harvest, and they were caught shortly afterwards. He states that, over several months, both children lost the green hue to their skin and learned the local language, and that both children were baptized shortly before the boy died.

Also according to William's account, both children were questioned about their origins; despite the fact that he never met the children, William's account contains quotes of what the children said when questioned. William's account is the only source for

several of the details that are often mentioned in the legend. It's the only source that gives a name for the children's original home: according to Keightley, the children called their original home 'St Martin's Land', and according to Stevenson's translation, William states that the children said: "*We are inhabitants of the land of St Martin, who is regarded with peculiar veneration in the country which gave us birth.*"

William's account is also the only source that credits the children with saying that all the people in their original home were Christians and that they had churches, and that they could see a bright country across a very large river from their original home.

On the subject of just exactly how the children traveled from St. Martin to Woolpit, William quotes the children as saying: "*...we only remember this, that on a certain day, when we were feeding our father's flocks in the fields, we heard a great sound, such as we are now accustomed to hear at St Edmund's, when the bells are chiming; and whilst listening to the sound in admiration, we became on a sudden, as it were, entranced, and found ourselves among you in the fields where you were reaping.*"

William's account is also the only source that claims the green girl married, but there is disagreement about who and where. According to Keightley, William says she married a man from Lenna; according to Stevenson, William says she married a man at Lynne. William ends his account of the Green Children of Woolpit by asserting that there were many more strange details that the children told, but that they were "*too many to particularize.*" Unfortunate.

Chronicon Anglicanum

The *Chronicon Anglicanum* is a historic chronicle of important and interesting events that occurred at or near the abbey of Coggeshall from the time of its establishment in the early part of the 12th century (*the earliest event that I know was noted in the chronicle is dated 1113 CE*). This chronicle was reprinted in 1857 as part of a preservation of ancient scrolls and manuscripts of England, and this reprint, in turn, was reprinted in 1965; it is in a copy of this last reprint that I've located a Latin original of the account of the Green Children².

The part of the chronicles reprinted was authored by Ralph (Radulphi) of Coggeshall Abbey, and the bit in particular that we're interested in was written sometime in the year 1200 CE. Ralph's account of the Green Children is presented in a section of the book featuring many fantastic stories that the author had heard and chose to write down; in fact, the Green Children story is sandwiched between a story about a merman and a report about some giant teeth that were discovered. If this is considered with the fact that Ralph wrote his account a minimum of 46 years after the Green Children were supposed to have been found, it seems a safe bet that Ralph was not an eyewitness to the events and is therefore merely noting an interesting story he has heard.

Ralph's account of the Green Children of Woolpit is the only source that claims the children were taken to the home of Sir Richard de Calne, a knight, at Wikes... perhaps this is because, as Ralph states, he had frequently heard this story from de Calne himself. In this version, it is at de Calne's home that it was discovered that the children would eat the raw beans. Also, Ralph's account claims that after the death of her brother the green girl then worked for de Calne's family as a servant for several years, during which time

she was “*rather loose and wanton in her conduct*”.

In Ralph’s account, the girl lost her green hue, learned the local language, and was baptized only after the boy had died; and so it was only the girl who was questioned about the origins of herself and her brother. As to the question of how the children traveled to Woolpit from their original home, Ralph says: “*...as they were following their flocks, they came to a certain cavern, on entering which they heard a delightful sound of bells; ravished by whose sweetness, they went for a long time wandering on through the cavern, until they came to its mouth.*” Upon exiting the cave, the children were overwhelmed by both the excessive sunlight and the temperature of the air; when found, they tried to find the cavern they came out of but were caught before they could.

And thus ends Ralph of Coggeshall’s account of the Green Children of Woolpit.

Some Brief Conclusions...

The differences between William of Newburgh’s account of the Green Children and Ralph of Coggeshall’s account is probably due to the differences in how each author originally heard the story. William appears to have investigated the story around forty years after it happened and talked to many people who recounted the event to him, so his version is likely a smoothed-out compilation of many short versions of the story. Certainly, he did not state that he talked to any eyewitnesses; so it’s quite possible that none of the people he talked to were.

