

How to get rid of unwelcome visitors

by Jill Clay

A knock at the door startled me. I was sure I wasn't expecting any visitors and I had that sinking feeling that it would be my neighbour who would be standing at the door with that I'm-looking-for-that-cup-of-tea attitude. I'm not normally very reluctant to answer the door to a neighbour but this one was becoming a real nuisance with daily (if not hourly) visits which would extend far beyond the recognised period of normal hospitality. I peered round the curtain and sure enough there she was! I thought for a moment as to whether I could pretend to be out but before I could make a decision I must have twitched the curtain and she spotted me through the window. So there was nothing for it but to smile, wave, and go to open the door. Reluctantly I let her in and tried very hard to look as if I was pleased to see her. It was becoming obvious to me that she was very lonely and had decided that an afternoon session each day would easily pass a few hours. I had only recently moved in to this house and predictably there were lots of things that needed doing, not just unpacking all the boxes still waiting to be sorted out but quite a lot of painting and decorating as most of the rooms needed some tlc. Her visits had started innocuously enough with a welcome to the neighbourhood, sometimes accompanied by a few fairy cakes. But as the days progressed she just started arriving soon after lunch every day and it meant if I was in the middle of painting a door or something I would have to drop tools rather grumpily. I couldn't understand why she was so oblivious, not to say insensitive, to the fact that I was in the middle of trying to improve my living quarters having so recently moved in. So once again I made some tea and settled down to hearing all about the people around in the surrounding houses, their lives, problems and not to put too fine a point on it - gossip! I listened patiently adding an occasional ooh and er but she really wasn't interested in hearing about my life so I offered the usual trivialities about the weather and so on. The afternoon passed agonisingly slowly and I've never known anyone being so—well thick—about the few hints I managed to put into the conversation over how busy I was. By the time she left it was too late to do anything except think about what I was going to have to eat, I hadn't even been to the shops so there was very little choice except some stale bread and a rather elderly egg. So there you have it, how do you manage to get rid of someone who had decided that I needed a daily visit? Murder was becoming an attractive proposition until I realised that being housed for years at the expense of Her Majesty's prison service would certainly prevent me from finishing my decorating, let alone putting my possessions in their rightful place.

For the rest of the evening I considered various options (including moving) but nothing claimed a workable solution. I slept fitfully and woke up the next morning feeling disgruntled and weary. I decided that I definitely would pretend to be out the next afternoon and put the car away in the garage out of sight. This time the doorbell rang and I slid behind the sofa. I'd hardly settled in my hiding place when there was a second ring of the doorbell, much more insistent this time. Again and again the bell rang, whoever it was was not going to take no for an answer. I inched towards the door. Taking a deep breath I unlocked the

door and turned the handle. For a moment I was exhilarated for standing on the step was a parcel delivery man and I gave a huge sigh of relief, swiftly followed by the knowledge that behind the delivery man was standing my neighbour with a big smile on her face. "I thought you were out when you didn't answer the bell straight away". "Oh sorry" I said "I must have been upstairs". The afternoon proceeded with its usual interminable way and I couldn't wait to get rid of her. So the next day I was ready. When the doorbell rang I was already dressed with coat and gloves, car keys clutched in my hand. Opening the door I announced loudly "I'm afraid I have to go out I've joined the local sports club and I shall be going there every day from now on". I kept that up for a week, going out of the house as she arrived and creeping back when I thought the coast was clear. And it worked!! No more visits - and that's how you get rid of unwelcome visitors!