

La Coin de la Biche

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a well-known farmer in St Martin's called Henri Mauger. He had spent a day with his men down at Saint's Bay. They had filled their cart with *vraic* for the fields, and when the sun began to go down it was time to take the heavily laden cart back to the farm. A powerful team of oxen and horses laboured to pull it up the hill from the beach. In those days Saint's Bay Road was a steep, rocky lane with a deep channel down which water ran back to the sea. The lane was bordered on both sides by high earth banks, hedges and tall trees. As they neared the top of the hill they turned off into a small, narrow lane we now call *La Rue des Grons*.

Locals once believed that a particular spot in that lane was haunted by the phantom of an enormous nanny-goat. The belief was so strong that it had long been known as *The Goat's Corner*. As the group turned into the lane, one of the men asked, 'Do you think that we will see the goat?'

To which Henri replied, 'If we see her, she will not harm us!'

No sooner had he uttered these words when, out of the darkness, a great, hairy nanny-goat appeared. It stood up on its hind legs and placed its front hooves against the back of the cart. The shock of the goat's appearance brought the horses and oxen to a complete stop. No matter how hard the men drove the panicked animals, the cart would not move an inch forward. All the while the huge goat kept its hooves firmly on the back of the cart, and stared intently at the men with large red eyes.



By this time, Mr Mauger and his workmen were desperate to get away, but nothing would move the cart. They were forced to unhitch the horses and the oxen, and lead them back to the farm, leaving the cart behind in the lane.

The following day Henri nervously returned to the lane – but there was no sign of the goat. Strangely, he was then able to use but one horse and one ox to pull the still heavily laden cart back to the farm.

Artwork by David Wyatt. © Guernsey Museums & Art Gallery

Story by Guernsey Museums, adapted from Marie de Garis' *Folklore of Guernsey*