The Ghost Club

Founded 1862



Newsletter – Winter 2008

ISSUED TO MEMBERS ONLY

Copyright: The Ghost Club. All rights reserved

"Nasci, Laborare, Mori, Nasci"

The Ghost Club

NEWSLETTER Winter 2008

Cover: "Scullery maid" at Michelham (Steve Boakes copyright 2007)

Chairman's Letter 2
Dan Leno 5
Ghosts in the News 9
Exercise in Exorcism 13
Amityville 15
Gef The Talking Mongoose 20
La Entaconada 23
Norman Smithenbottom 25
Haunting Scotland 27
The Exorcist 31
County Ghosts 34
My Story 37
Book Review 41
Ghost Walk 45
Investigation 48

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Welcome to the Winter newsletter. I hope you all had a good Christmas and that you are looking forward to the coming year as a member of The Ghost Club as much as I am. There is a lot to report since the last newsletter but I will try and keep it brief.

AGM

On Saturday 13th October, The Ghost Club Annual General Meeting was held at the Victory Services Club and was followed by a very interesting talk given by Ghost Club member, Frank Holt. The AGM saw Council Members give a brief account of their work during the last year and the members formally accepted the updated Ghost Club Constitution. Congratulations to Paul Foulsham who was formally elected as our new Science Officer and to Lisa Bowell who, after being co-opted onto the Council mid-term as General Secretary, was formally voted into the role during the meeting. Our Archivist, Keith Morbey, decided to stand down after an impressive 13 years on the Council and received a vote of thanks for all his hard work over the years. In recognition of this, Keith was appointed a Ghost Club Advisor. The remaining Council were re-elected to serve another year.

It was reported that 14 investigations took place in 2006, despite a drop in the uptake of places by members on these investigations and a severe lack of Area Coordinators. Some of the most notable sites visited include the Museum of Flight, Michelham Priory, Tutbury Castle, Derby Gaol, Arundel Prison Cells and Jamaica Inn. Special thanks went to Derek Green, our Area Coordinator in Scotland, who constantly amazes me by pulling some amazing sites out of the hat and who works tirelessly to run investigations to such a high standard for The Ghost Club. In recognition of all his hard work in 2006, the Council awarded Derek one year's free membership. Thank you very much Derek.

It was agreed that the Newsletter had undergone a metamorphosis since Sarah and Monica took over its production and the decision at the 2006 AGM to make this a two-role job had certainly paid off. This of course does not detract from the fact that it is only a success because of the huge amount of work and effort both of them put in. It was especially nice to receive messages of support and congratulations from members who were unable to attend the meeting. Keep up the good work ladies and thank you.

Special thanks also went to our Membership Secretary Milton Edwards

who worked wonders during the last year. Milton updated the database making it more accessible to the Council and easier to work with; he has introduced a new system whereby e-mails can be sent from the central database. Many of you will have noticed that e-mails no longer come straight from me but from a "Ghost Club Information" address instead. This will prevent any catastrophes such as the database crashing and the Council losing valuable information, or problems experienced with some servers sending and receiving mail. Unfortunately Milton was unable to attend the meeting but reported that membership stood at a very healthy 227 members.

MEMBERS ONLY AREA

For those of you that have Internet access, you will now have been given a user name and password to access the newly constructed "Members Only Area" on our website. Although still in its infancy, the area is already taking great shape and will continue to grow, so please do visit regularly.

Philip Carr, our Web Designer, has been working very hard; all dates for next year's meetings have already been posted, there is a Media area which includes Ghost Club press coverage dating as far back as the 1930s, an Archive area and an area where forthcoming investigations will be posted as and when possible. The Ghost Club Constitution and Annual General Meeting minutes are available for viewing too.

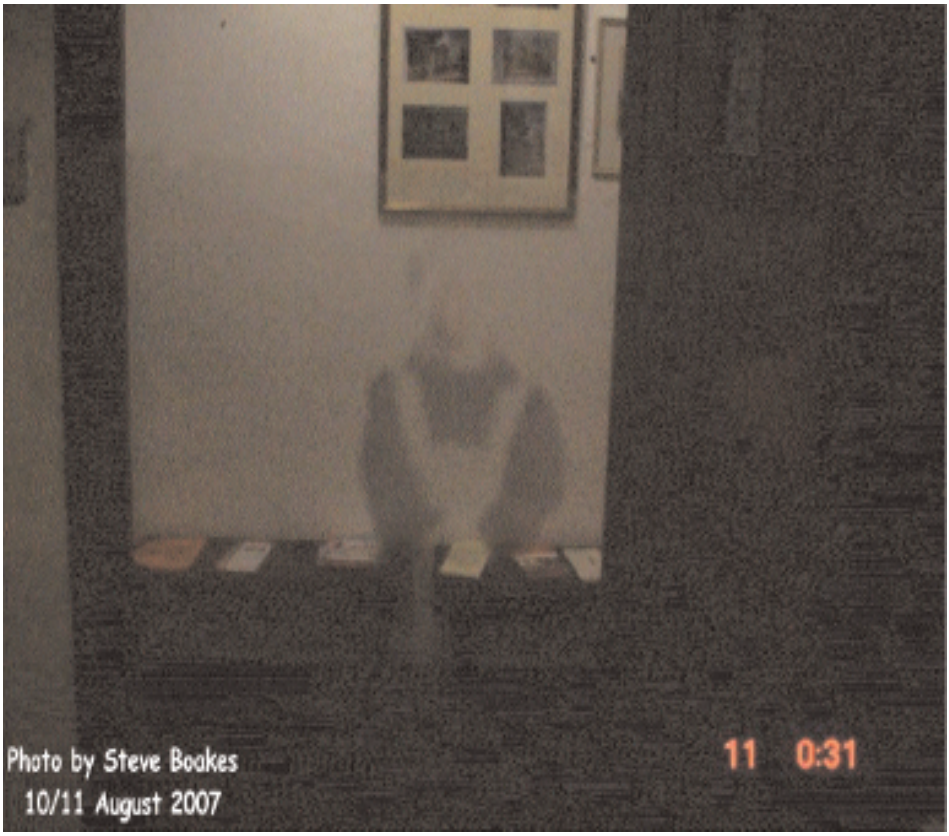
MEMBERS ONLY FORUM.

Milton reported, *"I have found that the predominate reason people join the Ghost Club is to communicate with likeminded people on the subject of the paranormal and their experiences. Though the club hosts various investigations around the country and has meetings based in London, I realise that not everybody can easily attend these or they may want something more frequent. To help rectify this, I will be liaising with our Webmaster to try to introduce some online services where members [wherever they may be based] can communicate with each other daily, on a private Ghost Club members only forum. I think that this would be an excellent place to discuss stories, explore ideas, share information and build friendships in our own exclusive domain. I would be happy to receive your opinions on this or any other ideas you may have on how to enhance your membership experience. You can email me on memsec@ghostclub.org.uk or write to me at the address found on the website & newsletter".*

As you can see, the Council have worked very hard and continue to do so and I would like to say a huge thank you to all of them for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the Club. (Details of the Council Members, their positions and contact details can be found on the back inside cover). Please remember, this is YOUR club, if you have any ideas or suggestions about any aspects of the club, please let us know.

THE MAID OF MICHELHAM.

As promised in the previous issue of the newsletter, I have included the second remarkable photograph taken at Michelham Priory on Friday 10th August, by Steve Boakes. At 00.31hrs during a break between vigils, Steve was in the pantry making a cup of tea chatting to his sister Sue, who was standing in the hall just beyond the doorway. Suddenly Sue looked to her left, appeared quite startled, burst into tears and fled the area! Steve, sur-



prised by his sister's reaction, immediately took a photo of the area before going to look for her.

When Sue was rather more composed, she explained that she had been prodded, or pushed and had sensed a woman wearing what she described as a "white pinafore", of thin build but with wide hips and about 5ft 4 in height. She has never experienced anything like this before and was shocked by the intensity of her encounter. You can imagine her surprise when she saw the photograph that had been taken!

The woman pictured seems to be dressed as a maid and appears to be kneeling on the floor. (I subsequently had various photographs taken of me standing, kneeling and crouching on the floor, to try to gauge a more exact position. I would estimate that the woman is of slight build and is around 5ft 2 – 5ft 5). Perhaps the ghostly maid was washing or polishing the floor and prodded or pushed Sue, when she inadvertently got in the way?

Many thanks to Steve Boakes for allowing me to use his photograph in this edition of the newsletter.



Dan Leno's Afterlife



The enigmatic Victorian music hall star, Dan Leno, haunts theatres and has an influence on people nearly a century after his passing. **Philip Carr** reports.

'The funniest man on earth', 'the King's Jester'—Dan Leno was considered, along with Joseph Grimaldi, the finest of all pantomime performers. But by any standards Dan Leno was an extraordinary man, with a sadly short but meteoric career. He was born in 1860 into a poor, show-business family. Though trained to be an acrobat, he soon became a dancer, travelling with his brother as 'The Brothers Leno' and winning the World Clog-Dancing Championship in Leeds in 1880. Success in the theatre followed. His speciality was monologues and comic songs, delighting audiences with his wit and inventiveness.
Ten years later he was the principal figure in the Drury Lane pantomimes in London's West End, making the role of 'Mother Goose' his own and effectively creating the modern pantomime dame. He brought to his parts not just his comic genius but great warmth and sympathy. Marie Lloyd, the 'Queen of the Music Hall' said of him, 'If we didn't laugh at him, we'd cry our eyes out'. (In certain photographs of the time, Leno's impish grin and sparkling eyes bear an uncanny resemblance to today's pop superstar, Robbie Williams.)

By the turn of the century he was at the height of his career, appearing in Music Hall in New York and in front of Edward VII by Royal Command in 1901. Two years later the strain of his success began to tell and it was said the effort destroyed him. Like many comedians the real Dan Leno was a melancholic. Dementia and poor health took their toll and in 1904, after spending some time in a mental institution, he committed suicide.

But that it seems was not the end of the king of the music hall comics. The beloved actor has made ghostly appearances in several London theatres, behaving as sanely as anyone could expect from a ghost. These included the old Grand Theatre, Clapham Junction and Collins Music Hall in Islington where reputedly, Leno audibly voiced his disapproval during rehearsals if performances were not to his satisfaction.

Dr Jeanne Youngson of the International Society for the Study of Ghosts and Apparitions writes: 'He has been seen a great many times at the Drury Lane Theatre, the scene of his greatest successes. One night, for example, Stanley Lupino, a member of the famous Lupino acting family, was alone in his dressing room when he heard the sound of a curtain being drawn. As he turned, he saw a pair of legs materialise in front of him. He immediately recognised the peculiarly skinny limbs of Leno but before he could utter a word, the legs sauntered off straight through a locked iron door. Another time Lupino was checking his makeup in the mirror and saw

Leno's head appear above and behind him. He was so close that Lupino could see where his wig ended. Quick as a flash he twirled around-but the room was empty.

Yet another time, Stanley's wife saw Leno appear from behind a curtain and follow her husband down a corridor. Lupino was unaware of the apparition, but his wife swore it was Leno's ghost. It was later discovered that the dressing room Lupino had occupied was one of Dan Leno's favourites and was, in fact, the last one he ever used.'

Psychic Mia Dolan was given a tour of the Drury Lane theatre on Hallowe'en, 2000 and claims to have been accompanied by Leno:

'My PR, Carol Ashby and I were met at the stage door at 6 pm by the theatre's tours co-ordinator, William Byers. As soon as we left the entrance lobby I could see the spirit of a small male which I thought was probably a lad of around 12 years of age. I didn't mention his presence at that point but I was aware he was coming on the tour with us. William first took me down to the lowest level of the theatre which was a tunnel. As William was telling me the history of the theatres I saw the outline of a man wearing a long cloak walk out of one wall, cross the width of the tunnel and disappear through the opposite wall. I interrupted William and asked him what the story behind the man in the cloak was. He said he didn't know anything about a man in a cloak. We then left the tunnel and started to climb the stairs leading towards the dressing rooms. The small spirit was still with us. As we were walking up the stairs William started to tell us the story of a murder that had happened in one of the dressing rooms. He said it was not known officially which dressing room it had happened in. At this point the small spirit said "number three". Carol laughed and William turned round with an enquiring expression and Carol explained that I had told her which room. William gave me a quizzical look and said "shall we continue?" Just as William was turning to lead us out of the stalls I saw the small spirit figure run in front of him as if to lead the way. My curiosity won and I asked William if he knew anything about the spirit of a lad connected with the theatre, he said he didn't and with this answer the small figure seemed to run along ahead.



Dan Leno; One of the finest pantomime performers

I then went back to the stage door entrance and was introduced to Joanna Riding who was appearing at the theatre as one of the witches in the show The Witches

of Eastwick. As soon as we were in the area of the dressing rooms I knew that there had been physical activity caused by the small spirit who was still with us and once we had sat down in Joanna's room I asked her what she had experienced. She thought for a while and then told us that champagne glasses had gone missing at different times and that she couldn't understand how and also that her lucky fairy which she hung above the dressing table had been untied and removed. This fitted nicely into the feelings I had that it was not anything bad just a little mischievous. William then went to get an old brochure on the theatre. When he returned I flicked through the pages and stopped on the picture of Dan Leno who seemed familiar. At this point I could see the flickering of energy out of the corner of my eye; I turned and saw the small spirit make a bow. Reading the small print under the picture of Dan Leno I learned that Dan had only been five feet tall, that he had died in his forties and was remembered for his sense of fun. I was quite honoured to realise it was Dan who had accompanied us on our tour.'

The connection between Peter Sellars and Dan Leno is a fascinating one. Sellars, something of a tortured comic genius, was desperately insecure. He regularly sought support and guidance from the world of the paranormal and came to depend on Maurice Woodruff, a well-known clairvoyant, as an emotional prop. Woodruff gave Sellars psychic readings by phone wherever he was and often made major decisions for him.

In 1970, when Sellars was living in Ireland and at a low point in his career, not having made a film for five years, he had a séance with the celebrated spiritualist Estelle Roberts, who brought along her spirit guide, a Red Indian called Red Cloud. Unlike most spirit guides he was real flesh and blood and told Sellars that he too had a spirit guide in the form of the Victorian music hall performer, Dan Leno. Sellars often listened to his spirit guide and



Leno, who is "forever getting in touch with cheerful messages".

began to rely on Leno much as he had previously done on Maurice Woodruff, to such an extent that Leno eventually ruled all his business decisions and chose the roles he played. Sellars said that his character in *The Optimist of Nine Elms* was directly inspired by Leno and that Leno was working him and gave him his talent.

When Sellars was offered the role of Inspector Clouseau, he confided to his biographer and friend Peter Evans, "Dan Leno tells me that I should do the Pink Panther film, he is most insistent". Of course Leno was absolutely right, Sellars' role as the bumbling French detective was a runaway success and revitalised his career.

Sellars was once taken to Leno's former home on a private visit and on entering fell down on his knees, exclaiming, "I can feel he's here, he's waiting for me". The confused and disturbed lady owner of the property then quickly showed Sellars the door.

One of the curious things about Sellars was that, without a character to play, when the mask was off, he appeared an empty and rather blank personality—as one of his friends described him — Mr Nobody. His role of Chauncey Gardener in the film *Being There* very much revealed this aspect of the man—a nobody who by a misunderstanding becomes President of the United States. Sellars told a friend that the one thing he couldn't get right was how Chauncey should walk. Apparently later Leno showed him but sadly, we are not told how Leno communicated this.