Meanwhile, Ralph appears to have heard the story repeatedly from just one man who claimed to be not only an eyewitness, but a vitally involved character. This sounds suspiciously like said ‘eyewitness’ -- Richard de Calne -- may have been bragging to Ralph, and should make us suspicious of his claim of direct involvement in a locally famous tale. The simple fact that de Calne’s name is not mentioned in William’s account, despite the fact William interviewed numerous people, may be a strong indication that de Calne was not originally involved in either the event or the legend.

Although both accounts agree on the general structure of the story, they disagree on the details; so they cannot be used either to confirm one another, or to prove the event happened. Still, each has clues that narrow down the where and when of the event, so further digging may still be able to give a more definitive answer in the future. Of course, it would help if there were a third ancient account, but...

Gervase of Tilbury's Account?

I have run across a small number of authors who have claimed that a third ancient account of the Green Children exists, written by Gervase of Tilbury, a well-known author of historical texts. Since Gervase lived from around 1152 to 1220 CE, an account from him would be as valuable as Ralph of Coggeshall’s or William of Newburgh’s; unfortunately, I haven’t found any real indication that Gervase actually wrote such an account.

The claim that Gervase gave an account of the Green Children of Woolpit was first put forward by Harold T. Wilkins in his book *Strange Mysteries of Time and Space*, published in 1958, and it is from his book that all other authors repeat this claim. But the

quotes that are presented by Wilkins' as being from the so-called Gervase account not only add nothing new to the story of the Green Children, the quotes are also clearly a simple blending of the details previously recounted in both Ralph of Coggeshall's and William of Newburgh's accounts. For example, Wilkins' gives a quotation from the green girl that he claims is from Gervase's account, but it is nothing more than an unskillful paraphrasing of Stevenson's translation of William's same quote from the green girl⁵.

There are other suspicious similarities between Wilkins' "Gervase account" and those of Ralph and William. Wilkins says that Gervase's account states that the green girl married at man at Lynn, and Wilkins then quotes, "*where she was said to be living, a few years since.*" When compared to William of Newburgh's account: "*...she was married at Lynne, and was living a few years since, at least, so they say...*", it becomes clear that Wilkins is giving a simple paraphrase of William's line as a supposed quote from Gervase. Wilkins' alleged account from Gervase of Tilbury offers only *one* detail different from both Ralph's and William's accounts of the Green Children; it claims the beans were given to the children while they were still sitting in one of the wolf-pits.

So Harold Wilkins is the only actual source I've found for a claim that Gervase of Tilbury wrote anything about the Green Children, and the evidence leans heavily towards the conclusion that Wilkins created the alleged account himself. Though he implies that the story may have come from Gervase's famous historic text, the 'Otia Imperialia', Wilkins never clearly states this as a fact; and I have found no other indication that the Green Children story is in said text. For this reason, and the others already mentioned, I will need to see more evidence before I'll believe that a third ancient source for the story exists.

A Critical Look at the Theories

In light of what William's and Ralph's account of the Green Children of Woolpit tell us of the original event, the various theories previously mentioned about who the Green Children were are interesting... mainly because of the scant amount of information that was ever recorded regarding the incident. The most commonly repeated theories are very closely related: that the children were fairies, aliens, or visitors from different dimensions or from underground, all hold as their main idea that the children were not human and that their arrival was clearly supernatural, ideas clearly implied by both William of Newburgh and Ralph of Coggeshall, though the theories about the children as aliens are usually based on a mistaken impression that they were found wearing metallic or spacesuit-style clothes, which is a newer detail that has been added to the legend [[see the extra on "The Green Children of Banjos"](#)].

A different view is that the children were from a distant town and had a dietary disease that colored their skin green. The theory goes like this: the children got lost in flint mines near the village of Fordham St. Martin, came out of mine shafts near Woolpit, and wandered around until they were found in the fields near the village. They spoke a local dialect of English that was immediately unintelligible to the villagers of Woolpit, but similar enough for the children to quickly learn the Woolpit dialect (*Fordham St. Martin is about six miles away from Woolpit*). Their skin was green because of a dietary

deficiency -- 'green chlorosis' was suggested by the author of the theory -- and the children quickly regained a normal hue when given a better diet. Overall, it's a good theory for those who want to believe both that the event occurred and that it was not a supernormal occurrence... but I must take issue with one point that supports it. The idea that the green girl's skin changed to a normal hue due to her diet is an unsupported conjecture. While both William and Ralph's accounts of the green children clearly state the authors' *beliefs* that it was her diet that changed her skin color, this may not be the case. Other factors could have caused the change. So while the theory is a good fit for the details as we have them, we can't be sure the details as we have them are the whole story.

