

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:23,000

Did this woman really see a burning house in this empty field?

2

00:00:23,000 --> 00:00:26,000

Was she witness to a tragedy yet to happen?

3

00:00:26,000 --> 00:00:32,000

There is no doubt in my mind what so ever as to what we saw.

4

00:00:32,000 --> 00:00:39,000

And did this man see back in time to glimpse a vision of the past?

5

00:00:39,000 --> 00:00:46,000

And why did this arctic explorer map a land that never was?

6

00:00:46,000 --> 00:00:53,000

Mysteries from the files of Arthur C. Clarke, author of 2001 and inventor of the communications satellite.

7

00:00:53,000 --> 00:00:59,000

Now in retreat in Sri Lanka he ponders the riddles of this and other worlds.

8

00:01:24,000 --> 00:01:36,000

This is the oldest government department in Sri Lanka, the survey set up by the British in 1800.

9

00:01:36,000 --> 00:01:39,000

It still keeps to some of the empire's traditions.

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00:01:39,000 --> 00:01:43,000

For example, the boss is called the Surveyor General.

11

00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:54,000

But otherwise it's a thoroughly modern place using satellite imagery to make maps of every feature in this island of 65,000 square kilometers.

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00:01:54,000 --> 00:02:01,000

Thanks to survey departments like this one, we should now have an accurate picture of the entire planet.

13

00:02:01,000 --> 00:02:06,000

But do we? Because travelers are reporting on eerie phenomenon.

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00:02:06,000 --> 00:02:10,000

They say that buildings they spot from a distance turn out not to be there.

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00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:14,000

Sometimes they discover that the building was demolished years before.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:17,000

Sometimes it never existed at all.

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00:02:17,000 --> 00:02:20,000

Such tales seem weird, even preposterous.

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00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:25,000

But I take them seriously when they come from reputable observers.

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00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:36,000

This wild and uninhabited glen in the highlands of Scotland is one of Europe's loneliest places.

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00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:42,000

It's accessible only by boat, helicopter or the most determined of hill walkers.

21

00:02:46,000 --> 00:02:50,000

George Bruce and Donald Watt are both members of mountain rescue teams.

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00:02:50,000 --> 00:02:54,000

They are intrepid climbers and know the moods of the mountains.

23

00:02:57,000 --> 00:03:00,000

I've been walking for about 40 years in the Scottish Highlands.

24

00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:03,000

And with George here, we've been doing that 30 years together.

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00:03:03,000 --> 00:03:08,000

And all kinds of conditions day and night, and winter and summer all year round.

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00:03:08,000 --> 00:03:11,000

We don't imagine we're seeing things, but we see and we know we're seeing.

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00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:18,000

The last time they came down the slopes of Ben Finley, the friends were on the first stage of a weekend hike.

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:23,000

The day was beautiful. It was the 3rd of May, all pint-tight conditions.

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00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:28,000

The sky was pure blue, but a snow on the ground, visibility was absolutely fantastic.

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00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:32,000

The two planned to shelter in a ruined house further up the valley,

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00:03:32,000 --> 00:03:35,000

but to their surprise they spotted another building first.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:38,000

I was about 100 yards behind George up the hill.

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00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:42,000

I saw this cottage before George stopped, and then he stopped ahead of me.

34

00:03:42,000 --> 00:03:45,000

And I got down to him, and he turned to me and said,

35

00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:51,000

I can't even see it. So we both saw the same thing, but we saw it quite up at the top.

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00:03:51,000 --> 00:03:56,000

The cottage was in clear view at the water's edge, but it was not on the map.

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00:03:57,000 --> 00:04:00,000

The thing that struck me was there was no moss on anything in the roof.

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00:04:00,000 --> 00:04:04,000

Normally in these cottages the slates would attract some moisture, a bit of moss,

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00:04:04,000 --> 00:04:07,000

and it would look worn a bit. This thing wasn't a worn.

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00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:11,000

The sun was reflecting off the slates, and it was almost as though it had been,

41

00:04:11,000 --> 00:04:15,000

well, either in a good scrub to clean it up or freshly built.

42

00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:21,000

So we just kept going down.