The essence of music hall is the rapport engendered between artiste and audience and no one is more aware of this than Roy Hudd, one of Britain's best-loved comedians — an expert and aficionado of the music hall tradition. There are many similarities between Hudd and Leno in their careers and Hudd has played the role of Leno several times. He once described on television how since childhood he had had a recurring dream of visiting a house with a cellar full of mirrors. Two actor friends, who had just moved into a flat in Brixton, invited him and his wife round to see it. Hudd, (something of a sceptic of things paranormal) was totally stunned to realise this was the house he had been dreaming of all those years and was able to describe each room before he entered it. It was only later that Hudd was told it had been a former home of Dan Leno, of whom he had not heard at the time but soon made it his business to find out about. After the programme went out, he got letters from ex-music hall performers, spiritualists and mediums, Brixton residents and Leno fans. The spiritualists and mediums all said Leno was forever getting 'in touch' with cheerful messages. Many of the performers said he'd actually 'appeared' to them at Drury Lane Theatre. According to Hudd in his Book of Music Hall, Variety and Showbiz Anecdotes, for years after Leno's death whenever it rained, people, (his gran included) said, 'It's the angels crying with laughter at Dan.'

Thanks to Mia Dolan, Roy Hudd and Dr Youngson for their help with this article.

Reprinted from Fanthorpe's Magazine

GHOSTS in the NEWS



By
Sarah Darnell

The following are a selection of extracts from articles featuring the paranormal, that have appeared in the media recently. Many thanks this time go to Kathy Gearing, Milton Edwards, Alan Murdie, Lisa Bowell, Paul Foulsham and Lance Railton. If you find anything of interest in the press, I would be grateful if you could send it to me, either via e-mail at producer@ghostclub.org.uk or by post to the PO Box address, so that we can include it in the next newsletter.

Skeletons Spook Staff

Builders at a new London Tourist attraction were today threatening a Halloween walkout after ghoulish events sparked by the unearthing of ancient skeletons.Workers at the *London Bridge Experience* made the grisly discovery in a secret sealed vault in the basement last week. Since then, tools have been going missing and ghostly goings on have given the petrified workforce the creeps.

Lee Scriven, who co-owns the attraction with his brother Danny said, "Since the discovery of the bones, strange things have been happening. We must have had at least a dozen light bulbs blown although the electrics are in perfect working order – it's costing us a fortune. Worse still, the contractors are getting the creeps and have said if it gets any worse, they're off. It's hard enough to get good tradesmen in London without all these shenanigans." He said he had even consulted a psychic, who will be sent into the bowels of the bridge to tackle any demons.

The present bridge, which was opened in 1973, was built on old tombs which contractors have been unearthing. The area once held a plague pit and is believed to have been the site of a cemetery for Southwark Cathedral. Hundreds of traitors, such as William Wallace, Guy Fawkes and Wat Tyler were executed on the bridge and their heads impaled at Traitors Gate. Scriven added, "Even the toughest lads aren't keen to be down in the tombs on their own and they tend to move around in pairs. I can't blame them, there's a strange feel about the place.

The £2 million London Bridge Experience will include an interactive tour of the bridge vaults, led by a Victorian guide. It opens in February 2008.

Story taken from thelondonpaper, 31/10/07

Village School Under "Evil Spell"

Superstition has caused panic among the school children at the Jagannathpur gram panchayat as news of the presence of a ghost at the Kageilo Janata School, spread like wild fire, with the villagers speculating that the ghost is that of a child. A team of doctors and the district inspector have visited the school but their efforts to "dispel such baseless apprehensions" have failed. Most of the villagers believe that the presence is that of the "killer ghost".

According to villagers, one student has died and four others have been hospitalised due to the evil spell cast by the ghost. On Monday, Priyabrata Samal, a student of

class VII went out to urinate and complained of reeling and eventually fell down. He was rushed to the hospital but died on the way. The very next day, Saroj Das who used to sit beside Samal, showed similar symptoms, but recovered, while a third boy Satyabrata Samal has also fallen unconscious.

The doctors who visited the school failed to find any outbreak of disease in the area. The district inspector of schools Mr Mayadhar Pany said that he too had visited the school. He admitted that the villagers firmly believe in the presence of the apparition. The local administration has been trying to dispel such baseless apprehensions. It has also undertaken tests of the tubewell water to find out whether the water has been contaminated. Study at the school has been hampered because the rumour has gained wide credence.

The full story can be found at: http://www.thestatesman.net

Theatre Revamp May Banish 'Ghost'

It is feared that the planned £13m restoration of a "haunted" 1920s theatre to its former glory, may silence its ghostly sounds. Footsteps on an empty stage and sightings of a woman in a bonnet are some of the ghostly reports by staff at Bournemouth's Pavilion. Some say it is the spirit of an actress who died on stage in the 1930s, called Emily. But the creaking noises from the old wooden floors and stage of the listed building may soon be silenced when the theatre is renovated.

Simon Bagnall, stage manager, said: "One member of staff claimed to have been chased up the corridor, another reported seeing things thrown around on stage when no-one was there, others have heard someone walking across the empty stage." Some staff are sceptical because they say the creaking noises are to be expected in such an old building. "It's an old building so there are lots of funny noises and it's a pretty eerie place to be in the dark," Mr Bagnall added. "Perhaps some of the activity can be put down to people's imaginations - but you never know."



Emily; heard walking across the empty stage...

The sightings were investigated by a clairvoyant whose description of a woman in period costume, matched reported sightings from staff. "If Emily does exist perhaps she can rest in peace knowing her theatre will soon be restored to its glory days of the 1930s when she was treading the boards," said Councillor Bob Chapman of Bournemouth Borough Council.

The full story can be found at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/dorset/7061433.stm

The Chat – An interview with Paul Chuckle.

In a recent interview with thelondonpaper, the younger of the two Chuckle Brothers, Paul, admitted he believed in Ghosts.

When asked about the latest Chuckle Brothers live tour and the included 'Ghost Busting' sketch, he was asked for his opinions on such matters. He states the following: "When I was doing a summer season in Rhyl, north Wales, I went to bed one night and couldn't sleep because it was such a muggy night. Suddenly the room turned icy cold and I felt a presence, as if someone was getting into bed with me, then the room turned warm again. Next morning, the owner told me that in the 1920's the place used to be a brothel, so I might have slept with the ghost of a prostitute!"



The Chuckle Brothers. Paul admits to a belief in ghosts.

Ghost Hunters Investigate Fire Station

Firefighters are renowned for their valour but they have been left unnerved inside their fire station in Drove Road, Swindon. Poltergeists are said to haunt the building, which lies on the route of the old canal, in which people are thought to have drowned.

A group of paranormal investigators examined the station's poltergeist trouble spots on Saturday to unearth the truth. Evidence gathered during the seven-hour operation reinforced the station's haunted reputation.

The officers' gear, which hangs next to where the fire engines stand ready, looked as if it could be the target of a mischievous ghost. But so far the ghosts of the fire station have shown no interest in floating around in firefighter gear. Instead they have concentrated on leaving mysterious footprints on floors, banging doors and setting off alarms. Areas checked by the *Paranormal Site Investigators,* (PSI), included the muster room, where hard hats, coats and boots hang.

Former firefighter Paul Rowland remembers spooky moments during his 30 years working at the station. "There were always weird goings-on at the station. I never liked staying there on my own," said the 61-year-old. "There were doors creaking and footprints. It would put the fear of God in you." According to Mr Rowland, years ago, one firefighter's dog constantly refused to venture into the halls.

PSI investigators recorded eerie activity in the gym at the end of the corridor on the first floor. Nicky Sewell, of PSI, said: "Our investigators heard voices from the gym area - but when they rushed towards it, the heavy fire door of the gym started to slowly close. It was certainly an interesting night but too early to draw concrete conclusions."

Other mysterious happenings on the night included clanks from the engine room, ghost detection equipment mysteriously failing and the unexplained sound of footsteps.

Mr Rowland said: "Years ago we had to

clean the station as part of our duties. I remember putting polish on the floor and leaving it all night. We would get up in the morning and find little footsteps running down the middle. There is no way anyone would do it."

The Fire Service will be presented with a detailed report of the PSI investigation. The results will also be posted on the group's website at www.hauntedswindon.com.

The full story can be found at: http://www.thisisswindon.co.uk/display.var.1630228.0.ghost_hunters_investigate_fire_station.php

Out-Of-Body Experience Recreated

Experts have found a way to trigger an out-of-body experience in volunteers. The experiments, described in the Science journal, offer a scientific explanation for a phenomenon experienced by one in ten people.

Two teams used virtual reality goggles to con the brain into thinking the body was located elsewhere. The visual illusion plus the feel of their real bodies being touched made volunteers sense that they had moved outside of their physical bodies.

The researchers say their findings could have practical applications, such as helping take video games to the next level of virtuality so the players feel as if they are actually inside the game. Clinically, surgeons might also be able to perform operations on patients thousands of miles away by controlling a robotic virtual self.

For some, out-of-body experiences or OBEs occur spontaneously, while for others it is linked to dangerous circumstances, a near-death experience, a dream-like state or use of alcohol or drugs. One theory is that it is down to how people perceive their own body - those unhappy or less in touch with their body are more likely to have an OBE. However, the two teams, from University College London, UK and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, believe there is a neurological explanation. Their work suggests a disconnection between the brain circuits that process visual and touch sensory information may be responsible for some OBEs. Through video display goggles, worn whilst standing in front of a camera, the volunteers could see a camera view of their own back - a three-dimensional "virtual own body" that appeared to be standing in front of them. When the researchers stroked the back of the volunteer with a pen, the volunteer could see their virtual back being stroked either simultaneously or with a time lag. The volunteers reported that the sensation seemed to be caused by the pen on their virtual back, rather than their real back, making them feel as if the virtual body was their own rather than a hologram.

Dr Henrik Ehrsson used a similar set-up in his tests and found volunteers had a physiological response - increased skin sweating - when they felt their virtual self was being threatened - appearing to be hit with a hammer. Dr Ehrsson said: "This experiment suggests that the first-person visual perspective is critically important for the in-body experience. In other words, we feel that our self is located where the eyes are."

Dr Susan Blackmore, psychologist and visiting lecturer at the University of the West of England, said: "This has at last brought OBEs into the lab and tested one of the main theories of how they occur. Scientists have long suspected that the clue to these extraordinary and sometimes life-changing experiences, lies in disrupting our normal illusion of being a self behind our eyes and replacing it with a new viewpoint from above or behind."

The full story can be found at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6960612.stm

In Argentina…

Scientists have been left baffled by a "haunted" playground swing that rocks backwards and forwards on its own.

Locals in Firmat claim one seat swung non-stop for ten days, before stopping dead, while other swings remained still. Parents and Children are convinced a ghost is to blame for the phenomenon. Local police were also stumped.

Story taken from thelondonpaper 25/10/07

Phantom Rider

The 11th Century home of TV personality Richard of "Richard and Judy" fame in Cornwall near River Tamar, had a reputation for being haunted by a headless horseman when the couple bought it ten years ago.

Richard states in an article in the Daily Express, that down a lane close to his property, there is an even narrower track that forks away from it, close to the rocky beach and it climbs between steep banks under a thick wood. He states, "I have walked this way a few times and it is a disquieting, even unpleasant stroll. It is hard to explain why – it's a pretty lane – but I always feel vaguely uneasy there and a sense of being watched.

On Sunday February 4th he went out to see if snowdrops were growing. 'Half way along I heard the sound of approaching hooves. The clip-clopping got louder and louder but no horse and rider appeared…. Thoroughly unnerved I walked home." Subsequently an unnamed local friend identified the lane as being haunted by a phantom rider and that several people had seen him and avoided it thereafter. Richard pledges to follow their example.

Full story taken from the Cornwall Daily Express, February 2007.



Robert Snow reveals a rare experience in

AN EXERCISE IN EXORCISM

This is the first time that I have made public details about an experience that I had about six years ago. However I have spoken about it to a very few members of 'The Ghost Club' and a few friends.

I received an email from a friend saying that a young couple who lived in Bournemouth, had contacted him. They were being plagued by poltergeist activity and wanted to be put in touch with someone who could help them. I called them on the telephone to find out exactly what the problem was.

The couple were in their twenties and ran a very successful IT consultancy from their home. They had purchased the large

Edwardian house about six months previously and had started to have the house completely renovated. The renovations involved quite a lot of structural alterations inside, such as the knocking down walls, the insertion of extra doors and window, not to mention the complete electrical rewiring and re-plumbing. Throughout this work, they were living in the building. I should mention that they also had some students lodging with them from Bournemouth University; about four in number. The house is in an expensive and fashionable area of Bournemouth, the kind of property sought after by affluent people.

When I called, I spoke to the man and he told me what had been happening to them. The activity started within a couple of days of the builders moving in. They were woken up at night by the sound of heavy footsteps, banging doors, loud crashing noises that sounded like the smashing of crockery and the televisions and radios were turned on. On a few occasions when they went out of the house, all the windows were open when they returned; having been closed before they left.

I re-assured him that even though these disturbances were unpleasant and alarming, they had absolutely nothing to be afraid of; nothing could harm them. I said that I would visit them at my earliest possible convenience, which would be in about a week.

Two days later I went away from home for the day, when I returned there was a desperate message on my answerphone and also on my mobile which I had left behind. I called the couple immediately to find out what exactly had been happening. I spoke to the wife this time. Apparently, matters were getting worse; the intensity of the activity had dramatically increased. The woman had gone downstairs the previous night at about 2am to make herself a cup of tea. Whilst walking down the main stairs to go to the kitchen, she heard what sounded like a woman sobbing and a low moaning sound. There was also the sound of voices talking quietly but the words were inaudible. She felt very nervous and uneasy but continued to head towards the kitchen. She made her cup of tea and was ascending the stairs with the tea. As she rounded the bend she saw a girl of about sixteen or seventeen standing in her way looking out of a window. She stopped, screamed and dropped her cup and the girl slowly faded away. Her husband came down to see what the trouble was. She told him. They returned to their bedroom and shortly afterwards all hell was let loose. There were loud bangs, screams, lights were turned on and off, the television was turned on at maximum volume, the radio was blaring away. She said that they could not stand any more and they were going to place the property on the market and move out until it was sold.

I told her that I would come along the following day after I had made enquiries from a friend of mine who was an ordained priest. I called a close personal friend of mine, the Reverend Lionel Fanthorpe whom I have know for many years. Lionel emailed me the order of a service of exorcism for Priests or Laity. I obtained also, some consecrated water and the following day and I went down the house in question. I performed the exorcism, according to the correct order of service, in every single room of the house, this took some time. I should mention that for the last couple of weeks the student lodgers were away.

The couple were very sensible and down to earth and did not strike me as having vivid imaginations or prone to exaggeration. Their house is of considerable size having around eight bedrooms; all very

nice. I do not think that they were making up these stories; they seemed genuinely very distressed indeed and I believe that they experienced everything that they told me about.

I did tell them that I might have to make a return visit because sometimes exorcisms did not always have the desired effect first time. Fortunately for the young couple, there has been no re-occurrence of the problem; all is quiet.

Please note: This article refers to a private incident. We, as The Ghost Club do not undertake clearances or exorcisms. Ed.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All meetings are held at the Victory Services Club, 63, Seymour St London, W2, commencing at 2pm. (Nearest tube, Marble Arch).

January 12th
Peter Jobson-Sightings and experiences on the Rochester Ghost Tour.

February 23rd
Stuart Orme

March 15th
TBA

April 19th
Jeff Davis-Research in America's Pacific North-West.



A searching question: the journalistic exposure of villainy is an acknowledged public service, but are nefarious schemes sometimes unwittingly aided by enterprising journalism?

AMITYVILLE: HORROR AND HOAX

by

Philip Paul

The honest answer has to be a hand-on-heart Yes. The point could be no better proven than by describing the affair that became world-famous as *The Amityville Horror.* Under that title it spawned a stream of 'news' stories, a sequence of 'spine chilling' feature articles, a shock-packed, 'best seller' book, numerous 'shudder-making' reviews, radio and television interviews in almost every English-speaking country on earth and a major feature film that filled cinemas all over the globe. And made its instigator much money.