If the opinions of the original chroniclers, William and Ralph, were to be guessed at, the events described very much fit ideas regarding fairies that were common in England at the time. Fairies were supernatural creatures considered to be essentially human in appearance, and to live in their own world that was somehow separate from but close to our own world. The two worlds often met in unexpected times and ways, thus encounters with fairies were both unpredictable and dangerous... dangerous mostly because interaction with fairies could trap a human in the fairy's world, forever lost to ours. In this light, the Green Children could be comparably thought of as being fairy children that got trapped in the human world. The fairy world's appearance and society were believed to roughly correspond with the world familiar to humans, but also thought to have strange and surprising differences... and so the description given of the children's home, St. Martin, would also match up with then-current expectations of the fairy world.

In the end, what we have is a mix of evidence that both supports and undermines the possibility of the event. In its favor is that William of Newburgh gathered stories from many locals of Woolpit who may have been alive when the incident happened (*depending on local average lifespan*). Against it is the resemblance of the story's structure and details to the fairy mythology that was common knowledge in Woolpit at the time. So we are left with a basic question: is the story of the Green Children of Woolpit a true event that has had the trappings of fairylore attached to it, or is it a fictional story that a large number of people in Woolpit believed and passed on to whoever asked? An answer to this question may never be found.

Appendix 1: William of Newburgh's Account

This is the translation of *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* by William of Newburgh as it was presented in 1856 by Joseph Stevenson:

“Nor does it seem right to pass over an unheard-of prodigy, which, as is well known, took place in England during the reign of King Stephen. Though it is asserted by many, yet I have long been in doubt concerning the matter, and deemed it ridiculous to give credit to a circumstance supported on no rational foundation, or at least one of a very mysterious character; yet, at length I was so overwhelmed by the weight of so many and such competent witnesses, that I have been compelled to believe, and wonder over a matter, which I was unable to comprehend, or unravel, by any powers of intellect.

“In East Anglia there is a village, distant, as it is said, four or five miles from the noble monastery of the blessed king and martyr, Edmund; near this place are seen some very ancient cavities, called ‘Wolfpittes’, that is, in English, ‘Pits for wolves’, and which give their name to the adjacent village [Wulpet, a market town]. During harvest, while the reapers were employed in gathering in the produce of the fields, two children, a boy and a girl, completely green in their persons, and clad in garments of a strange colour, and unknown materials, emerged from these excavations. While wandering through the fields in astonishment, they were seized by the reapers, and conducted to the village, and many persons coming to see so novel a sight, they were kept some days without food. But, when they were nearly exhausted with hunger, and yet could relish no species of support which was offered to them, it happened, that some beans were brought in from the field, which they immediately seized with avidity, and examined the stalk for the pulse, but not finding it in the hollow of the stalk, they wept bitterly. Upon this, one of the bystanders, taking the beans from the pods, offered them to the children, who seized them directly, and ate them with pleasure. By this food they were supported for many months, until they learned the use of bread. At length, by degrees, they changed their original colour, through the natural effect of our food, and became like ourselves, and also learned our language. It seemed fitting to certain discreet persons that they should receive the sacrament of baptism, which was administered accordingly. The boy, who appeared to be the younger, surviving the baptism but a little time, died prematurely; his sister, however, continued in good health, and differed not in the least from the women of our own country. Afterwards, as it is reported, she was married at Lynne, and was living a few years since, at least, so they say. Moreover, after they had acquired our language, on being asked who and whence they were, they are said to have replied, ‘We are inhabitants of the land of St Martin, who is regarded with peculiar veneration in the country which gave us birth.’ Being further asked where that land was, and how they came thence hither; they answered, ‘We are ignorant of both those circumstances; we only remember this, that on a certain day, when we were feeding our father’s flocks in the fields, we heard a great sound, such as we are now accustomed to hear at St Edmund’s, when the bells are chiming; and whilst listening to the sound in admiration, we became on a sudden, as it were, entranced, and found ourselves among you in the fields where you were reaping.’ Being questioned whether in that land they believed in Christ, or whether