43

00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:25,000

We went into a kind of little gully system, right down to the lock side,

44

00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:30,000

walked through the path, anticipating the cottages, there was nothing there.

45

00:04:31,000 --> 00:04:35,000

The house had vanished. George and Donald were mystified.

46

00:04:35,000 --> 00:04:40,000

Both were completely certain that they had seen a real building from above.

47

00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:43,000

I know exactly what I saw. It was solid.

48

00:04:43,000 --> 00:04:49,000

Sitting on the side of the lock, on solid ground, with solid ground behind it,

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00:04:49,000 --> 00:04:53,000

and all around about it. Two windows in the bottom, two door windows in the top,

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00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:57,000

two chimneys, no smoke I'm afraid, but very new looking.

51

00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:05,000

Where we're standing now, here, is where we think we saw it.

52

00:05:05,000 --> 00:05:09,000

It's very strange again. I remember very late years ago doing exactly what I'm doing.

53

00:05:09,000 --> 00:05:12,000

I'm standing here, we walked about here, totally puzzled,

54

00:05:12,000 --> 00:05:17,000

walked right down to the end, to what we could see right down the lock, no cottage.

55

00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:21,000

And I feel somewhat similar just now. I'm still surprised it's not sitting here.

56

00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:24,000

I think it should be sitting here.

57

00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:27,000

And maybe someday I'll come back and then this in the future, and we'll be sitting here.

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00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:29,000

Yeah, it's a strange feeling.

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00:05:29,000 --> 00:05:34,000

Only 60 miles north, Susanna Stone believes she too may have had a brief glimpse of the future.

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00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:35,000

Come on, come on.

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00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:39,000

It happened one evening as she drove her friend home after dinner.

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00:05:39,000 --> 00:05:44,000

Susanna Stone, who is now a local, has been living in the city for a long time.

63

00:05:44,000 --> 00:05:47,000

She's been living in the city for a long time.

64

00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:50,000

She's been living in the city for a long time.

65

00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:53,000

She's been living in the city for a long time.

66

00:05:53,000 --> 00:05:56,000

She's been living in the city for a long time.

67

00:05:57,000 --> 00:06:02,000

We drove along this April evening, peacefully lovely evening, a light evening,

68

00:06:02,000 --> 00:06:04,000

and we came round the church.

69

00:06:04,000 --> 00:06:13,000

And to a horror, we saw a large-ish house, high house, blazing, flaming.

70

00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:18,000

The flames were coming out of all windows, the upstairs and the downstairs

71

00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:23,000

and curling up the lintels.

72

00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:29,120

the downstairs and curling up the lentils.

73

00:06:29,120 --> 00:06:33,280

Susanna knew the road like the back of her hand. She had driven up and down it every

74

00:06:33,280 --> 00:06:34,760

week for years.

75

00:06:34,760 --> 00:06:44,520

We stopped the van and we turned off the engine and we watched it. It had long narrow Georgian

76

00:06:44,520 --> 00:06:49,880

windows which are quite different to any of the other houses around here and it had a

77

00:06:49,880 --> 00:06:53,400

long narrow door in the middle that was shut.

78

00:06:53,400 --> 00:06:58,760

The building Susanna saw was on the grass field beyond where the new road now runs.

79

00:06:58,760 --> 00:07:01,760

It stood just where the football goalposts are.

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00:07:01,760 --> 00:07:11,840

The blazing house that we saw was just exactly there and it was very obvious, very clear

81

00:07:11,840 --> 00:07:16,040

it was by itself those wooden houses weren't there.

82

00:07:16,040 --> 00:07:23,160

Fearily they heard no noise and saw no people. They wanted a closer look.

83

00:07:23,160 --> 00:07:29,400

So we set off and we got nearer to it and we went quite a distance down. I was driving

84

00:07:29,400 --> 00:07:37,080

and she was watching and when we got quite near it vanished completely disappeared. It

85

00:07:37,080 --> 00:07:44,040

just simply wasn't there. So I thought well perhaps the levels had changed. We may be

86

00:07:44,040 --> 00:07:49,000

lower down and perhaps I'd got my angles wrong and we couldn't sit.