I must emphasize at once that, in terms of remorseless human savagery, there was indeed a horror story. But my inquiries into the happenings that were claimed to have



The house at Amityville where my inquiries into the happenings that were claimed convinced me that they were utter hocus-pocus. No horror; just a hoax.

followed convinced me that they were utter hocus-pocus. No horror; just a hoax.

Situated some 30 miles east of Brooklyn, New York, Amityville is an affluent neighbourhood of detached, Dutch colonial style houses, mostly of wooden construction, standing in gardens of shapely shrubs and neatly-trimmed lawns. It is reached via the monotonous road that skirts the flat southern shore of Long Island. The events of which I write occurred at 112 Ocean Avenue, a three-storey residence reputedly built in 1928, with a garden leading down to the Amityville river, a two-car garage, a heated swimming pool and a large boathouse.

In 1974 the place was owned by 43-year-old car dealer Ronald DeFeo, who lived there with his 42-year-old wife Louise, his 22-year-old son Ronald, 18 and 13-year-

old daughters Dawn and Allison and 12 and seven-year-old sons Mark and John. To all outward appearances a successful, happy, united family.

But at 3.15 am on November 14, using a high-powered rifle, Ronald junior shot his mother, father, sisters and brothers to death in their beds. So much for amity in Amityville! At his trial DeFeo said he'd 'heard voices' in the house but later, admitted that this was a lie he had told to foster the idea that he was mentally ill. His real motive was thought to be a $200,000 life insurance policy and a cache of money said to have been hidden in his parents' bedroom. He was sentenced to six consecutive terms of life imprisonment - a total of 150 years!

In December 1975 the house was bought, for $80,000 (then equivalent to some £40,000), by 28-year-old land-surveying agent and former US marine corps corporal George Lutz, who moved in with his 30-year-old wife Kathleen and her three children (boys aged seven and nine and a five-year-old girl) from a previous marriage.

Four background facts are significant. First, Lutz was desperately short of money. Second, he knew all about the DeFeo murders, which had, of course, been widely reported. Third, he and his wife were given to 'transcendental meditation.' Fourth, it is believed that they were habitually using illegal drugs.

The book allegedly recording the experiences reported by the Lutzes (and embellished with some additional flights of fancy) was written by a hitherto unknown American scribe named Jay Anson. Of it a British Sunday newspaper's book reviewer wrote 'One of the most terrifying true cases ever of haunting and possession by demons….breathless….heartstopping.… chilling…a huge bestseller.' A Kansas City Star reviewer promised 'This book will scare the hell out of you.' More soberly, the Los Angeles Times reported 'The scariest true story I have read in years.'

85 incidents

In 28 days of residence, from December 18 to January 16, Lutz (and his wife and her children) claimed to have suffered 85 frightening paranormal experiences in the house and its surroundings. So the first task I faced, on opening my inquiries, was to examine these claims item by item, annotating the details of my findings. Obviously it is not possible to include all this material here. Anyone wishing to check the full range of facts will find them available in my book *Some Unseen Power*, which was published by Robert Hale in 1985. I will list here the most significant claims, with my appended notes. I have omitted all of the instances when the Lutzes reported having had 'sensations' or 'feelings' because these lack corroboration, could be the result of 'expectation' in a 'spooky' environment, or the result of substances ingested or inhaled.

There were numerous 'raps' and 'knocks'. The house is constructed largely of wood, an organic material which expands and contracts with variations of temperature and humidity. And gale-force winds were prevalent.

A mass of flies was found inside a window. Lutz had raised the central heating temperature to 8O degrees F. This could have caused incubation of the flies.

The front door was found hanging on one hinge. Gale force winds persisted.

The children were found sleeping on their stomachs - the position in which the DeFeo children were found after the shooting. Coincidence; children often sleep face

down.

There was a foul smell in a bedroom cupboard. A decomposing rodent behind the panelling?

A crucifix was found inverted in a cupboard. High winds were shaking the house.

Disturbed, Lutz went to the boathouse at 3.00 am. Looking up at his stepdaughter's window, he saw her face and that of a huge pig looking out. Rushing to her room, he found the girl asleep in her bed. Moonlit reflections on window glass can produce many visual illusions.

The girl told her mother she'd been talking to the pig. Lutz must have told his wife about the sighting in the window. The girl could have overheard this and, child-like, decided to 'get in on the act.'

A local historical society was said to have told Lutz that Indians had used nearby land as 'a death enclosure.' This report was denied by the society

After he had poked the embers of the living room fire and switched off the lights before going to bed, Lutz and his wife saw 'red eyes' looking in through the window. They disappeared when the lights were switched on again. Rushing outside, Lutz found hoofprints in the snow like those of a huge pig. The coloured luminescence seen in the eyes of certain animals at night is caused by a lustrous opaque structure called the tapetum lucidum. It occurs in all domestic animals except the pig. As to the hoofprints, my inquiries in Amityville revealed that a wild deer, of which there were many in the area, had been seen in the village. A deer hoof print in snow resembles that of a fully-grown pig.

Police Denial

The hoofprints and a damaged door were said to have been examined by Detective Sergeant Pat Cammaroto, of Amityville Police Department. He was reported to have experienced 'a creepy feeling' in the house. Detective Sergeant Cammaroto gave me a signed statement certifying that he had never visited the house during its occupation by the Lutzes.

'Green gelatinous spots' were found on walls, trickling down to the floor. Some mischief by the children? Why wasn't a sample of the material kept, for examination?

His stepdaughter told Lutz that the pig wanted to speak to him, in her room. Again two red eyes were seen looking in. Terrified, Kathleen Lutz threw a playchair at the window, smashing it. There was 'a cry of pain and loud squealing' and the eyes vanished. The earlier comment applies to the 'eyes.' The cry and 'squealing' could have been the distressed squawks of a nocturnal bird frightened by the breaking window.

Lutz saw 'a green substance' emerging from a hole in the playroom door, where he had removed a lock. Again a children's prank? Because it would have been easily within their reach, children would be likely to put substances in a lock hole. Why was none of the stuff kept for examination?

Having fled to accommodation in another house nearby, the Lutzes had sensations of being levitated above their bed and then saw a line of 'greenish black slime' ascending stairs towards them. The effects of ingestion or inhalation? Why was none of the 'slime' collected for examination?

What were the views of local people? I found no-one who believed the Lutzes' accounts of their sufferings. Amityville's village clerk, Gordon Moore, told me he considered the entire affair 'hogwash,' perpetrated for two purposes: to gain a sympathetic retrial for DeFeo and to make money.

Make money it certainly did. It was con-

servatively estimated that the Lutzes received at least $100,000 from the book, which sold five million copies and a similar sum from the film, as well as fees and expenses for their extensive radio and television appearances.

A journalist friend living in New York told me that the Lutzes had taken up residence in a more comfortable (but less profitable!) home in southern California.

Two more books were published describing the paranormal experiences that were said to be pursuing them wherever they went. But the sales never approached those of the Amityville book. The well of public gullibility had dried up!

Reproduced from the Chartered Institute of Journalists' Journal, by kind permission of the author.



Member's Area

Firstly I would like to thank you all for sending in your renewals in a timely fashion and to warmly welcome our new members to the club.

The majority of you would have noticed that we have implemented a new Members Only section on our website. As the name implies, it is for paid up members only and may contain some confidential material, so please do not pass on your logging in details to anyone outside of the club. This area is still a work in progress but at least we have a foundation to build on and as time progresses we hope to have a lot of varied content available for you.

The system we use that drives the member's area requires that each person provide a unique email address! The secondary joint member who shares an email address or any member who has not supplied me with an email address will not have been granted access. This can simply be remedied by providing me with your own personal email address. Secondary joint members can alternatively use their partners' username and password to gain access.

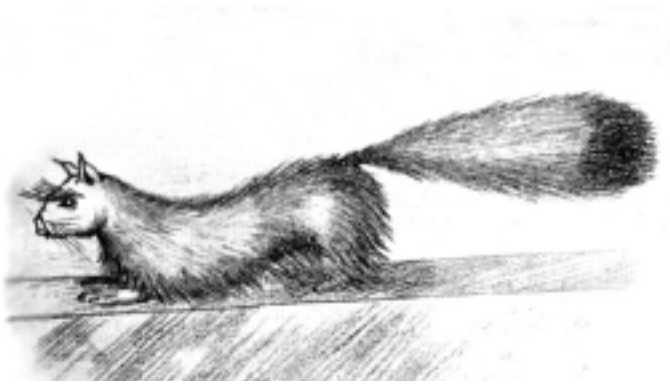
If any member has any media in any format pertaining to our club that may be of interest to other members, then I would be grateful if they could contact me, or indeed any person on the club council, with a view to us including it in our online archive.

Thank you all again for your continued support of the club!

Milton Edwards
Membership Secretary

The Bizarre Case of Gef, the Talking Mongoose

A poltergeist in the form of a mongoose that ate, drank, sang, gossiped and swore like a trooper sounds preposterous but the press and the renowned paranormal investigators Harry Price and Dr Nandor Fodor took the haunting very seriously. The manifestations began in 1931 and continued for nearly ten years. To this day no one is quite sure what caused them. Philip Carr recalls the story:



Gef, as he was called, moved in uninvited with the Irving family at a farmhouse called 'Doarlish Cashen' on a bleak and desolate hilltop on the Isle of Man. There was James Irving, his wife Margaret, daughter Voirrey, who was about twelve at the time and sheepdog Mona.

When he bought it, Mr Irving lined the inside of the house with tongue and groove boarding to help keep out the harsh cold of the winters there and the gap between the new and old walls, became Gef's lair, where he could observe the occupants and move round the house, largely unseen.

He was not a poltergeist in the true sense of the word in that he was fleetingly seen and photographed on various occasions and appeared to be a ferret or weasel-like animal with a yellowish tinge. Mr Irving wrote up a diary of the amazing events at the farmhouse, which Harry Price attested ran to 200 pages of typescript on which 'every page describes a miracle'.

The first evidence of his occupation came with tapping noises behind the boarding, followed by animal sounds: 'barking, hissing, growling and persistent blowing', then a strange crack that shook the house. As he was disturbing the household regularly at night, farmer Irving set about eradicating the uninvited guest using poison, trap and gun but Gef, eluded them all.

Gurgling sounds were the next of Gef's manifestations, just as if a baby was attempting to talk. James Irving tried imitating animal sounds to him

and was amazed when they were reproduced back perfectly, along with the name of the particular animal. Voirrey then tried with nursery rhymes which were successfully repeated back to her. More words soon followed in a torrent in the shrill, high-pitched voice. This initially frightened the family but, as they grew accustomed to their visitor, they began to be amused by the 'talking mongoose', as he claimed to be. In fact he told them he came from India and was nearly 80 years old. His appetite for learning was voracious and he constantly asked questions of the family.

It soon became obvious that he had been able to talk, laugh and sing from the outset and that the animal mimicry had been merely a leg pull. In fact his sense of fun was his most endearing feature, but he had a dark side too and in the early days, often frightened the family. He would throw objects round the house, spit and blow water at people from behind the boarding and thump loudly on the walls. He threatened to burn the house down. "If you are kind to me", he said once, "I will bring you good luck, if not I shall kill all your poultry... I am not evil. I could be if I wanted...I could kill you all if I liked, but I won't." He later put his powers to good use, regularly putting meat on the family table by bringing back scores of rabbits from his travels—though not killing them by biting the throat as a mongoose would, but by strangulation.

Gef's hearing was phenomenal and it became evident that nothing said in the house escaped his ears. James Irving once whispered to Margaret, "What in God's name can it be?" Back came the reply, "I am a ghost in the form of a weasel and I shall haunt you with weird noises and clanking chains".



'Doarlish Cashen' on a desolate hilltop on the Isle of Man, haunt of 'Gef the talking mongoose'.

But Gef became tamer. The family fed him on goodies such as bacon, biscuits, sausages and chocolate and he allowed the farmer's wife and daughter to stroke him and even feel his teeth. He demonstrated a talent for foreign languages by singing a Spanish song, reciting a Welsh poem and speaking in Arabic. He even claimed to under-

stand the deaf and dumb alphabet.

ESP was another talent claimed for Gef. He could tell Mrs Irving and Voirrey what Mr Irving was doing when he was miles away from the farmhouse, repeating the colourful language Irving was using and Gef was invariably accurate. He was also said to be have been able to read minds on various occasions.

He was shy and timid in the extreme and claimed he was afraid of being caught by a trap. Mr Irving hardly ever saw anything of him except the tip of a tail as he dashed along a beam, though he did see a shadow cast by candlelight of his front paw holding a spoon to eat some stewed bilberries laid out for him. The rest of the family was more favoured. Voirrey was even allowed to photograph him fleetingly on several occasions.

But Gef hated publicity and when curious visitors or investigators turned up at the farmhouse, he would usually be silent or curse them and refuse to cooperate. Captain MacDonald sent by Harry Price to investigate the phenomenon, was only favoured by a very brief glimpse of the mongoose and had objects hurled at him and water squirted at him. But for Harry Price himself, when he visited all was silent and Gef was either sulking or absent. After Price departed, Gef volunteered to leave some of his hair in a bowl. This was excitedly sent to Price who got London Zoo to analyse it. They declared it was canine—probably Mona, the family dog—another of Gef's jokes. Undeterred Price sent some plasticine and asked for casts of Gef's paws and teeth which the British Museum identified in one print as dog and another as perhaps racoon but not mongoose.

Dr Nandor Fodor was the last to try his hand but though he investigated the matter in more depth than anyone previously, he too received no first-hand experience of Gef.

After 10 years, the manifestations slowly ceased and Gef was not heard of again. Books and articles have been written on the subject and despite all the investigations and media interest, no one found evidence of a hoax. If this was a hoax the whole family must have colluded in it as no individual could have continued for 10 years without being found out. Ventriloquism, mass hallucination, fraud? What was the motive? James Irving never accepted a penny for letting people into his home to investigate or see Gef. Voirrey did not appear to be the adolescent energy centre around which poltergeists often manifest (if indeed we can classify Gef as one). Anyway Gef later outstripped her intellectually and when she left puberty, she had no interest and was almost hostile to him, despite his continuing presence.

This may be unique in the 20th century annals of the paranormal but in Price's book, which he wrote with RS Lambert, *The Haunting of Cashen's Gap* (Methuen 1936), he details many similar cases in the 16th and 17th centuries of 'familiars', or witch's assistants, which took forms such as ferrets, polecats, squirrels and rabbits.

Whatever the truth, the 'talking mongoose' has become another of the Isle of Man's many legendary ghosts, and certainly the most unusual.

Reprinted from Fanthorpe's Magazine.

La Entaconada

A Colombian Ghost Story

by Declan Leary

The province of Valle del Cauca in southwestern Colombia is a place of striking natural beauty. Its fields of maize, sugarcane and yucca run for mile after lush mile, making the landscape greener than any in Dorset, Meath or Normandy. The whole fertile plateau is bounded, dramatically so, by the stark peaks and crags of the Andean cordillera. The rich quality of the sunlight intensifies the loveliness of the countryside and frequent tropical storms give it moments of a fiercer poetry.

But this is Colombia and the beauty of the landscape belies the harsh human reality of the place. Bloody battles are fought in those mountains between a conscript army and Marxist guerrillas. The highways of the Valle are the nightime fiefdoms of AK-47 carrying bandits. And death squads routinely dump their victims' bodies in the cane fields.

Perhaps because they are made so keenly aware of their mortality, Colombians have a real interest and belief in a supernatural order. Ghosts, premonitions and witchcraft are as much the currency of everyday conversation as family, soccer and soap operas. And not surprisingly, Colombian folklore mirrors the violence endemic to this tragic nation, and its ghosts and revenants rarely resemble the genteel phantoms of the English country mansion or coaching inn.