the sun arose, they replied that the country was Christian, and possessed churches; but said they, ' The sun does not rise upon our countrymen; our land is little cheered by its beams; we are contented with that twilight, which, among you, precedes the sun-rise, or follows the sun-set. Moreover, a certain luminous country is seen, not far distant from ours, and divided from it by a very considerable river.' These, and many other matters, too numerous to particularize, they are said to have recounted to curious inquirers. Let every one say as he pleases, and reason on such matters according to his abilities; I feel no regret at having recorded an event so prodigious and miraculous."

Appendix 2: Ralph of Coggeshall's Account

This is the translation of *Chronicon Aglicanum* by Ralph of Coggeshall Abbey as it was presented by Thomas Keightley in 1850:

“‘Another wonderful thing,’ says Ralph of Coggeshall [1], ‘happened in Suffolk, at St. Mary’s of the Wolf-pits. A boy and his sister were found by the inhabitants of that place near the mouth of a pit which is there, who had the form of all their limbs like to those of other men, but they differed in the colour of their skin from all the people of our habitable world; for the whole surface of their skin was tinged of a green colour. No one could understand their speech. When they were brought as curiosities to the house of a certain knight, Sir Richard de Calne, at Wikes, they wept bitterly. Bread and other victuals were set before them, but they would touch none of them, though they were tormented by great hunger, as the girl afterwards acknowledged. At length, when some beans just cut, with their stalks, were brought into the house, they made signs, with great avidity, that they should be given to them. When they were brought, they opened the stalks instead of the pods, thinking the beans were in the hollow of them; but not finding them there, they began to weep anew. When those who were present saw this, they opened the pods, and showed them the naked beans. They fed on these with delight, and for a long time tasted no other food. The boy, however, was always languid and depressed, and he died within a short time. The girl enjoyed continual good health; and becoming accustomed to various kinds of food, lost completely that green colour, and gradually recovered the sanguine habit of her entire body. She was afterwards regenerated by the laver of holy baptism, and lived for many years in the service of that knight (as I have frequently heard from him and his family), and was rather loose and wanton in her conduct. Being frequently asked about the people of her country, she asserted that the inhabitants, and all they had in that country, were of a green colour; and that they saw no sun, but enjoyed a degree of light like what is after sunset. Being asked how she came into this country with the aforesaid boy, she replied, that as they were following their flocks, they came to a certain cavern, on entering which they heard a delightful sound of bells; ravished by whose sweetness, they went for a long time wandering on through the cavern, until they came to its mouth. When they came out of it, they were struck senseless by the excessive light of the sun, and the unusual temperature of the air; and they thus lay for a long time. Being terrified by the noise of those who came on them, they wished to fly, but they could not find the entrance of the cavern before they were caught.’“

“This story is also told by William of Newbridge,[2] who places it in the reign of King Stephen. He says he long hesitated to believe it, but he was at length overcome by the weight of evidence. According to him, the place where the children appeared was about four or five miles from Bury St. Edmund’s: they came in harvest-time out of the Wolf-pits; they both lost their green hue, and were baptized, and learned English. The boy, who was the younger, died; but the girl married a man at Lenna, and lived many years. They said their country was called St. Martin’s Land, as that saint was chiefly worshiped there; that the people were Christians, and had churches; that the sun did not rise there, but that there was a bright country which could be seen from theirs, being

divided from it by a very broad river. “

“[1] As quoted by Picart in his Notes on William of Newbridge. We could not find it in the Collection of Histories, etc., by Martene and Durand, -- the only place where, to our knowledge, this chronicler’s works are printed.

“[2] ‘Guilielmi Neubrigensis Historia, sive Chronica Rerum Anglicarum.’ Oxon. 1719, lib. i. c. 27.”

As you can see from the notes, Keightley claims to have gotten his two versions of the account from much earlier documents, which I have yet to verify.

EXTRA: The Green Children of Banjos

In 1965, John Macklin published an account of a pair of green children being found near the town of Banjos, Spain. According to his book, *Strange Destinies*, this event happened in August 1887.