87

00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:53,920

Susanna dropped her friend off and began the journey home but close to the field where

88

00:07:53,920 --> 00:07:59,440

the two had seen the blazing house she had a puncture. She had to walk to a telephone

89

00:07:59,440 --> 00:08:01,360

to call for help.

90

00:08:01,360 --> 00:08:06,800

As I walked on up the hill I realised that there was something terribly wrong. It was

91

00:08:06,800 --> 00:08:10,800

something very strange. There was nothing in the field that I just walked past and I'd

92

00:08:10,800 --> 00:08:16,480

looked into the field and a few humps and bumps in it and some stones but no house,

93

00:08:16,480 --> 00:08:24,320

no ashes, nothing. So I thought that's most extraordinary. I really felt quite frightened.

94

00:08:24,320 --> 00:08:31,320

I've often thought about this since and it worried me as I walked up the dark road as

95

00:08:31,320 --> 00:08:40,080

to what on earth we had seen, the two of us. And I really don't know but except that

96

00:08:40,160 --> 00:08:49,640

I have a feeling that perhaps it's the future. I just wonder and if anyone ever builds a

97

00:08:49,640 --> 00:08:57,640

light-colored house in that position I'm not a bit sure what I'd do about it. I think

98

00:08:57,640 --> 00:09:08,080

I might have to go knock on the door and warn them.

99

00:09:08,080 --> 00:09:15,080

Mount Lowe rises above the city of Los Angeles. It's a wilderness haven above the smog.

100

00:09:17,640 --> 00:09:22,840

At the turn of the century the mountain was a popular tourist attraction. A railway took

101

00:09:22,840 --> 00:09:29,840

daytrippers up for a breath of fresh air and lunch in the Alpine Tavern Hotel.

102

00:09:38,080 --> 00:09:45,080

The more adventurous could ascend to the very top and enjoy the panoramic views thanks to

103

00:09:51,320 --> 00:09:58,320

Herbert the Mule. But even Los Angeles' favourite day out could not survive the economic depression

104

00:10:00,160 --> 00:10:06,400

of the 1930s. The resort closed and now all that remains of the railway is a track for

105

00:10:06,400 --> 00:10:13,400

hikers. Bo Osjo is a clean walker.

106

00:10:14,400 --> 00:10:21,400

The first time I hiked to Mount Lowe was in the 1970s. I hiked from the bottom of the

107

00:10:21,640 --> 00:10:28,080

mountain which is about four miles up here I think. I saw a huge building up here that

108

00:10:28,080 --> 00:10:35,080

looked like a hotel, green in colour. I saw a maid was sweeping a big staircase. She was

109

00:10:35,640 --> 00:10:42,080

using an old fashioned hand broom and nobody does that today. They use vacuum cleaners or

110

00:10:42,080 --> 00:10:49,400

other tools but it looked kind of old fashioned. Puzzled, Bo went down the mountain and described

111

00:10:49,400 --> 00:10:55,400

the hotel to a friend, Vaughan Thompson. An argument began. I told him, I said there

112

00:10:55,400 --> 00:11:00,160

hadn't been any buildings up there in years. I knew there had been in a long time ago but

113

00:11:00,240 --> 00:11:07,240

they burned down and they were just gone. I said to him, this hotel is still standing

114

00:11:09,440 --> 00:11:14,280

on Mount Lowe and he said no way, there are no buildings on Mount Lowe, there haven't

115

00:11:14,280 --> 00:11:20,480

been in our lifetimes. And I said yes there is because I have seen it. I certainly wasn't

116

00:11:20,480 --> 00:11:26,480

dreaming. This was reality. It was as real as anything can be.

117

00:11:26,480 --> 00:11:31,880

Although no one will believe him, Bo refused to budge from his story. He climbed the mountain

118

00:11:31,880 --> 00:11:38,880

again. This time he went to the exact spot where he had seen the hotel standing. He found

119

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:47,000

his friends had been right. There was only rubble.

120

00:11:47,840 --> 00:11:53,840

There was no building. There was just this empty structure with high trees and it was

121

00:11:54,120 --> 00:12:01,120

a very surprising situation. I am 100 percent sure the hotel was there.

122

00:12:02,120 --> 00:12:07,120

The cars came up right up to the front of the hotel.

