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To Whom It May Concern,

I'm contacting you today in the hope that you may be able to offer me some help.

I'm a historian, folklorist and storyteller currently working on the first collection of folktales specific to the New Forest area, which should be published this Christmas. I've been researching the project for some years now, and believe I have all but exhausted the historical, literary and linguistic sources which exist. I'm very keen now on adding a more human, less academic element, and on exploring what oral traditions might remain or exist, and seeing what golden nuggets and old fragments I may be able to find in people's memories and experiences. If the contributor wishes me to, then I will protect their anonymity.

I'm currently looking for any:

- Ghost stories and sightings, Fairytales and Fairy stories, accounts of Witchcraft, magic, etc.
- Customs, Sayings, Phrases or Traditions
- Local nick-names for Animals, Places, Roads and Pathways, Geographic Features, etc.
- Stories or experiences of the supernatural or the strange and unexplained
- Stories, slang, traditions or anecdotes about or from:
 - The area, the people, the culture, or the history of the New Forest
 - Local industry or work, Smuggling, or the Military
 - Any churches, large houses or old buildings
 - Any places, trees, rocks, areas or geographical features

If you or anyone under your aegis might have anything close to any of the above to send me I would greatly appreciate it, no matter how relevant or random, how serious or silly, how ancient or new, how widely known or how personal and obscure. I want to be as inclusive as possible, and am hungry for any scrap of anything I can find, no matter how tawdry or peculiar.

I can be contacted by email or post, and I would ideally need responses by the end of February. I am especially interested in hearing from older generations, and people with long ties to the Forest. Please do disseminate this as widely as you can, and to any and all interested parties.

For those interested in submitting anything, I would also like to know:

- Name & Address, Date & Place of Birth
- How long have you lived in / what is your connection to the New Forest?
- Where were your parents and grandparents from?
(Do you know where any earlier generations of your family were from?)
- How did you hear about my search for folklore?
- Where did you first hear of the information you're sending me?
(eg: told at school, told by a parent/friend/grandparent, experienced it myself, etc.)
- How widely known is it?
(eg: throughout the village, throughout the Forest, throughout Hampshire, once common but now not so well known, personal to you and your friends, passed down through family, etc.)
- Where and when did it occur?
- Do you believe it to be true, or is it more just a bit of fun?

Kind Regards,

Brice Stratford