Macklin tells us that workers were harvesting their fields when they heard frightened cries; investigating, they discovered two children, a boy and a girl, terrified and huddled near a cave. The two were screaming in a language that was not Spanish, and their clothes were made of a strange metallic cloth... but stranger still, the children's skin was green. The two children were taken to the home of an important and respected man in the village, where the local populace attempted to take care of them, but the children refused to eat or drink anything that was offered. The boy soon sickened and died; but the girl finally began to eat a diet of uncooked vegetables, mostly raw beans, and was soon healthy and hearty.

The green girl lived for five years after her appearance, during which time her skin slowly lightened to a normal Caucasian tone; she also learned Spanish, but what she told of her origins only deepened the mystery. She said that she and her brother had come from a land with no sun; the people there, all green-skinned, lived in a perpetual twilight. They could see a land of light, but it was beyond a great water. When she was asked how she had come to be found outside the cave, she could only say that she had heard a loud noise and then been pushed through something; then she and her brother were in the cave and could see the light from the mouth of it.

With her death, any hope of solving the mystery faded... or so Macklin tells us. As should be obvious by now, this account of the Green Children of Banjos is simply a modern re-telling of the story of the Green Children of Woolpit; in fact, Macklin copied the text of Keightley's account of the Woolpit story published in 1850 almost word for word in his re-telling³. The most glaring similarity between the two stories, however, is in the name of the man whose home the children were taken to. In Keightley's account, the Woolpit children are taken in by a knight named Sir Richard de Calne; in Macklin's account, the Banjos children are helped by "the village's chief landowner," a man named Ricardo da Calno. In the end, the only major difference between the two accounts is that the green girl dies after a mere five years. This can be seen as a story convenience on Macklin's part; after all, if the girl was found in 1887 and survived to a good age, researchers would expect to be able to find lots more evidence for the story... instead, I have only John Macklin's word in his account that there were documents, reports, and sworn witness statements in existence at least as late as 1965, when his book *Strange Destinies* was published.

Despite the obvious fact the story was a re-write, many authors picked up Macklin's story and repeated the account, often changing details further... the name of the children's saviour, Ricardo da Calno, is not repeated in any of the further re-tellings of the story, for example. This means that at least one of the authors repeating the Banjos story realized it was a fake, but chose to disguise this fact by removing a detail that would

be a dead giveaway.

The story of the Green Children of Banjos has been used as proof that the original Woolpit story must be true, the logic being that if the same event is described as happening twice in two different places and times, it must be proof of an actual repeating event⁴. Oy.

Notes

1 Many variations on the basic legend currently exist in the volumes that recount it, apparently largely due to copying errors and dramatic license.

- Katharine Briggs in *'The Fairies'* says the green girl claimed to have come from an underground country.
- Margaret Rowan gives a particularly over-dramatic version of the story in her book *'House of Evil'*; detail-wise, though, it's the same story except that she calls the man the green children were taken to Richard de Caine, and describes him as the "richest landowner in the district." Also, she says that the girl claimed her home was "Not far from here [Woolpit], but cut off from us by a great river of light."
- In *'Strange Disappearances'*, Brad Steiger says the children entered a cave following some small animals; the cave just kept going down deeper and deeper until, somehow, the children found themselves in the fields near Woolpit.
- Steiger also says that the green girl married a man from Norfolk. Rodney Davies and Harold T. Wilkins say she married a man either of or at King's Lynn in Norfolk, to which Davies adds that she lived for years in King's Lynn. In all cases, it's agreed that no one knows whether or not the green girl ever had children.

2 It should be noted that many authors attempt to show that the mysterious arrival of the Woolpit Green Children was not a singular occurrence; for instance, in *'House of Evil'*, Margaret Rowan states that "every now and then reports still come in of the arrival of green people from nowhere." Despite this rather sweeping statement, she only gives one example; a recounting of a UFO encounter story from 1955 in which the UFO occupants were described as glowing greenish, which is a rather thin attempt to imply a connection between the two events. The exact same approach is taken by Harold Wilkins in *'Strange Mysteries of Time and Space'*, when he relates the story to a series of UFO occupant sightings that he never goes into any real detail about.