123

00:12:07,120 --> 00:12:14,120

Brian Markroft, a Mount Lowe Ranger, keeps a collection of old photographs. Amongst

124

00:12:14,120 --> 00:12:18,760

them, Bo recognises his Phantom Hotel.

125

00:12:18,760 --> 00:12:21,640

That is one. That looks exactly like it.

126

00:12:21,640 --> 00:12:27,640

Gee, that's fascinating because you know it burned in 36. The shell of it sat here for

127

00:12:27,640 --> 00:12:33,640

years. A ban on it in 1959, what was standing was dynamite into the ground.

128

00:12:33,640 --> 00:12:38,640

But that is the hotel, right?

129

00:12:38,640 --> 00:12:45,640

Bo is certain he saw this hotel building almost 40 years after it was destroyed.

130

00:12:45,840 --> 00:12:51,960

There was a very scary experience because I question myself what else have I seen that

131

00:12:51,960 --> 00:12:57,400

is not there. And it was with me for a long time when I was out hiking alone. I always

132

00:12:57,400 --> 00:13:03,600

question myself is that for real or is it not?

133

00:13:03,600 --> 00:13:09,360

The people who report sightings of apparently phantom buildings are usually condemned to

134

00:13:09,360 --> 00:13:15,600

years of frustration without ever discovering what they really saw. Yet sometimes a little

135

00:13:15,600 --> 00:13:22,120

persistence, a fresh look and a bit of luck finally solve these mysteries. Here's one

136

00:13:22,120 --> 00:13:29,120

such case. Ironically, it comes from the city that thrives on confusing reality with illusion.

137

00:13:29,920 --> 00:13:37,920

A place where nothing is what it seems, Hollywood, USA.

138

00:13:37,920 --> 00:13:42,720

This woman is on her way to a meeting that she hopes will resolve a mystery that's been

139

00:13:42,840 --> 00:13:48,840

bothering her for years. Her date is with Larry Gelbman. He is a movie actor with an

140

00:13:48,840 --> 00:13:52,240

interest in the paranormal.

141

00:13:52,240 --> 00:13:57,400

Shirley Lawrence used to be part of the Hollywood Dream Machine. One day near Paramount Studios

142

00:13:57,400 --> 00:14:00,480

she found a little basement shop.

143

00:14:00,480 --> 00:14:07,480

For the first time I saw a sign on one of the doors that said book store step down.

144

00:14:07,480 --> 00:14:14,480

After browsing for a while Shirley turned to go but was stopped by the shop owner.

145

00:14:37,480 --> 00:14:42,760

Shirley loved the book. She looked forward to returning to the shop next time Paramount

146

00:14:42,760 --> 00:14:44,880

employed her talents.

147

00:14:44,880 --> 00:14:49,720

I wanted to thank this lady because I loved the book so the next time I worked at Paramount

148

00:14:49,720 --> 00:14:55,480

I went back to that bookstore. But it wasn't there. It was gone.

149

00:14:55,480 --> 00:15:00,200

A paranormal publication picked up Shirley's story. She believed the book shop had been

150

00:15:00,200 --> 00:15:06,000

a phantom. But one reader knew better. From his own days at Paramount, Larry remembered

151

00:15:06,040 --> 00:15:08,240

exactly where it was.

152

00:15:08,240 --> 00:15:12,800

I was really amazed because I'd been to that book shop numerous times. I couldn't believe

153

00:15:12,800 --> 00:15:19,000

it. So I did go over and I prowled around like a good detective and I found out that

154

00:15:19,000 --> 00:15:24,360

the signs hanging in front were gone, the window markings were gone and a new man was downstairs

155

00:15:24,360 --> 00:15:28,520

three, four steps down. So I went and talked to him and I said you're running the book

156

00:15:28,520 --> 00:15:34,120

shop and I looked around and we're running books. He says no I'm an engineer.

157

00:15:34,240 --> 00:15:40,480

The book shop had indeed vanished but its disappearance was not paranormal. The building

158

00:15:40,480 --> 00:15:47,480

still stood but an engineer's office had taken it over. If Shirley had looked harder she would

159

00:15:48,800 --> 00:15:53,640

have discovered the truth. But now it's too late.

160

00:15:53,640 --> 00:15:54,840

You recognise any of that?