One spirit which can still cause genuine anxiety amongst the country people of El Valle is La Entaconada- 'The Woman in High Heels'. This malevolent creature appears in the guise of a young streetwalker and wears a trademark pair of fashionable high heeled shoes. She patiently waits for custom in isolated, deserted places - and with an odd modesty too, as her beautiful mane of jet-black hair is brushed forwards so as to obscure her face. But for the lonely traveller accosted by La Entaconada she will happily draw back her tresses. To reveal a face that lacks both nose and eyes. Her only facial feature being her mouth, with which she will first offer her victim a kiss, before commencing to gnaw and mutilate his face. La Entaconada is literally a femme fatale: An avatar of the horrors and ravages of venereal disease perhaps.

My father-in-law claims not only to have met La Entaconada, but to have actually fended her off with a firearm. He told me the story of this singular exploit in the course of a walk we took through his village one evening after dinner.

Crossing a patch of waste ground, I remarked on the eeriness of the spot. At this, my in-law, Don Efrain, stopped and drew my attention to a wall of a derelict building. He pointed out several bullet marks and asked me to guess how they were made. At a loss for an answer (it being Colombia, too many possibilities crowded my mind) I shook my head and asked him to enlighten me. He then proceeded to tell me of how one night, half a century ago, he had encountered La Entaconada.

In 1950s Colombia *La Violencia* was at its height. This internecine fighting



The house where Don Efrain shot at 'La Entaconada' (Photo D Leary).

between partisans of the Conservative and Liberal parties was spawning a truly dreadful round of massacre, assassination and vendetta. In this climate of terror and hatred, the teenage Efrain was given a revolver for his protection and he made sure that he carried it with him, fully loaded, wherever he went. And it is to this act of corporeal self-defence, that he attributes his salvation from a supernatural assailant.

At that time, necessity had forced his mother to supplement the family income by illegally distilling and selling *aguardiente*- sugar-cane spirit. On the night in question, my future father in-law was carrying a load of this contraband through the village, making sure that he kept to the darker, emptier streets at borders of the cane fields. As Efrain passed an isolated house (the one at which we now stood), a teenage girl stepped out of the shadows and blocked his path. With her head bowed she stood there, utterly still; her self-possession as striking as her incongruous footwear- expensive high heeled shoes being the province of the ladies of the gentry, or city prostitutes, not simple farm girls. Concerned and curious, Efrain spoke to her, reminding her how dangerous the night time streets could be and telling her to go home to her family. The girl declined to reply but took a step towards him.

At this point in the narrative, Don Efrain became a touch reticent, but I was given to believe that La Entaconada made a species of sexual advance, mute but obvious enough. He certainly made it clear to me

that she possessed a siren-like magnetism and that he felt a compulsion to draw nearer to her. And as he did so, the girl raised her head and pushed back her hair, to reveal a face with no features other than a leering mouth- like a poorly wrought shop window manikin. Don Efrain said that the fear he'd felt when seeing men shot down in the street was nothing compared to the terror that took hold of him when he saw that face. It was, as he put it to me, *'en contra de Dios en contra de la naturaleza'*- 'against God, against nature'. Fortunately, however, as he stumbled back, he had the presence of mind to fumble for the gun at his belt. When he had it in his hand, he opened fire blindly, loosing all six bullets into the apparition.

Stunned by the report and flash of discharging all six rounds in quick succession, it was several long moments before Efrain could fully regain his senses. And when he did so, La Entaconada was gone, not a single trace of her remaining. Not even a footprint from a high heeled shoe. But the six bullet holes are still there.

I brushed my hand across them last summer as I wondered what to make of Don Efrain's anecdote. My father-in-law is a man of considerable personal integrity and is a tough, practical character not given to idle daydreaming or flights of fancy. He recounted his adventure to me in a sincere and matter-of-fact manner. It's a story that would stretch the credulity of most of us but I was left in no doubt as to how real the tale was to the teller. I may not believe in flesh and blood succubi prowling the midnight lanes of Valle del Cauca but the world is full of strange things, Latin America especially so.

So, with that thought in mind, I'll leave the last word to Colombia's Gabriel Garcia Marquez: "It was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity for surprise... no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay. It was an intricate stew of truths and mirages."

THE SEARCH FOR NORMAN SMITHENBOTTOM

By Kathy Gearing

I was intrigued to come across a very curious article recently in a Croydon newspaper and was spurred into action immediately when I discovered that the article was based on the findings of the founder of Strange Phenomena Investigations (S.P.I.) and former Ghost Club member, Malcolm Robinson. The former resident of 83 Tamworth Road in Croydon contacted Malcolm in August regarding a very strange photograph she had allegedly taken many years ago.

In around October 1979-1980 during a party at her six storey Victorian residence (now demolished to make way for the Centrale development), the hostess recalls how she took photos throughout the evening on her new 35mm camera. When the photographs were developed she was at a loss to recognise the face of a man captured in one image which was also very different from the rest! The picture shows the clear image of a man who is framed in an almost whispy "sepia" effect. The photographer subsequently showed the photo to the guests that attended the party and nobody recognised the uninvited guest! When the lady showed her elderly next door neighbour the photograph, she was astounded when he remarked, "Oh, that's old Norman Smithenbottom. He's been dead for years". He went on to explain that

Norman had previously lived in her house and had worked as a local butcher.

The photographer, Mrs Bell, confirmed to me that this could not have been a photograph taken at an earlier date as it was a new camera (a Kodak Instamatic) and a new spool of film was used on the night of her party. Neither could it be just an error at the printers, (ie the wrong photograph be enclosed in the wrong batch), as the shot that it was developed on the same size and type paper as the rest of the film.

Not surprisingly, the image caused quite a stir in the family at the time. Her neice spent some time immediately afterwards trying to find out more, taking the photograph to clairvoyants and mediums. Unfortunately her efforts went unrewarded and the copies have sat in a drawer ever since.



Was Norman Smithenbottom the uninvited guest at the party?

clearly shows her own living-room in the background. What is even stranger, is that when I spoke to Mrs Bell myself, she revealed that she was actually taking a photograph of her brother who failed to materialise on the exposure at all!

Sadly, Mrs Bell is uncertain as to the whereabouts of the original and negative but confirms that the print was in keeping with the rest of the developed film, that is

Mrs Bell admitted that throughout her life, she has had many strange experiences. In particular at her house in Tamworth Road, where pictures would regularly "jump" off the wall.

Malcolm is trying to research the photograph further and confirm the identity of the man in the photograph. He has appealed to local residents, particularly those of the older generation, in the hope

that someone could shed some light on the mysterious image. Malcolm added: "I've been doing this sort of thing for 25 years and you get to know when people are trying to pull the wool over your eyes. I'm convinced of the photographer's sincerity".

The name "Smithenbottom" has so far proven elusive in local records but of course, it is entirely possible that the elderly neighbour, who was around 93 years old at the time, was mistaken regarding the name. It is estimated that Norman died around 1965; fifteen years before the photo was taken. With any luck, Malcolm will be able to search the names of previous residents registered at that address in his local Library. Of course, if any of you can shed any light on this, please, do let me know.

Article: Croydon Guardian Wednesday 19th September 2007.

With many thanks to Mrs Ruth Bell and Malcolm Robinson.



The Ringcroft Poltergeist

by Derek Green

In this present day there are a number of alleged poltergeist disturbances which are investigated worldwide. With today's technology many of the recorded findings are posted on web sites, feature on Television/Radio or are simply recorded on highly sensitive apparatus. In many of these cases the activity is all very similar to what is known as classic poltergeist manifestation. The activity can include smells, movement of objects, apports, asports, doors opening, objects flying through mid air and puddles of water. More serious activity can include taps being turned on, small fires breaking out and people being scratched.

Poltergeist phenomena is spoken of quite frequently and is featured in many of today's paranormal publications and as a result of this exposure, we think we are gaining more knowledge on this classic type of manifestation, but are we really?

In 1695 a case was reported in Rerrick in Kirkcudbrightshire. The Rev. Alexander Telfair, a Parish Minister, published a pamphlet concerning a series of strange events which plagued the family of Andrew Mackie, a stonemason of Ringcroft. The Mackie family were subjected to a series of strange, frightening and bizarre events which were witnessed by at least 15 people and most of these were recorded by the Rev. Telfair with the help of the local residents.

Telfair published the pamphlet which was entitled *"A True Relation of an Apparition, Expressions and Actings of a Spirit, which infested the house of Andrew Mackie in Ringcroft of Stocking, in the Paroch of Rerrick, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbrightshire."*

It began in February of 1695, Andrew Mackie first discovered that some of his beasts had broken their tethers and had become loose. The following night he secured the animals only to find again the following morning that the same thing had happened. For a total of three nights/mornings this had become a regular occurrence and greatly confused Andrew Mackie and his family. A few days then passed without trouble before a further series of bizarre events started to unfold. Late one evening, the Mackie family were wakened by thick smoke pervading the house and on investigation, Andrew Mackie discovered a backcreel of peat piled up in the centre of the house which had been set alight. On Tuesday 7 March, the family were then subjected to the first bombardment of stone throwing which became very intense after night fall. Once more, the family investigated but could not find the perpetrator.

On Saturday 11 March, Andrew and his wife were working outside the house, while indoors, his children were witnessing what looked like an apparition sitting by the fireside. The following day, the Sabbath, some pot lids completely disappeared only to be later discovered by two neighbours in a loft. More stone throwing followed on this day as well.

After a few weeks of this constant bombardment it was noticed that the stone throwing intensified every Sabbath Day and more importantly while the family was at prayer. The target for the stone throwing was the person leading the prayer and it was also realised that the stones that were striking the victims appeared to be lighter than they should have been.

Andrew was now really struggling to cope with the series of bizarre events and contacted the Minister of the local Parish. Alexander Telfair agreed to come and spend some time in the house. Initially, Telfair did not notice anything untoward until he was preparing to leave the croft, whereupon he was struck by two small stones. Telfair followed this by praying and the stone throwing ceased - but not for long. Again, the next recorded incident was on the next Sabbath Day when the stone throwing was once more evident and this time larger stones were thrown through the air. This continued constantly for three days.

By the Wednesday, Alexander Telfair had decided to stay the night and he was attacked by stone throwing and other house hold objects being hurled through the air. Telfair was also subjected to a string of beatings on his side and shoulders with what he described as a long staff. So hard were these beatings that other witnesses could hear the noise of the strokes hitting the Minister.

The activity then changed and manifested in what was described as a series of heavy knocks and raps and one whole side

was ripped away from a box bed. Later that evening Alexander Telfair was leaning on the bed saying his prayers when he felt something pressing into his arm. When he looked he saw a white hand and arm from the elbow down.

Following this was a series of sightings which included a red faced man with yellow hair and a boy aged around 14 dressed in grey and wearing a hat.

The local neighbours, because of their interest were then to become the next victims. They were subjected to being struck with stones, beaten with the staff and then forced to leave the building. Andrew Mackie was now subjected to finger nail scratches appearing on his skin and the experience of something gripping him by the hair. Other victims were forcibly dragged through the house and one man was grabbed by an extremely firm force. The Mackie children, had their bed clothes ripped off the bed and were beaten about the hips by an unseen force. The activity continued with bangs and knocks and more stone throwing which followed with a disembodied voice shouting "wisht!, wisht!" while the family gathered for prayer times.

Bangs and knocks and more stone throwing, followed by a disembodied voice shouting wisht! wisht!

All these happenings were being persued relentlessly and by now, Alexander Telfair realised that more support was required from the Church. He enlisted the services of another two Ministers who joined him and the Mackie Family. This seemed to annoy the entity which by now Telfair had called "The Trouble." While the family and the Clergy were at prayer, they were assailed by a series of seven or eight pound rocks which were hurled at them. One Minister received two head wounds and had his wig pulled off with great force during prayer, while the other Minister was severely beaten with the long staff until he was badly bruised. Other members of the household had live peat thrown at them from the fire while stones apported and showered everyone like a hail storm.

What then followed intrigued everyone. Mrs Mackie while standing at the croft door, felt a stone wobble at her feet and lifting the stone, she found seven small bones with blood and flesh, all closed in a piece of old paper. The blood and flesh appeared fresh. On finding this, the family were subjected to more stones which flew around the house more than ever before and hot stones now became the focus of the activity where they would land on beds and furniture and burn holes through the material. When the local Blacksmith entered the house a plough share and trough weighing more than three stone was thrown at him and once more the family were subjected to stone throwing, beatings, fires and a strong vibration which travelled through the house.

The Mackies had now suffered this bizarre chain of events for two months and finally three Ministers gathered to try and end the problem. However again they

received beatings with the long staff, heard whistles, groans and the words "wisht!, wisht!"

Finally the Mackies fled the croft for a period of time and in their absence five neighbours decided to spend a night there. They reported a quiet night but when checking the barn in the morning they discovered that some of the animals and been thrown around the barn and had become loose. A couple of days passed quietly for the neighbours, however this did not last long as the stone throwing, fire raising and beatings started again. Also voices were heard and mud was reported to have been thrown around the house.

The final phase of activity was a string of fires which broke out in the croft and the barn although the animals were saved by the neighbours and the Clergy. A total of nine fires were recorded to have started with no explanation.

Finally the Ministers, the Mackies and the neighbours all gathered in the barn to say prayers. As they prayed, they observed a large black mass which oozed and grew bigger and bigger until it finally dissipated. Following this observation, the activity ceased and normal life once again came back to the Mackie family, the Clergy and the general neighbourhood.

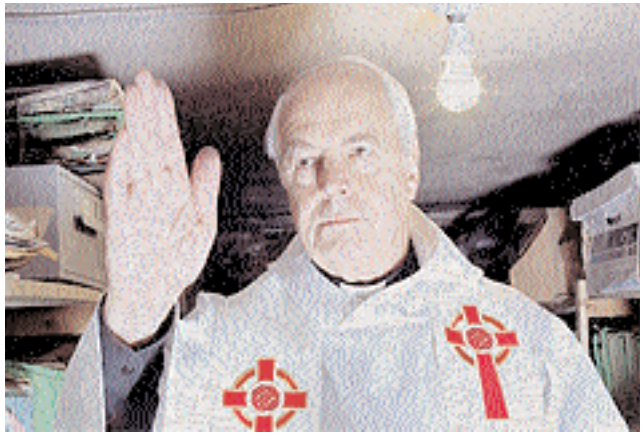
Alexander Telfair could never give a natural explanation for what he and the Mackie Family had experienced in those two months. Records were checked in order to find the previous owners of the croft and one man in particular was reckoned at the time to have been the cause of the alleged activity. It was known that he had suffered from severe depression for a number of years. Other tales were offered as an explanation, one included a possible peddler who had been murdered and buried on the land the croft was built on, but none of these were verified.

The Ringcroft story will always remain one of Scotland's biggest mysteries but at the time, it was reckoned that incident was unquestionable as there were testimonies from fourteen witnesses. They included five ministers, various neighbours and the Mackie family with all the testimonies being signed.

Ringcroft does not exist to this day but the Encyclopaedia Britannica called the Rerrick case a particularly good example of a poltergeist manifestation. What is an interesting fact is that some of the same phenomena is still reported in testimonies of families today while investigating modern poltergeist cases. However due to the lengthy history in this case and the fact that there was no technical apparatus available, one tends to think just how much of the Ringcroft phenomena can we really accept? The case was reported over 300 years ago and what I find so interesting is that such a long period of time has elapsed and yet scientists are still trying to find answers to alleged poltergeist cases...shall we ever get one!!!

THE EXORCIST

This is an edited transcription by Philip Carr of an interview on Saturday Live on Radio 4 on the 8th December 2007 between the presenter Fi Glover (FG) and the Rev Tom Willis (TW) by kind permission of the BBC.



Rev Tom Willis.
Photo kind permission of the BBC.

FG: The Rev Tom Willis very much believes in ghosts because he is charged with the task of getting rid of them. As a vicar in the Church of England, Tom became interested in the paranormal and proved to have something of a knack when it came to ridding places and people of unwanted spirits. He was part of the Ministry of Deliverance, the exorcism bit of the C of E, as it was called and over the years he has carried out hundreds of exorcisms persuading the spirits troubling his parishioners to leave and trouble no more. Tom came into our Yorkshire studio to tell us more and I asked him what his last call out involved.