Harold Wilkins, Brad Steiger, and Rodney Davies all try to relate the incident to other reports of people who seem to appear from nowhere... but none of these other people were green. Davies also feels that, if the Green Children really did appear from nowhere, then whatever phenomena produced this effect could be the same that occasionally makes people from our world supernaturally disappear (*if, in fact, they do*).

3 This is the Latin version of the Green Children story by Ralph of Coggeshall Abbey from *Chronicon Anglicanum*, 1200 CE, as reprinted in *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, or *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages*, 1857 London, no. 66, pg. 118-120:

"De quodam puero st puella de terra emergentibus.

“Aliud quoque mirum priori non dissimile in Suthfolke contigit apud Sanctam Mariam de Wulpetes. Inventus est puer quidam cum sorore sua ab accolis loci illius juxta oram cujusdam foveę quę ibidem continetur, qui formam omnium membrorum ceteris hominibus similem habebant, sed in colore cutis ab omnibus mortalibus nostrę habitabilis discrepabant. Nam tota superficies cutis eorum viridi colore tingebatur. Loquelam eorum nullus intelligere potuit. Hi igitur ad domum domini Ricardi de Calne cujusdam militis, adducti prę admiratione, apud Wikes, inconsolabiliter flebant. Panis ac cętera cibaria eis apposita sunt, sed nullis escis quę eis apponebantur vesci volebant, cum utique maxima famis inedia diutius cruciarentur, quia omnia hujusmodi cibaria incomedibilia esse credebant, sicut puella postmodum confessa est. Tandem cum fabę noviter cum stipitibus abscissę in domo asportarentur, cum maxima aviditate innuerunt ut de fabis illis sibi daretur. Quę coram eis allatę, stipites aperiunt, non fabarum folliculos, putantes in concavitate stipitum fabas contineri. Sed fabis in stipitibus non inventis, iterum flere cęperunt. Quod ubi astantes animadverterunt, folliculos aperiunt, fabas nudas ostendunt, ostensis cum magna hilaritate vescuntur, nulla alia cibaria ex multo tempore penitus contingentes. Puer vero semper quasi languore depressus infra breve tempus moritur. Puella vero sospitate continua perfruens, ac cibariis quibuslibet assuefacta, illum prassinum colorem penitus amisit, atque sanguineam habitudinem totius corporis paulatim recuperavit. Quę postmodum sacri baptismatis lavacro regenerata, ac per multos annos in ministerio prędicti militis, (sicut ab eodem milite et ejus familia frequenter audivimus,) commorata, nimium lasciva et petulans exstitit. Interrogata vero frequenter de hominibus supę regionis, asserebat quod omnes habitatores et omnia quę in regione illa habebantur viridi tingerentur colore, et quod nullum solem cernebant, sed quadam claritate fruebantur; sicut post solis occasum contingit. Interrogata autem quomodo in hanc terram devenisset cum puero prędicto, respondit, quia cum pecora sequerentur, devenerunt in quandam cavernam. Quam ingressi, audierunt quendam delectabilem sonum campanarum; cujus soni dulcedine capti per cavernam diutius errando incedebant, donec ad exitum illius devenirent. Qui inde emergentes, nimia claritate solis et insolita aeris temperie, quasi attoniti et exanimes effecti, diu super oram speluncę jacuerunt. Cumque a supervenientium inquietudine terrerentur, diffugere voluerunt, sed introitum speluncę minime reperire potuerunt, donec ab eis comprehenderentur.”

4 If the story elements were all the resemblance there was between the Woolpit and Banjos tales, it could be simply chalked up to a good story gaining different details with the re-tellings... something that happens all the time, and for which no one person can be blamed. But Macklin’s account of the Green Children of Banjos contains details that are all too obviously borrowed *directly* from Keightley’s account of the Green Children of Woolpit, ear-marking it as a deliberate falsehood.

A good example of this is the suspicious similarity in both accounts when describing the children’s discovery of beans as a good food. In Keightley’s account of the Woolpit children, we read: “...when some beans just cut, with their stalks, were brought into the house, they [the children] made signs, with great avidity, that they should be given to them.” Compare this to Macklin’s account of the Banjos children, as quoted from an unspecified ‘report’: “...beans cut or torn from stalks were brought into the house, and

they [the children] fell on them with great avidity.” Clearly, the account in Macklin’s book is just a paraphrase of the earlier Keightley account; and the use of the phrase “*with great avidity*” is undoubtedly a direct steal.