TW: This was in an old abandoned chapel which had been sold as a house. There was a little old lady hovering about in the chapel being seen by the family. One man was fixing a heater and he said an old lady came up and thumped him on the back and then disappeared – he fled!

FG: So when you went along to perform the exorcism how did you go about it?

TW: I went and talked to the people that lived there and simply blessed every part with holy water and prayed that the peace of God would return and it seemed to be completely all right after that.

FG: The caricature of exorcism that we might see in the movies, Tom, is it borne out at all in practice?

TW: No, we usually try and diagnose whether it is possession or some kind of psychological condition. People don't get possessed walking to the supermarket, they usually have to have dabbled in the occult in some way – fortune tellers, tarot cards or ouija boards, in which case we would simply take them into church and at the altar rail they would make a prayer, renouncing anything they had dabbled in and we would then lay our hands upon them, anoint them with oil and command anything evil to depart.

FG: Some of those conditions that you talk about are quite complicated to diagnose psychologically. Is this the stuff best left to

a professional clinician really?

TW: It's a hard thing to say sometimes whether a thing is really a possession. If there is no reason for it we then perhaps bring in a psychologist. A rule of thumb is if the person says they are possessed they very rarely are. It's usually found in the process of finding out why they bring bad luck to other people, why there is a sense of coldness around them, things happen around them.

FG: I wonder whether you've been frightened by it yourself?

TW: Not a lot, no. I simply pray for protection and it's always given. I'm not particularly psychic and over years of going into haunted houses I've never seen an apparition.

FG: That must be so difficult if you can't see what the other people are seeing?

TW: Yes, sometimes I'm blessing a house and we get to the landing and the family say, "It's there!" and I say, "Where?" "In the corner!" and they're off downstairs and I'm blessing an empty corner, which is helpful if I'm not affected by it. I get a zigzaggy feeling round my edges, that's the only way I can describe it, like there's some instinct which says you're not alone.

FG: People finding themselves seeing things that they don't understand and don't want to see, that must be the most common exorcism that you do?

TW: My experience being mostly dealing with houses but hospitals, pubs and hotels are the ones that get the most problems because they have the most human emotion go through them.

FG: What are most of these spirits hanging around for?

TW: Quite often it's someone who has rebelled at death and has stayed hanging on, saying, "This is my place, I was happy here, I don't want to leave it."

FG: What would you say to those who simply don't believe in ghosts?

TW: I would say that they have not really examined the evidence.

FG: Have you ever literally had to shake a spirit out of somebody?

TW: Not physically, no. We wouldn't try anything physical because with a spiritual thing it's no good doing anything physical. You do get some Pagan (exoduses?) where some people try and physically beat them which seems a ridiculous thing to do. We would never do that as part of a healing ministry as far as the Christian church is concerned.

FG: You're not actually called an exorcist are you Tom?

TW: Well that's the biblical thing. Today they tend to say we are involved in the deliverance ministry but every priest is an exorcist but not all priests are in situations where they have to use it.

FG: And can you work across religions or do you have to believe in the God you believe in?

TW: No, I've had Muslims, Jews and atheists come, I had an atheist policeman on one occasion.

FG: Has there ever been an evil spirit that you felt you wouldn't be able to conquer?

TW: Well it's not me that does the conquering, it's me being a channel for God. I was once contacted by some girls who were having a party. The boys had gone quiet, sitting, not answering any questions, not talking. They called me in and I laid hands on one lad, he shook violently and then he was alright. He said, "Something just took me over that was horrible". I noted another lad and said, "Are you alright?" and he replied, "No I'm not". So I went to lay hands on him and he snarled like a Rottweiler!

FG: Are those very rare circumstances? Do

most spirits just have a feeling of sadness rather than evil about them?

TW: Yes. Sometimes it's only a memory. We had some taxi drivers in Hull who wouldn't go down a certain street after ten o'clock at night because several of them had had a man run out in front of them, had hit him and got out of the car, sickened to find there was nobody there. It seemed to be a memory of a past accident.

FG: And have you come across a lot of people who have been extremely surprised by the fact that they have felt spirits or have seen ghosts? I know some people rather embrace the prospect.

TW: Yes. I was once called out by the Samaritans to a couple and found them in the street, saying that they kept seeing an old man in the house, so we blessed the house. Next day I talked to a woman who lived opposite and asked who lived in the house before this couple and she told me it was a young couple who only stayed a month then they moved. She also gave me the name of some other occupants. I rang them up and they told me they had lived in the house for ten years. The first time the wife saw the old man she said she screamed the place down but after a while got used to it. The kids would sometimes come down at night and say "Mum, that old man's in our room." She told them just to say "Night, night, God bless" and he would go. That's the only help the children got!

FG: Would that be your general advice to people who see spirits? If they don't feel they are evil spirits should they just say "Hi, how are you?".

TW: I think you've got to say to them you shouldn't be here, you shouldn't be disturbing us , you must move on.

"You don't need to go to books and draw a circle round you, simply pray that God will protect you".

FG: Is your part of the country particularly prone to visitations from the spirits?

TW: I think you get some areas where people dabble more. Hull has always had a lot because in the past it was a trawling port and trawlers would disappear. People would then go to some fortune teller or medium and ask them "Is my husband still alive or what happened?"

FG: Is there anything you can do to avoid coming back as a spirit?

TW: I think we occasionally get some good phenomena. Quite a common one is a mother wakes up about four or five days after her baby has been born and there's granny looking in the cot. So not all visitations are necessarily bad. I think sometimes our family pay us a visit, see how we are and go away again. Occasionally they are seen.

FG: Do you think that can be explained by the force of your own mind desiring to see loved ones?

TW: It could be but I've had cases where there was someone else there who saw the visitation as well, so it wasn't just one person seeing granny appear.

FG: Tom, you do sometimes sound very chipper and I imagine it does help people enormously if you turn up and you're quite jolly in a situation where they might have become very fearful of?

TW: Yes, I was once called out by the police to a block of flats because sixteen people had had an experience where all sorts of things were happening. We ended up blessing the whole place. As I was commanding anything evil or disturbed to depart, I saw them look over my shoulder with a gasp of horror as the front door opened and slammed with a great bang and

I found myself saying "Well whatever it was – it's gone!". They all fell downstairs laughing. And I laughed all the way home.
FG: How legitimate is what you do, do you have to get a Council's permission, do you have a kite mark of exorcism, do you have to tell people when you are doing it?
TW: The Archbishop of York says that exorcism is part of the ministry of Jesus, so it's part of ours but they like you to have some training if you're going to get involved a lot. At the moment I'm trying to train younger clergy who come along and say " I've never had any training at college, what do I do?" I give them perhaps three afternoons of instruction, so it's training the next generation really.
FG: Is your family affected at all? Have there been occasions where you think what you have been doing has had some comeback on those around you?
TW: There was one case where we were dealing with something very nasty. There were three people in the house and I commanded it to go and I asked one of them what was it she saw and she said it was like a possessed doll. When I got home my wife said " Oh gosh, I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed there was evil trying to get at us and in my dream I went downstairs and smashed it against the wall and I felt it was coming from where you were." I asked her what it was and she said it was like some sort of possessed doll. So something very weird happened telepathically or something.
FG: But that often happens in horror movies, where other people are affected telepathically. Do you watch any of those movies?
TW: Occasionally. But you don't need to go to books and draw a circle round you, simply pray that God will protect you. You don't need to do all this complicated stuff.



COUNTY GHOSTS

BY
Keith Morbey

HANTS and DORSET

Purists may complain that Dorset has already been covered in the Autumn 2006 issue of the Ghost Club Newsletter. However, as one of the old school who has difficulty in accepting that Bournemouth is not still in Hampshire, perhaps readers will excuse the heading for this item.

Thanks to the work done by Maurice Grosse and Guy Lyon Playfair, the Enfield poltergeist case is well known. Perhaps not nearly so well known is the poltergeist case which occurred in the Winton district of Bournemouth in 1981.

The case first surfaced in the Evening Echo of August 15th 1981. Apparently mayhem had broken out in the normally quiet detached house of 37 Abbott Road at 9am on 14th, when objects started moving around and ornaments came crashing to the ground, littering the floor with broken glass and china. What makes the story even

more startling was that a police constable called to the scene actually witnessed a kitchen cabinet come crashing to the ground and felt a distinct change in temperature in the house.

The first warning that something unusual was happening came at 5am in the morning when the family's black Labrador began howling and later, the terrified dog rushed into the street and refused to go back into the house. Strange things began to happen at 9 o'clock when the lady of the house who was upstairs, heard two bottles of squash falling off a shelf in the kitchen. Then the table in the hall, which had flowers on it, fell over. When she came downstairs, more objects began to fly. The television went up and fell over and all the things on the top fell off. The nightmare continued with cups and plates falling off the draining board and shattering on the floor.

The lady's husband was called home from work and reported that he was very aware of some strange spirit within the fabric of the house. These sensations were also felt by two policemen who were the first to arrive at the scene. They both said the temperature dropped ten or fifteen degrees at least.

The police arranged for 95 year-old Dr Oliver, assistant at St. Albans church and a graduate of Yale and London University, to conduct an exorcism. Afterwards, Dr Oliver said that there was something evil still in the house but that he did not think it would manifest itself again.

The next day, Mr Albert White from the Bath Road (Bournemouth) Spiritualist Church conducted a séance in which he was informed that the spirit was working through the 17 year-old daughter and using the boy as a playmate. The spirit was supposed to be that of a 9 year-old boy called Ian.

A spokesman for the College of Psychic Studies in London said these were all normal signs of poltergeist activity. "It is a rogue energy that derives power from people, especially children. This case has all the classic signs of a poltergeist.", he said.

In this connection it might be relevant to note that the occupants of the house were a 62 year-old man and his 45 year-old wife, a 17 year-old foster daughter and an 8 year-old foster son. The wife suffered with Multiple Sclerosis and the boy was said to be retarded.

The Fraudulent Mediums Act

With the repeal of the 1951 act coming into law this April, **Sarah Darnell** takes a look at what this might mean.

"The Fraudulent Mediums Act 1951 has rarely been used in the prosecution of mediums and psychics who claim to contact the dead relatives of people. Yet there are increasingly more TV shows and live acts where people claiming to be mediums and psychics prey on vulnerable people who have lost loved ones, giving them spurious information and taking their money. We call upon the Government to revise the Fraudulent Mediums Act and make it easier to prosecute these people."

The above is the wording on a recent e-petition circular. I think I received it myself on a couple of separate occasions. It was submitted to Downing Street on September 21st this year, bearing

365 signatures. The majority who signed it were sincere but as always with this subject matter, there appear to be a few jokers as well. Famous medium Doris Stokes added her name, as did former Ghost Club member Sir William Crookes (d. April 1919) and the last person to be convicted under the Witchcraft Act of 1743, Helen Duncan managed to sign at least 3 times!

There is a very serious side to this, however. Whether or not you believe in such things personally, there can be no doubt that most mediums can offer a valuable service, especially to the recently bereaved and can give great comfort to those suffering with grief or guilt after the death of a loved one. They act responsibly; knowing what impact their words will have on the people who seek their help. Most for example, would not tell a client that they were going to die next week in a road accident, even if they had strong reason to believe it…

Unfortunately, as with everything, there are a minority out there who will exploit the vulnerable. We at The Ghost Club receive occasional e-mails and letters from distressed people who have been given dubious psychic readings by suspect individuals calling themselves mediums or psychics. Some of the spurious (and sometimes completely 'off the wall') information given in these readings causes a great deal of worry and distress to all concerned. Whilst most of us would take such advice or guidance with a good pinch of salt, there is a small group of susceptible people, whether through circumstance or illness, to whom suggestion from these charlatans can be real and very frightening.

The Fraudulent Mediums Act 1951 is credited with giving Spiritualism legal status by its definition, that it acknowledges the reality of genuine mediumistic ability. It was originally brought in to replace the Witchcraft Act of 1743 and since it was introduced, it has rarely been used. Between 1980 and 1995 there were only 5 successful prosecutions. Many have stated the Act doesn't go far enough and doesn't carry the legal clout to bring realistic prosecutions to those who warrant it. On the other hand, there are also those who say the Act as it stands is sufficient but it hasn't been used as often, or as wisely as it should have been and if used properly, it could have brought many more convictions.

The government's response to the petition was as follows:

"The Fraudulent Mediums Act 1951 will be repealed from April 2008 by the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2007 (CPR's) which implement the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD).

The CPR's include rules prohibiting conduct which misleads the average consumer and thereby causes, or is likely to cause him to take a transactional decision he would not have taken otherwise.

Although the average consumer would arguably not be mislead by a person who claims he is able to contact the dead, such conduct would still be unfair under the CPR's if it deceives the average member of (i) the group to which it is directed or (ii) a clearly identifiable group of consumers who are particularly vulnerable to this type of practice.

Unlike the Act, there is no requirement in the CPR's to prove an 'intent to deceive'. This means that where practices are aimed at vulnerable consumers or average members of particular groups, it should be easier to take action against fraudulent mediums than under the act.

The CPR's will be enforced by both civil (injunctive) action and criminal sanc-

tions."

At present, full details are a bit sketchy but this new legislation appears to put mediumship under the same blanket as any other consumer products, therefore making it easier to prosecute those who deceive the 'average consumer' and making him/ her do something, or make a transaction they would not have done otherwise.

Which type of medium will it be easier to prosecute under the new legislation? Certainly not the TV celebrity mediums the petition was set against. Surely their defense would just be that they are part of the entertainment industry, as the OFTEL report into the 'Most Haunted' show, has recently declared.

The majority of Spiritualist mediums do not charge, although they may ask for donations for petrol or food if they have travelled. Several are members of the Spiritualists National Union (SNU), a reputable body which puts mediums through strict tests, advises them on a code of conduct, how to pass information in the correct manner to the recipient and even how to dress appropriately at a sitting. Many Spiritualist churches are affiliated with the SNU and have a code of conduct, which their mediums must follow.

It seems, in conclusion that mediums who are sincere should have nothing to fear from this new CPR. However, those mediums, whatever their denomination, who charge for their services for profit could, in future, be at risk of prosecution if they knowingly mislead their clients. This can only be seen as a good thing but as with the 1951 Act, how can you prove mediumistic ability, or indeed lack of it, in a courtroom?

Sarah Darnell

My Story

Members share their personal experiences.



Robert Goodall

I have been a Ghost Club member for 8 years now and would like to tell you about the haunted house I live in.

We moved into a house in Birmingham in 1986. It is an ordinary 3 bed semi built in 1923 but is built in the grounds of a stately home called Rookery House built in 1730. Ghosts from the mansion are regular visitors to our house.

The ghosts of two women haunt our house. The first is a young woman of about twenty years of age, with blonde hair done up in a bun. She wears a long black dress down to the ground with a white pinny on top, like a Victorian maid. She was first seen by my son Stephen in 1991 when he was seventeen. He awoke in the early hours to see this woman standing by his bed, with her hand clasped around the bedside lamp switch. He could see the switch through her hand; the hand being semi-transparent. At first he thought it was his mother but when he realised it was a much younger woman, he yelled out in fright. She seemed to acknowledge his presence and turned to look at him. He said she glowed with a strange kind o f light. She then put up her arm to her face as though to protect herself from him and slowly backed away, getting more and more transparent until finally dis-

appearing.

The other female ghost seems more "upper crust" however, judging her clothes. She was first seen by Elaine who had got up early to go to work and was sitting in the lounge drinking a cup of tea. The lounge door has glass panels that look through to the hallway. Suddenly a woman dressed in a long blue dress with big white flowers on it walked down the hall past the lounge door towards the front door. Elaine jumped up and ran and opened the door, to see the woman walk straight through the locked front door.

The next ghost was seen a few years later. Elaine said she was going to her friend Helen's house to watch a video and wouldn't be back till late, so not to wait up as Helen would drop her back in the car. So we went to bed about 11pm. At 1am we were woken by the front doorbell, Elaine had forgotten her key. My wife Kay got out of bed, put on her blue dressing down and went out onto the landing, putting on the landing light. Strangely Kay seemed to wait on the landing for quite some time and I shouted to her that it was only Elaine wanting to be let in, but still Kay waited. Eventually she went down and opened the door.

Next morning Elaine told us a strange story, she said she got home at 1am and realised she'd forgotten to take her key and had to ring the bell. She put her nose up to the obscure glass panel in the front door and waited. She saw the landing light come on, then a woman dressed in a white nightgown came walking down the stairs. She appeared solid and had pink arms and face and came down as far as the half landing and stopped. Elaine thought it was her mother and wondered why she'd stopped and wouldn't come any further down. It was then a second woman came down from the top dressed in a blue dressing gown. This turned out to be her mother, so who was the first woman? And why didn't Kay see the first woman go down in front of her? Remember, the first woman went down after Kay had put on the landing light. I asked Kay why she waited so long on the landing before going down and she said she hadn't. As far as she knew she went straight down. It seemed as though Kay was held in a trance while the ghost went down.

Strange things seem to continue happening here. The latest is to do with our telephone. We have an ordinary BT land line phone plugged into a socket in the hall and I believe our ghost is phoning people we know all by itself because I've seen it, with my own eyes. Elaine and I were standing in the hall talking when our phone dialled out a number and even with the receiver hung up it connected with a line. Someone answered saying "Hello! Hello!" We immediately recognised the voice as Una my wife's boss. Well, we just looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders. At this point I must mention we have never used the memory facility on the phone, so there are no numbers stored in it. Also we hadn't phoned Una for a long time so the last number recall button hadn't been pressed accidentally. Elaine and I thought it odd but had soon forgotten about it. However a few days later, the same thing happened again only this time it phoned Elaine's workplace, all by itself! We stood in the hall listening to it. The next day I phoned the B.T fault line thinking there must be a simple explanation for it. The engineers had never heard anything like it and asked me if I lived in a haunted house or something, to which I replied yes!

But the strangest thing was yet to come. Elaine was at home alone one day soon

after and just as she was walking up the hallway the phone dialled out yet again by itself. This time my wife's sister Dawn answered. When there was no answer to her hellos, she phoned our number because our phone had then phoned her mobile phone and our number came up on her screen and recognised it. She spoke to Elaine and wanted to know how we knew her mobile number as it was brand new. Elaine replied "We don't know your mobile number in fact we didn't know you had a mobile phone".
The ghost in our house knew alright!

We are always eager to publish accounts of your personal ghostly experiences. Send them with a picture of yourself to either Monica or Sarah.

Derek Green, Area Investigation Co-ordinator (Scotland) received the following e mail. We thought members would be interested to read it and publish it now with the writer's consent.

About 5 years ago now I was living in Glasgow with my husband and little boy. As an Aussie, I have a fascination with anything historical or old, having never been brought up within that environment that Europeans and Brits live with everyday.

My husband (an Ayrshire native) suggested going to look at the ruins of Linlithgow Palace one Saturday in the Summer. After doing a spot of research, I readily agreed that it looked like a wonderful experience, and it was.

It was at that time that the trust were renovating the fountain in the courtyard, it was encased in plastic and many areas were still hazardous and off limits but as usual, I can simply wander in these old places for hours engrossed in the history and imagining what might have been. There weren't too many people there on this day, maybe a dozen at most.

To cut a long story short, our little boy inevitably gets a bit bored with his mother's fancies for these things and so my husband opted to sit on the seats in the courtyard by the fountain renovations and just let me get on with my poking around. I found the entrance to the tower to the left of the entrance archway and proceeded up the long steep winding stair.

On every other turn, I would pause and look down to the courtyard at my husband and son playing happily together on the seat. I was nearly at the top and had a great view of the boys so I sat down on the step to look down at them, when I felt someone looking over my shoulder to see what I was looking and laughing quietly to myself about. There was a soft laugh behind me as whoever was watching with me was as amused as I was. I didn't turn but said something like: "oh they're such boys, sorry I'm blocking the stairs I'll get out of your way". There was just another chuckle and I stood up to move, looked around but no-one was there. I remember feeling a prickle up my neck. Then, thinking rationally that maybe whoever was behind me (a lady I'm sure) had gone up to the tower walk at the top of the stairs. So,steeling up my courage (I don't have a lot; all sorts of things happen to me!) I continued up to the top and turned right onto the walk. Just briefly, I felt relief as I saw a figure in white leaning over the

edge looking out. Relieved until the figure sort of evaporated!

The other end of the walk was blocked off, so it was then that I started feeling total panic and made the trip down that stairway in record time.

This is my only ghostly experience. I didn't read anything of the hauntings at Linlithgow before I went there, nor did I have any interest in ghosts prior to that trip. I still couldn't say I'm too into ghosts now, but that experience has stayed with me.

The thing I can tell you is that if it's one of the Marys (I think Guise myself), there was a nice vibe and an obvious kind sense of humour. I didn't feel frightened until I realised I was alone with something my senses couldn't explain. From the warm chuckle, I couldn't imagine being scary was on the menu for whoever was with me that day.

Have you heard anything like this from anyone else who's experienced things at Linlithgow?

Adrienne Denholm

Derek Green replies;

I am very intrigued indeed. You have given a lot of good information in the e mail and I know exactly where you would have been in the Palace. The area at the top that has the walk way is called Queen Margaret's Bower. It was here that Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII was waiting on her husband, King James returning from battle. King James never did return and it is said that the apparition of Margaret Tudor has been witnessed on a number of occasions.

All the sightings are usually the same. They describe a lady standing looking out towards the view and that she is seen for a few seconds then simply vanishes into thin air. They also describe the colour of the apparition as either a white or blue colour.

There are a number of sightings in Linlithgow and one of them they reckon is Mary, Queen of Scots. Her apparition is seen walking towards St Michaels Church. I am not sure of the last recorded sighting though.

A blue light has also been sighted in the Palace Buildings and quite a number of the general public have reported feeling a dark energy in the area of the Great Hall.

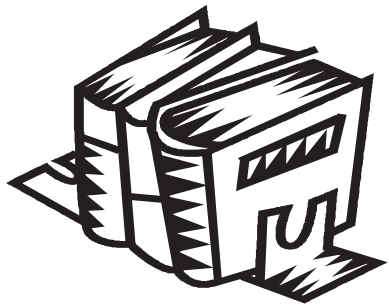
So I am happy to say that you are not the only one Adrienne to have witnessed strange goings on at Linlithgow.

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to these members who have recently joined us.

David Reid, Paul Collins, Karen Donaldson, Mark Salmon, David Caldwell, Gill Pharaoh, Nerissa White, Mirrlees Chassels, and Stephen Rigg.

BOOK REVIEW



Folklore and Ghosts

A review article on

The Lore of the Land

By

Alan Murdie

On November 6th 2007, folklorist Jacqueline Simpson gave a lecture to the Folklore Society entitled- 'The Lore of the Land' based on her book with Jennifer Westwood of the same title. (1) Although her talk was centred on the concept of place legends, it inevitably touched upon the supernatural and the subject of ghosts – hauntings perhaps being the most common type of place legend.

Whilst there are many local and regional books every 15 to 20 years, there appears a truly comprehensive gazetteer on the folklore of the British Isles. Such a work is encyclopaedic in its scope and coverage and provides a life-long resource for serious enquirers and scholars. Over the last thirty five years two such books have been published, *The Folklore Myths and Legends of the British Isles (1973)* published by Reader's Digest and Albion: *A guide to legendary Britain (1985)*. Now, Jacqueline Simpson the one surviving authoress of the former (which brought together contributions from virtually all the great folklore writers still living in the 1970s) and the authoress of the latter, Jennifer Westwood have combined forces to produce The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends from Spring Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys, a monumental study of English regional folklore. The book provides a treasure house of material and will surely be a standard research text for decades to come, not least because of its detailed sourcing and extensive bibliography which runs to nearly 50 pages alone.

At the outset Jacqueline Simpson explained the book – at over 900 pages - is limited to the English counties (with a section on London) estimating that a book which included Scotland, Wales and Ireland would have been four times the length.

Although the remit of the book is far beyond ghosts, the supernatural features heavily throughout, both in the selection of sites and their folklore and in short essays on particular topics. With regard to traditional haunted places in England, the book is an indispensable guide and as such will be of interest to many Ghost Club members both for pleasure and also as a starting point for local research.

The authors state that their main self-imposed limitation for inclusion in the book is that a site must be identifiable and have some narrative component (as opposed to a fairy story where the geographical location is not given).

For readers of popular ghost stories, the book clears up many mistakes and misconceptions which have endured in print for generations about various traditional haunted locations (for example, the 19th century statesman Lord Castlereagh saw a Radiant Boy apparition at Knebworth in Hertfordshire not Corby Castle in Cumbria or in Ireland as frequently stated).

Of course, no single book could attempt to cover all such material and the authors state they have eliminated "many anecdotes about ghosts, premonitions and so on, printed by writers on paranormal and psychic phenomena who tactfully refrained from identifying people and places, precisely because they believed the anecdotes to be true – but to the folklorist's eye they are recognisably legends in their material, though deprived of specific details." However, they are prepared to take websites as sources in some cases (e.g. Bluebell Hill in Kent and the work of Sean Tudor).

With respect to the book I was delighted to discover folklore relating to locations in my own county Suffolk and in other parts of East Anglia which was wholly new to me (this is despite 30 years of reading all I can find and the collection of such fragments by myself and with others).

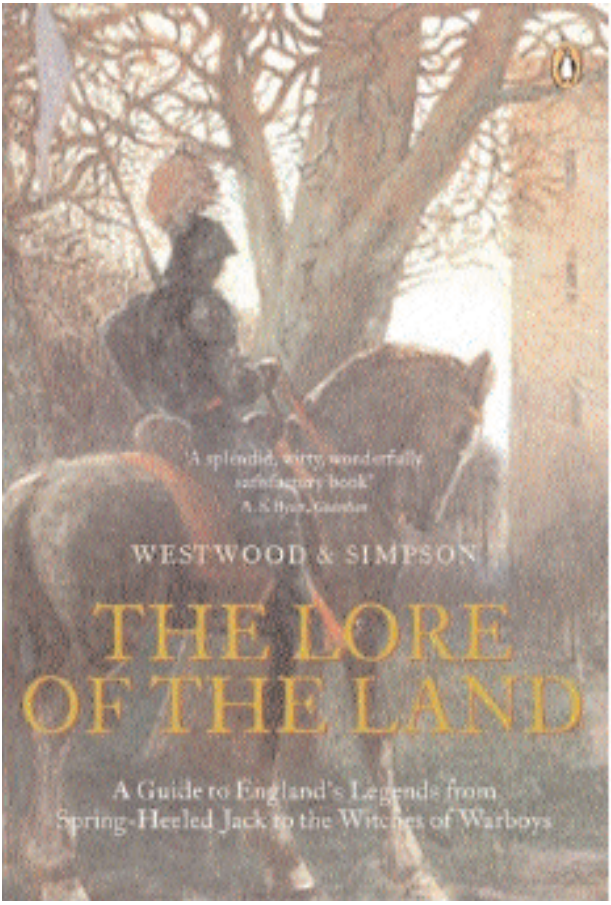
Reviewing certain traditions the authors emerge with new interpretations. As with Black Shuck, the infamous demon dog of East Anglia, the authors pick up on local names and variants and maintain on pages 500-501 that "Shuck is not a true Black Dog". Certainly, their case for re-classifying Black Shuck is an interesting one. For example, in 1830, 'Old Shock' was said to appear in the form of a dog or a calf; in Suffolk 'Shock' sometimes had a donkey's head. Around Geldeston the 'Hateful Thing,' though seeming at times a black dog, might be identical to a spectral donkey haunting the same ground. They note another variant, 'Old Scarf' might appear as a black goat; the Faines of Hethersettwere 'the size of calves'; while West Wratting Cambridgeshire boasted a Shug Monkey (a story first recorded by James Wentworth Day in *Here are Ghosts and Witches (1954)*). An old keeper who had witnessed the beast at Letton, Norfolk stated in around 1900 that its coat was "all skeffy-like….like an old sheep." To this might have been added the tradition that around Thetford in Norfolk the Black Shuck was held to transform itself into a white rabbit with blazing eyes.(1) Encouragingly for witnesses they also conclude that the role of the Black Shuck as an omen of death or disaster is not as well established as often believed. So where should one place Black Shuck? In the opinion of the authors he should be categorised as one of the many shape-shifting 'bogey beasts' of folklore, defined on pages 560-561 as shape-shifting apparitions which can take different guises, including inanimate forms such as fire. Noting that the "distinction between bogey beasts and hobgoblins is blurred" some such phantoms may have a pedigree reaching back to medieval times.

The Relevance of Folklore to Ghost Research

Aside form the pleasure which folklore can yield in itself, there are a number of cogent reasons why folklore is worthy of the attention of ghost investigators, even those who maintain they are engaged on a wholly scientific quest for the 'truth' about psychic phenomena. Firstly, as the American ghost researcher Troy Taylor notes, folklore may provide clues about the existence of haunted locations, possibly

even geographical areas (dubbed "window areas") in which there seems to be a high concentration of psychic occurrences.(2) When it comes to place legends and traditions, later historical research sometimes reveals that the story is based on a genuine experience in the past. For example, the now demolished Rushbrooke Hall in Suffolk was said to be haunted by a White Lady, a detail endlessly recycled in popular ghost books since the beginning of the 20th century. Research into material held by the Society for Psychical Research turns up a letter containing a detailed albeit second hand account detailing manifestations which allegedly occurred in the 1850s and details of witnesses.(3) Folklore may also provide clues about the history of a site.

Furthermore, as Jacqueline Simpson and Jennifer Westwood recognise, a good deal of material in circulation in the paranormal scene may be best understood as folklore. Examples include "phantom hitch-hikers" and for that matter, "orbs" whose interpretations have become truly folkloric (and increasingly absurd - for example, I was told in September 2006 the depressing news certain orb believers are now maintaining that reddish or pink coloured orbs represent spirit girls and those of a bluish hue represent boys.).



I do not discount the possibility that some folklore may actually provide pre-scientific data on the nature of phenomena, as well as being relevant to other fields such as archaeology. The fact that a story may be derived from popular and non-literary sources does not mean it should be dismissed out of hand; clues may exist within the folklore of ghosts. After all, it was partly out of folklore that the serious consideration and study of ghost reports emerged; and folklore - albeit sometimes Germanic rather than English – gives us some of the terminology such as "poltergeist" which we use today. Folklore may provide clues about the nature of ghost experiences – for example Shari Cohn's study of second sight in Scotland in 1999 revealed many experiences might have a precognitive element, as tra-

dition avers.(4) Another question is the extent which folklore and popular cultural beliefs may actually shape the experience of ghosts themselves and the way in which witnesses describe them.

Folklore even provides a route by which sceptics can approach paranormal phenomena; whilst retaining a sceptical approach they can nonetheless study the phenomena in which they profess they do not believe, often it seems in the way that in previous generations Western scholars observed the practices of "primitive" peoples. Folklore has been particularly useful in respect of interpreting much of the data gathered in ufology – a subject that needs saving from many of its currently dwindling band of adherents – and whole theories and schools of thought have grown around a folkloric approach to the alleged phenomena. For example, many UFO and alien stories have parallels in earlier traditions of fairies and demons.(5)

Finally, folklore still has a powerful resonance on the human mind. Although we live in a primarily materialist and largely urban culture, many people find folktales charming, entertaining or scary. Victorian folklorists noted the same seductive power of such stories. This raises the question why? I would suggest that the reason is that they have a power to touch the deeper parts of our minds. Folklore reaches beyond the rational self and can connect with our non-material needs and feelings and with the subconscious component of ourselves. It is, after all, in the subconscious that psychic abilities seem to lie, though dormant during most of our waking hours. Even sceptics feel the pull of folklore on occasion, no matter how much they may dismiss ghosts and the paranormal (for example, former Ghost Club General Secretary Robert Snow informed me that there are never any volunteers prepared to take the 'Screaming Skull' of Bettiscombe Manor, Dorset out of the house, once the tradition that to do so means death will follow within a year is revealed).