In light of the similarity of Macklin’s 1965 Banjos account to Keightley’s 1850 Woolpit account, it seems likely that Macklin simply copied and doctored the earlier story to suit his own purposes. If any reader out there has found a version of the Banjos story that pre-dates 1965, I would be most interested in hearing about it (*but I’m not holding my breath*).

5 Wilkin’s quote for the green girl, claimed to be from an account of the green children written by Gervase of Tilbury: “*We are folk of St. Martin’s Land; for he is the chief saint among us. We know not where the land is, and remember only that one day we were feeding our father’s flock in the field when we heard a great noise like bells, as when, at St. Edmunds, they all peal together. And on a sudden we were both caught up in the spirit and found ourselves in your harvest-field. Among us no sun riseth, nor is there open sunshine, but such a twilight as here goes before the rising and setting of the sun. Yet there is a land of light to be seen not far from us, but cut off from us by a stream of great width.*”

Now compare with the translation of William of Newburgh’s quote from the green girl, published by John Stevenson: “ ‘*We are inhabitants of the land of St Martin, who is regarded with peculiar veneration in the country which gave us birth.*’ Being further asked where that land was, and how they came thence hither, they answered, ‘*We are ignorant of both those circumstances; we only remember this, that on a certain day, when we were feeding our father’s flocks in the fields, we heard a great sound, such as we are now accustomed to hear at St Edmund’s, when the bells are chiming; and whilst listening to the sound in admiration, we became on a sudden, as it were, entranced, and found ourselves among you in the fields where you were reaping.*’ Being questioned whether in that land they believed in Christ, or whether the sun arose, they replied that the country was Christian, and possessed churches; but said they, ‘*The sun does not rise upon our countrymen; our land is little cheered by its beams; we are contented with that twilight, which, among you, precedes the sun-rise, or follows the sun-set. Moreover, a certain luminous country is seen, not far distant from ours, and divided from it by a very considerable river.*’”

Stevenson printed his translation around one-hundred years before Wilkins claimed to have a copy of the account from Gervase of Tilbury; and it’s pretty clear that the account Wilkins presents is just a re-wording of the earlier account.

Bibliography

- *Charles Berlitz's World of the Incredible but True*, Charles Berlitz, 1991 Ballantine Books, pg. 219.
- *Church Historians of England*, Vol. 4, Part 2, by Joseph Stevenson, 1856 Seeleys. Pgs. 436-437
- *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1982 E.B. Inc.:
 - Micropedia IX, entry on the Norman king, Stephen.
 - Micropedia X, entry on the William of Newburgh.
- *Eyewitness to History*, John Carey, 1987 Faber and Faber Limited, pg. 28-30.
- *The Fairy Mythology*, Thomas Keightley, 1850 London, pg. 281-283.
- *The Fairies*, in *English Tradition and Literature*, K.M. Briggs, pg. 7-8.
- *House of Evil*, Margaret Rowan, 1977 Scholastic Magazines, pg. 22-28.
- "The Green Children of Woolpit," Paul Harris, *Fortean Times* #57, Spring 1991, pg. 39,41.
- *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages*, 1857 London, no. 66 - 'Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum', pg. x-xxv, pg. 118-120.
- *Strange Destinies*, John Macklin, 1965 Ace Books, pg. 23-26.
- *Strange Disappearances*, Brad Steiger, 1972 Lancer Books Inc., pg. 78-79.
- *Strange Mysteries of Time and Space*, Harold T. Wilkins, 1958 Ace Star Books, pg. 183-187.
- *Strange Women of the Occult*, Warren Smith, 1968 Popular Library, pg. 123-124.
- *Supernatural Disappearances*, Rodney Davies, 1995 Robert Hale Limited, pg. 42-45.
- *Unexplained!*, Jerome Clark, 1993 Visible Ink Press, pg. 162-163.
- *Wikipedia: Coggeshall Abbey*, 2009 website, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coggeshall_Abbey



If you liked this eBook, then please check out <http://www.AnomalyInfo.com/>
for more studies!