As a link to the deeper aspects of the psyche, folklore deserves our attention, study and respect. Although Jacqueline Simpson and Jennifer Westwood do not delve into the ideas of Carl Jung, the great Swiss psychologist identified the workings of the collective unconsciousness in many folkloric apparitions such as White Ladies. The hypothesis has been advanced in recent years that spectral White Ladies apparitions may be a form of archetypal hallucination, representing the genus loci or 'spirit of a place'. Rather than arising from a particular deceased individual such apparitions seem to be closer to an idea or symbol. Apparitions such as white ladies seem to be associated with particular landscapes which trigger responses at a deep level of consciousness in the form of visions or waking dreams. Such apparitions may be connected with the more exotic female apparitions of folklore and religion such as banshees, goddesses or angels. As such, they may be a construction of the unconscious mind stimulated by psychic forces that operate both internally and externally to the brain of the witness. It is postulated that these apparitions are subjective in that they exist within the mind of the observer but they also appear to have a degree of objective existence in that they recur at the same place to a succession of different witnesses, sometimes many years apart. The psychologist Carl Gustav Jung considered that: "It not infrequently happens that the archetype appears in the form of a spirit in dreams or fantasy-products, or even comports itself like a ghost." (6) Although such things as White Lady apparitions and

Black Dogs are hard to fit into many theories about ghosts (such as 'stone tape') there is no doubt that people do report them and the study of folklore may provide a tool to their understanding.

***Folklore and Ghosts: A Review of the Lore of the Land: A guide to England's Legends from Spring Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys. By Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson**
Published by Penguin
ISBN 13:978-0-141-02103-4.
Hardback £30.00 Paperback £22.00

Notes:

(1) As recorded by the Rev C. Kent in his book Land of the Babes in the Wood (c1910).

(2)Taylor, Troy: The Ghost Hunter's Handbook: The essential guide for investigating ghosts and hauntings (1998)

(3)File H104, Cambridge University Library

(4) Cohn, Shari in Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, April 1999.

(5)Vallee, Jacques Passport to Magonia (1969) and Magonia magazine generally for this approach.

(6) Murdie, A. Haunted Brighton Chapter 3

GHOST WALK

Hampton Court Palace

Even though Hampton Court Palace has been heavily remodeled through the centuries and has had several royal occupants, it will always be most famous for being the favoured home of King Henry VIII. As such, it was the scene of highly charged emotion and drama throughout his forty year reign. But many forget, King Henry was not the only monarch to have lived at the palace and it has played host to many other tragedies and turmoil during its five-hundred year history.

Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York and King Henry VIII's chief minister acquired Hampton Court as a modest manor house in 1514. He extended the original building immensely throughout his years of ownership but was forced to give up the palace to the King in 1528, when he fell from favour. A portion of Wolsey's original structure still stands.

Over the years the palace has been called home by many notable figures, including Oliver Cromwell when he became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth in 1653. Other royals who lived at, and made their mark on the palace were King William III and Queen Mary II, also King George II. The palace was last lived in by a reigning monarch in 1737.

The Tour

"We don't tell you what to feel, think or believe. We don't guarantee you'll have an experience, but we can guarantee that any experience you have will be genuine."

Turn up at Hampton Court Palace to participate in one of their highly acclaimed Ghost Tours and this is exactly what you will be told. The guides take great pride in the fact that there will be no actors jumping out at you and that you won't be herded like cattle through the corridors and hallways; each tour is capped at a maximum of 35 people and is done in near-darkness, so you can really get a sense of the history of the place. In my opinion, this ghost tour is not so much a tour, as an experience.



Hampton Court Palace

Starting at the main Gatehouse with the story of Sybil Penn, nurse to Edward VI you are then whisked down some dark and dismal corridors to set the tone of the evening to come and from there, it just keeps getting better...

One location that could not possibly be missed out on a tour of haunted Hampton Court is the 'Haunted Gallery', which is said to take its name from the ghost story of Catherine Howard, King Henry's fifth wife. Whilst under house arrest for infidelity, she managed momentarily to escape her guards and run from the Great Watching Chamber to the King's Holyday Closet, where he was at prayer. Beating on the doors, she cried and begged for his forgiveness. The King was said to have ignored her pleas and didn't answer the door and she was dragged away, kicking, screaming and begging for her life. When the palace was opened to the public during the reign of Queen Victoria, residents of nearby Grace and Favour apartments reported hearing screams and sobs coming from this area of the palace. The name stuck and is still used today. Here, you are invited to go through in ones or twos at your own pace, with no illumination other than dim battery powered lanterns to light your way. This, according to the guides, is to give you a sense of the place. There is no hurry.

In 1999, a study was carried out here by Prof. Richard Wiseman. The study involved over six-hundred members of the public walking through certain areas of the palace and noting exactly where they experienced any strange phenomena. One of the conclusions of this study was that people consistently experienced unusual sensations in certain areas within the Haunted Gallery. Some members of the public have been reporting odd feelings here for a long time, some have even passed out.

The tour takes in The Great Hall, Fountain Court, the Queens Stairs, the Silverstick Stairs and many other well known locations inside the palace. The recent story of 'Skeletor' is also mentioned and you will get to see the doors that were flung open by an unseen force prior to the appearance of a ghostly figure caught by the CCTV cameras in October 2003.

One real treat is being allowed into areas of the palace where the general public are not allowed. One such place is Apartment 15, a Grace & Favour apartment once occupied by Dennis McGuiness, a former director of Hampton Court Palace. As an ex-police officer and a man not known for flights of fancy, he reported many cases of paranormal activity here during his occupancy. Trigger objects are left in place in the main sitting room, just in case anything should be moved. It is here where you will be shown a short video and served refreshments of tea, coffee, mulled wine or fruit juice.

Palace officials have, in the past, been reluctant to admit they have such things as ghosts. The ghost tours may not have got off the ground at all if it weren't for the perseverance of State Apartment Warder, Ian Franklin. Some of you may remember that Ian managed to persuade the palace's



Ian Franklin; Logs all reports of ghost sightings at the Palace

Director, Rod Giddins, to trial the tours for the general public after a visit to the ghost tours at Ham House during a BBC documentary (Tales From The Palaces - 2004). Ian has worked at Hampton Court Palace for over 10 years and has carefully logged any reports of ghost sightings, photographs and any other strange occurrences throughout his employment here. He is the palace's official spokesperson on paranormal matters and has appeared on various TV programmes and in other media articles relating to anything ghostly.

The ghost tours take place from Halloween night (31st October) until March and will start at 19:30 on a Friday evening and 18:00 on a Sunday. Each tour lasts for approximately 90 minutes and refreshments are served during the tour. Tickets cost £25 per person and are limited, so advance bookings are essential. The minimum age for attendance is 12 years. The tour involves climbing stairs and visiting areas where unfortunately, there is no lift access for wheelchair users. Tours for

the hard of hearing and specific tours for children have been trialed and are a possibility for the future. I have been told that the current tours are heavily booked up but the palace have conceded that if the demand is there, they would consider adding extra days to the tours, incorporating a Wednesday into their schedule.

To book tickets for the ghost tours, call 0844 482 7795 or book online at www.hrp.org.uk . If you want a prestigious ghost tour with a difference, this one comes highly recommended.

Sarah Darnell

INVESTIGATION COALHOUSE FORT

The Ghost Club conducted the first ever Paranormal Investigation at Coalhouse Fort in October 2003 and has since, been a much-requested repeat venue. Several of our investigations produced some very interesting results and our visit there this year proved to be no exception!

One of the finest remaining examples of an armoured casemate fort in the UK, Coalhouse Fort is situated on the banks of the Thames Estuary in East Tilbury, Essex. A fort of some description has stood on or near this site since the reign of King Henry VIII, who fearing a continental invasion led by Rome, built a fort as a second line of defense of the Thames against an enemy fleet, the first of course, being his Navy. It was built in 1540 but was ordered disarmed in 1553 and did not continue in use. The site of the Tudor Block House is now below the water level of the river it once helped to protect.

The semi-circular battery was built in 1799. A Dutch invasion fleet had managed to penetrate the Thames Estuary up to Gravesend in 1667 and had clearly demonstrated the need for a stronger defense at East Tilbury. In 1794, a river survey finally recommended the reinstatement of forward defenses as it was felt this would prevent an enemy penetrating the Thames quite as far as the Dutch had done over a century before. No further attack came, although it was put on a state of high alert during the Napoleonic Wars. After their conclusion in 1815, the East Tilbury Battery was abandoned and it slipped into a state of disrepair.

The present fort, known as the Royal Commission Fort, was built between the years of 1861 and 1874. Although extensive work had been carried out to the existing fort around 1855, what was there was demolished and rebuilt as an armoured casemate structure that would be able to withstand heavy bombardment. After the 2nd World War, the Admiralty took over the fort for training purposes and then in 1949, it was let as a storage facility. It's now owned by Thurrock Borough Council and looked after by 'The Coalhouse Fort Trust', a group of very dedicated volunteers who are trying hard to ensure the fort doesn't fall into further disrepair and are trying to restore the building for the benefit of future generations.

The Investigation

On 20th October 2007, a group of 19 Ghost Club members met at a pub in East Tilbury Village. We made our way to the fort at approximately 20:30 hours to start our investigation of this unique site.

Members present were:

Sarah Darnell, Iain Lister, Jo Edwards, Philip Hutchinson, Paula Eason*, Lorraine Holt, Monica Tandy, Frank Holt, Paul



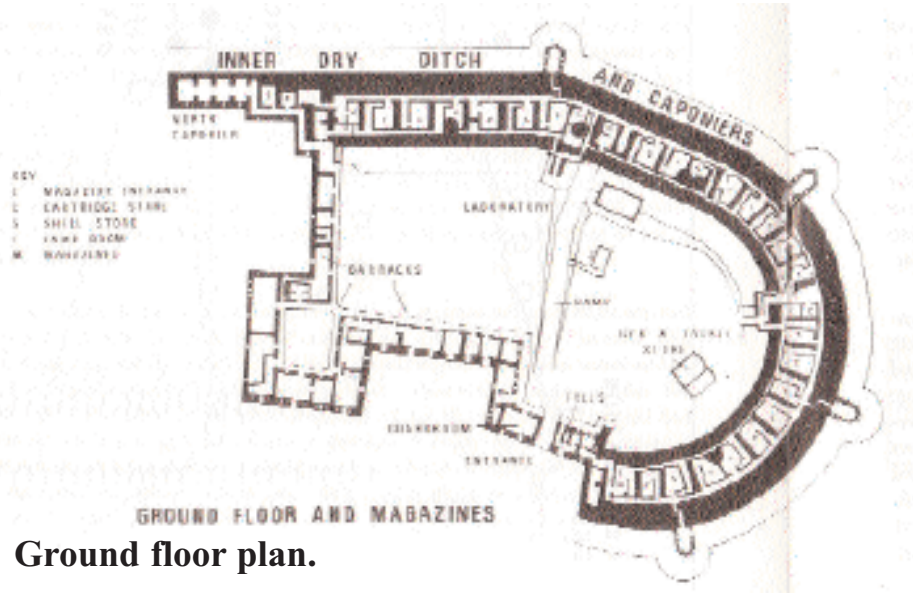
Coalhouse Fort: One of the finest remaining examples of an armoured casemate fort in the UK.

Brown*, Lisa Bowell*, Jim Lever, Mary Gallagher, Kellie Kirkman, Mick, Wendy Gibbs, Paolo Sammut*, Karen Mosely, Amy and Shaun Feeley.
(* Group Leaders)
Coalhouse Guides:
Simon, Matt, Ellie and Shane.

We were met by Simon, the Paranormal Investigations organiser for the Coalhouse Fort Project. After making our base for the night in the tea rooms, Myself, Monica, Philip and Ian headed off with Simon to do a health and safety check and do the baseline tests - the results of which I will include within the locations.

During the tour of the fort given to members prior to the start of the investigation, Lisa Bowell noted some interesting points which I will quote here:

"During the tour, in the Quadrangle, I saw a male figure come out of the upper floor doorway directly opposite the entrance. He was aged about 30, had dark hair and a light grey/ light green jacket with the bottom front part folded back, light coloured trousers and black boots. He came out of the doorway, turned to his left and faded. On the stairway, right by the entrance I saw a figure with a bright



Ground floor plan.

red jacket peering out of the first doorway. On returning back to the tearoom, I was talking to Simon and I saw a white figure moving swiftly from right to left. It moved between the fence along the walkway and the first vehicle in the parade ground. I told Simon and we went outside again, as we stepped out I saw a black figure move swiftly down the walkway."

The above took place at approximately 10pm.

The Vigils.

I split the team into 4 groups, all of whom were accompanied by a Coalhouse Fort guide:

Group 1 (mixed) Lisa, Kellie, Mick and Wendy - accompanied by Simon.

Group 2 (Couples) Paolo, Karen, Amy and Shaun - accompanied by Shane.

Group 3 (Women) Paula, Jo, Monica, Lorraine and Mary - accompanied by Ellie

Group 4 (Men) Paul, Iain, Jim and Frank - accompanied by Matt

The areas available for us to investigate were as follows:

Area 1 - The North Caponia (Latrines area)

Area 2 - The full length Tunnels and most rooms (not the lighting tunnels)

Area 3 - The Quadrangle and Parade Grounds

Area 4 - The Theatre Room and the Open Casemates

I have noted what was experienced under 4 headings - visual, Audio Psychic impressions and Physical.

AREA 1- THE NORTH CAPONIA (LATRINES)

Baseline tests: 0 EMF, lighting levels were pitch black without torches and the temperature was measured at 8.9 degrees Celsius throughout the area.

Visual

Between 23:00 and 23:50, lights were seen by all of **group 2** and moving shadows appeared to be walking through the area and Karen saw a figure stand from a seated position. Karen, Amy and Paolo saw what

they described as 'quite a large patch of light', which kept vanishing, on the left hand side of the archway.
At 00:50, Paula saw a white light in the area to the right of where Lorraine was sitting.
At 01:15, Jo reported seeing movement of white mist.

Audio

At approximately 23:45, Paolo heard a noise, which sounded like a door slamming a couple of times. Soon after this, Karen thought she heard a couple of footfalls.
At 00:45, all of **group 3** heard the sound of a propelled aircraft, which lasted for 1 - 2 minutes.

Psychic Impressions

Between 23:00 and 23:50, a sense of unease was felt by Paolo and Karen. Near the end of the Vigil, Karen felt an adrenaline rush, the urge to run and a feeling of exhilaration.

Physical

Between 23:00 and 23:50, all felt inexplicable changes in temperature, although actual temperature readings were not taken. Karen felt someone brush past her whilst stood in the far archway. She felt a pain in her right hand shoulder and neck, which was followed by numbness in her lower arm.
At 00:40, Lorraine felt that something had touched/ skimmed her head.
At 00:56, Paula complained of feeling nauseous and clammy - she had to sit down to stop herself from passing out.
At 01:00, Paula, Lorraine and Monica all smelled 'roses'.

AREA 2 - THE TUNNELS

Baseline tests: 0 EMF apart from a sudden burst of EMF in the corridor outside room 9. On inspection of the area, we could find nothing to have caused this and on searching thoroughly with the EMF meter, could not find it again. It was so brief, it could not actually be measured but it set the alarm and the light off on the meter (a Cell Sensor or 'Rudolph' meter). Temperatures ranged from 8.1 - 11 degrees Celsius apart from in the Shifting Lobby (which was right by an external door). Here the temperature was 6.8 degrees Celsius.

Visual

At 23:40, Kellie saw a man run into room 24. She reported seeing him as having 'his face blown to bits' and wearing combat fatigues.
Between 00:40 and 01:20, Paolo, Karen, Amy, Shaun and Shane reported that the darkness kept increasing.
At approximately 03:30, Lisa reported seeing 3 faces in front of Matt's face. She said they all dispersed to the left of him but stayed with him. Matt later confirmed this had been seen before and was confident these three people were protecting him and were all related to him. He was the only guide not to fall ill in or near the tunnels during the night.

Audio

Whilst in room 14 at 23:30, a 'plop' sound was heard by all members of **group 1**, plus Sarah and Philip. Lisa jokingly called the noise Mr Ploppy and felt that something was very annoyed by this comment and the ensuing laughter. About 15 minutes later, Lisa heard the murmur of distant conversation. This would not have been noise pollution from other groups as we were so far away from them.
At 00:55 the sound of something large and wooden being dragged down the corridor



Latrines Area

was heard by Paolo, Karen, Shaun, Amy and Shane.

At 01:00, Karen heard the sound of faint 1940's music from either vinyl or radio, drifting down from above.

Amy heard asthmatic sounding breathing coming from the corridor at 01:15.

At 02:35, Matt, Paul, Iain, Frank, Monica, Jo, Paula, Lorraine, Mary and I heard a low growl type sound coming from the corridor, whilst standing in room 24. Between 03:00 and 04:00, Lisa again heard murmurs of conversation. Also at this time, Frank and Lisa heard a sound like a distant siren. Kellie and Lisa heard footsteps by room 26.

Psychic Impressions.

At 11:15, whilst sitting in room 8, **Group 1** all experienced a feeling of a presence outside the door, peering into the room from the tunnel. Mick moved away from the door, Kellie then mentioned that she felt someone was there. Lisa and Wendy backed this up. Mick then stated that was the reason he'd moved away.

Whilst walking along the tunnel when we left room 8, Mick said he felt we were being 'beckoned' from the front of us and ushered along from behind. Lisa said that she felt as though someone was going to grab her left arm as we exited the room.

Between room 14 and room 24, Lisa clairaudiently heard a man scream.

In room 24, Mick said he felt as though someone was standing behind him. Lisa said she felt smothered and had the impression of swimming baths.

Group 2 felt as though room 8 was

unpleasant and uncomfortable; "foreboding" even. They felt that room 10 was also unpleasant. Karen felt there was a large, dark figure blocking the doorway. Amy stated that she felt a woman had been raped there and the rest of the group agreed.

Physical

At 23:20, whilst everyone in **Group 1** was feeling uneasy about the doorway in room 8, I felt totally comfortable and felt that the area was neutral. I felt brave so went to stand outside of the doorway in the corridor on my own. As soon as I stepped into the corridor, I felt a little uncomfortable but turned to my right, as for some reason, this is where I felt they had all been talking about. I went to take a random shot with my camera and instantly felt as if someone was behind me - there was a firm pressure on either side of my lower waist/ hips to the back as if someone was giving me a squeeze! I turned and there was no one there, so took a couple of random shots and went back into room 8 (rather quickly!) to join the others. It didn't feel threatening although it did make me jump! I kept my experience to myself for the time being as I didn't want to create the possibility of autosuggestion in any of the group members. Everyone else in the group seemed to feel threatened by the presence. I feel it is worth mentioning that this is almost the exact spot that we earlier encountered the sudden surge of EMF whilst we were doing the baseline tests.

In room 14 at 23:30, Simon began to feel unwell. His appearance was grey and clammy and he had severe stomach pains, which made him bend double. I asked him if he needed to leave but he insisted we carry on with the vigil.

In Room 24 at 23:50, Wendy felt a tapping sensation at the top of her thigh.

Group 2 noted a drop in temperature in room 8.

At 01:11, Paolo felt a pain in the back of his head and Karen felt a pain in the right hand side of hers.

In room 10, Shaun was aware of a combined smell of sweat and urine. Everyone in the group, including the guide Shane, felt sick.

Paolo had chest pains and Amy felt as though she was drunk and woozy.

At 02:40, I smelled a 'burned rubber' type smell.

AREA 3 - THE QUADRANGLE

Baseline tests: 0 EMF and an outside location so 6.2 degrees Celsius. Lighting conditions were good as there were powerful spotlights nearby, lighting the parade grounds.

Visual

A "pinprick flash" was seen in the upstairs centre window (from the entrance to Quadrangle, looking straight ahead) by Paul, Iain, Jim and Frank at 23:20. At 23:30, another "pinprick flash" of light was seen in the Mess area window (the room with the crest on the wall).

At 00:45, Lisa saw a figure behind her. She describes him as being 5'5" with dark hair and a light grey jacket. He was wearing a hood and his face wasn't visible. The figure disappeared and was then seen again on the upper floor above the entrance, for about 3 seconds before he disappeared again.

Later on, Lisa saw a white shape like an arm on the upper floor, above the Mess Room. Wendy reported seeing a bright light near the centre of the Quadrangle.

Audio

At 23:20, Matt and Iain heard voices talk-

ing. Even though it sounded far away and faint, they didn't think it was the other groups.

At approximately 01:00 Kellie, Lisa, Wendy and Simon all thought they heard music. There were quite a few animal noises around the local area from the local farms, especially one very noisy cow.

Kellie then heard the music again. It seemed to be coming from the upper floor on the right hand side of the entrance. Lisa and Wendy heard this too.

At approximately 01:10 Wendy and Simon then heard the footfalls of a hobnail boot, and then a crackling noise like a scrunched up crisp packet. Kellie could hear lots of chinks, clunks and bangs coming from the mess room.

On leaving the area at the end of their vigil (01:20), Kellie heard a male voice say "goodbye" in a nice friendly manner.

At 03:30, Monica put her voice recorder on and called out for EVP's. Nothing was captured.

Psychic Impressions

Paul felt the area at the far right hand corner was unhappy/ sinister and Iain felt the same area was 'dodgy'. Jim thought the near right hand corner was colder than the rest of the area. Paul felt that he was drawn to the Mess room window.

Between 00:40 and 01:20, Kellie picked up on the name of Sam. Mick picked up the name Fred. Lisa perceived some figures, leaning on the railings of the upper walkway opposite the entrance to the Quadrangle, just watching them all.

During the final vigil between 03:00 and 04:00, Monica felt that someone had either hung themselves or had been hung in the far right hand corner of the Quadrangle, from the railings of the walkway. It was later confirmed by Shane that this had actually happened although he couldn't be more specific.

Physical

Between 00:40 and 01:20, Wendy felt as if she was touched lightly on her hair and face. She also felt a pain in her lower back.

AREA 4 - THE THEATRE ROOM AND OPEN CASEMATES

Baseline Tests: 0 EMF in both locations. The open casemates measured 6.5 degrees Celsius whilst the Theatre Room measured 6.7 degrees Celsius. Lighting conditions in both were dark, although in the open casemates, there was a small amount of light coming in from the large spotlights in the parade ground. There were also some props for the forthcoming Halloween week in here, making the area slightly hazardous!

Visual

During the second vigil whilst sitting in the theatre room, Frank was sure he could see a figure walking up and down on the other side of the bars. He described the bars as getting darker and going in and out of focus.

At 02:25, Paolo saw a black mass standing between the bars and the corner of the table in the theatre room. At the same time, Lisa saw a white shape in exactly the same spot. Kellie said she saw a white blur flick across the bars and Mick saw a flash of light in the same place.

In the casemates looking through the bars, Lisa saw a flash of white light in the theatre room where she'd been sitting previously.

Audio

At 23:10, Group 3 reported hearing tapping noises from the back of the room at the stage area.

At 23:25 there was a loud crack from



The Tunnels

behind Jo, causing the group to jump and Lorraine to scream!

Between 02:00 and 03:00 whilst in the theatre room, a metallic 'click' sound, which was described as like a radiator cooling down was heard by Kellie, Lisa, Simon, Mick, Wendy, Paolo, Karen, Amy and Shaun. This could have been caused by water dripping onto a metallic box. Matt had alerted a few of us to this noise earlier in the evening.

Psychic impressions

Whilst Frank thought he could see a figure walking up and down behind the bars, Iain felt someone was watching us from this area. **Group 4** all felt that the room was uncomfortable and oppressive and didn't like the feel of the room.

Physical

At 23:18, **group 3** reported that the area appeared to feel much colder, although the temperature reading did not fluctuate.

At 23:22 Lorraine mentioned smelling a 'sulphuric' smell in the theatre room.

During the second vigil, everyone in **Group 4** (myself included) felt that the temperature dropped considerably and the room was colder inside than outside on the battlements. However, the temperature reading was not taken to establish whether the temperature had actually dropped or, whether like **group 3**, it had just felt like it. I didn't have my thermometer with me but sat at the door end, then the stage end - I

had to admit, the stage end felt colder to me.
Between 0200 and 0300, both Karen and Kellie reported feeling wheezy and short of breath. Karen also felt a pressure on her back and chest.

The Tea Rooms.
At approximately 03:50am, Monica heard shuffling footsteps walking past outside the door. Upon immediate inspection she ascertained there was no one there.

ILLNESS.
It seems that the three guides who fell ill and the few GC members who also felt unwell, ailed after being in either the tunnels or the North Caponia, which is located at the far end of the tunnels on the same level. At first I thought this was due to either food poisoning or a nasty bug and asked Simon if we should end the investigation early. He insisted they were OK to carry on but after the second vigil, it was agreed that we would change the groups as we weren't allowed in any of the locations unaccompanied due to health and safety and two of the guides simply could not continue and had to lie down in the tea room. We decided to merge the groups so we only had two larger groups instead of four smaller ones.

The symptoms consisted of nausea and vomiting, dizziness, stomach cramps and their skin was grey and clammy in appearance. Paula states she was absolutely fine after about 10 minutes of leaving the tunnels; everyone else in the Ghost Club party who felt ill seemed to feel better straight away, on leaving the area. The guides certainly got the brunt of what ever this was, but they had all completely recovered by 4am.

I can't say for certain that this was a paranormal occurrence but Simon told me later that this has happened before on several occasions, although not as severe. They all appeared to be fit and healthy at the beginning of the evening.



Door to Room 8

CONCLUSION.
This location has a lot to offer and further investigation into the site and the occurrences here is definitely warranted.

I personally felt the phenomena, especially in the tunnels was time sensitive - which was something the guides confirmed to us after our investigation had concluded. Certainly, each of the times I went into the tunnels were very different experiences both on an atmospheric and a physical level. It's also the only area where we

experienced EMF readings whilst doing baseline tests.

My own highlight of the evening was feeling someone touch me in the tunnels on the first vigil. Ellie (one of the guides) confirmed that this is something that happens regularly to females in the tunnel and she had experienced it on several occasions herself. Wendy also experienced something similar in room 24 later on the same vigil.

Distant conversation and strange noises were heard here, perhaps due to the shape and dynamics of the tunnels and the way sound travels but this seems unlikely as everyone was so far away from each other and the walls were very thick. The only area in the tunnels you could hear another group was in room 8 (if there was a group in the theatre room directly above, you could hear the occasional voice if the volume was increased).

The mystery illness is certainly one to ponder on…

At the same time that Kellie saw a man with facial injuries run out of room 24 in the tunnels, Karen, who wasn't that far away in the North Caponia, was experiencing pains in her shoulder and neck after feeling someone brush past her.

Light anomalies seemed to be seen in the North Caponia during the first half of the night, also moving shadows and a smell of roses. Later on during the night, the area seemed to lose the energy it had earlier on.

A similar style of music was heard at exactly the same time from two different locations - although the possibility that those in the North Caponia could have heard something from the Quadrangle without those in the Theatre Room and Open Casemates also hearing it, is virtually impossible given the thickness of the walls in the Latrines and their locations respective to each other.

Many felt the Quadrangle was very active. Lisa saw a figure and different groups felt uneasy in the same areas of the structure. Many were drawn to the Mess Room window, light anomalies were seen, footsteps and voices were heard and Monica felt someone had hung himself or had been hung in the far right hand corner, which was later confirmed by the guides. Paul's group had also mentioned this corner had felt 'dodgy'.

The Theatre room and Open Casemates were quite difficult to investigate as one area. Temperature changes - the room feeling much colder all of a sudden, was something that seemed to be experienced by a lot of members. Moving shadows and shapes, especially from the back of the room around the stage and bars area of the room seemed to be quite common and some light anomalies were seen. Again, many felt that one particular area of the room felt threatening or unwelcoming - the stage area.

I would love to return and have already been in touch with the fort to see if we can secure a date for The Ghost Club next year. My sincere thanks go to the Coalhouse Fort Project, especially our guides for the night: Simon, Ellie, Shane and Matt whose sterling efforts despite severe personal discomfort, made the night one to remember. My thanks also go to a brilliant team who were patient through the problems we encountered and who kept detailed notes without which I would not have been able to write this report.

Sarah Darnell,
November 2007.

"Worlds Apart, Worlds Together"

Guildhall Worcester
September 27th 2008

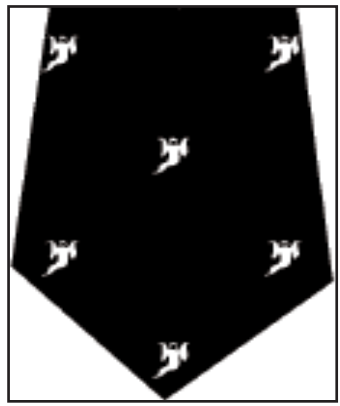
David Taylor, from Parasearch thought Ghost Club members may be interested to hear that his "Worlds Apart, Worlds Together" joint conference will take placein Worcester September 27th 2008.

One of the main speakers is Dr. Peter Fenwick, President, Scientific & Medical Network and International Association of Near Death Studies . He is a Senior lecturer at Radcliffe Infirmary & Hon Consultant at Broadmoor Special Hospital. Another speaker talks on ESP & Quantum psychics.

Tickets £18.50 in advance
£20 on the door.

More information from
Parasearch.org.uk

Ghost Club Ties



These quality ties are 140cm long by 9.5cm widewith the Ghost Club logo woven into a black background.

To order, send a cheque for £9.50 inc p&p for each tie, made out to:
The Ghost Club
Philip Carr
Bessborough House
Fostall, Hernhill
Faversham
Kent ME13 9JG

The Ghost Club,

PO Box 160,
St Leonards-On-Sea.
TN38 8WA

THE COUNCIL

Chairman
Kathy Gearing,
Tel: 01424 719924
chairman@ghostclub.org.uk

General Secretary
Lisa Bowell,
gensec@ghostclub.org.uk

Newsletter Editor
Monica Tandy,
editor@ghostclub.org.uk

Newsletter Producer
Sarah Darnell,
producer@ghostclub.org.uk

Membership Secretary
Milton Edwards.PO Box 160,
St Leonards-On-Sea.
TN38 8WA
memsec@ghostclub.org.uk

PressOfficer
Rosie Murdie,
mediaenquiries@ghostclub.org.uk

Events Officer
Philip Hutchinson,
events@ghostclub.org.uk

Treasurer
Lance Railton MA (Oxon),
treasurer@ghostclub.org.uk

Web Design
Philip Carr.
webmaster@ghostclub.org.uk

Investigations Organiser
Kathy Gearing.
investigations@ghostclub.org.uk

Science Officer
Dr Paul Foulsham
science@ghostclub.org.uk

ADVISORS

Advisors
Stuart Arnold. WTG Perrott.
Dr Ciarán O'Keeffe.
Keith Morbey.

Legal Advisor
Alan Murdie, LLB Barrister.

The Ghost Club website is at http://www.ghostclub.org.uk
Please note that all views expressed by contributers are not necessarily those of the editor or of The Ghost Club.

Issued to members only. Not for resale.