161

00:15:54,840 --> 00:15:58,200

Oh how it has changed. Well there's the same old gate Paramount pictures.

162

00:15:58,200 --> 00:15:59,200

Yes.

163

00:15:59,200 --> 00:16:02,000

And the bookstore was just down for just a minute.

164

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:09,000

The book shop's expanding empire has engulfed the whole street.

165

00:16:12,720 --> 00:16:18,120

Ben Fleet Downs in Essex is the unlikely location for one of the most famous reports of phantom

166

00:16:18,120 --> 00:16:24,240

buildings in the annals of psychical research. This is the story of how investigator Melvin

167

00:16:24,240 --> 00:16:30,520

Harris believes he has cracked this long standing puzzle. Earlier investigators Bob and June

168

00:16:30,560 --> 00:16:36,120

Andrews were told that two people had spotted an old house deep in these woods by the railway

169

00:16:36,120 --> 00:16:40,120

tracks but it had never been seen again.

170

00:16:40,120 --> 00:16:47,120

One Sunday afternoon they were going along to their friends and they saw what they thought

171

00:16:48,320 --> 00:16:55,320

was a large imposing Georgian house from which ran a girl and a dog. They looked at this

172

00:16:55,800 --> 00:17:02,080

and they saw what they later described as a gravel drive leading to the Georgian house.

173

00:17:02,080 --> 00:17:06,840

Then they went to their friends and said we've just noticed this Georgian house on the way

174

00:17:06,840 --> 00:17:10,720

to see you which we've never seen before. And their friends said well of course there

175

00:17:10,720 --> 00:17:14,160

isn't one there at all.

176

00:17:14,160 --> 00:17:19,240

The couple lived locally and were asked by the society for psychical research to look

177

00:17:19,240 --> 00:17:23,880

into the mystery and see if they could resolve it.

178

00:17:23,960 --> 00:17:30,960

We spent two evenings walking along together along the path looking in all directions and

179

00:17:31,280 --> 00:17:35,800

there was just literally nothing at all to be found. We went to the library, we asked

180

00:17:35,800 --> 00:17:41,000

relevant questions, we looked at maps that they had such as they had. We then looked

181

00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:44,960

at these ordnance survey maps and the borrow engineer's. There was nothing there that they

182

00:17:44,960 --> 00:17:51,960

could have claimed to have been remotely like a Georgian house.

183

00:17:52,960 --> 00:17:58,960

The case was reported in the prestigious journal of the Society of Psychical Research.

184

00:17:58,960 --> 00:18:04,560

Bruce and Grace McMahon described the house they saw. They said they had searched the

185

00:18:04,560 --> 00:18:09,600

wood and had never found it again.

186

00:18:09,600 --> 00:18:15,080

Melvin Harris thinks the key to the mystery probably lies close to the scene of the sighting

187

00:18:15,080 --> 00:18:17,760

in the little local library at Hadley.

188

00:18:18,560 --> 00:18:23,560

It was a story that was cobbled together by two children. They talked about an imposing

189

00:18:23,560 --> 00:18:29,560

Georgian house. Well the first thing I thought well most children don't know much about architecture.

190

00:18:29,560 --> 00:18:35,720

A Georgian house is maybe just a rough guess. So I'm not looking for an imposing Georgian

191

00:18:35,720 --> 00:18:40,520

house. I'm looking for a large house in the forest.

192

00:18:40,520 --> 00:18:45,320

Harris knew the Andrews had studied ordnance survey maps but he thinks they had been given

193

00:18:45,400 --> 00:18:48,440

the wrong map by the wrong library.

194

00:18:48,440 --> 00:18:52,480

If you go to Southend and ask for the last scale ordnance survey maps you'll see this

195

00:18:52,480 --> 00:18:58,200

map and that map doesn't show the Bentley Downs in full. They really need to go on much

196

00:18:58,200 --> 00:19:05,200

further and as you see on this map the Downs down there they go right across the many inches

197

00:19:05,320 --> 00:19:10,840

and in the middle of that wooded area the path walked by the children the Andrews and

198

00:19:10,920 --> 00:19:16,560

the centre of the wood is a small rectangle which was a house.

199

00:19:16,560 --> 00:19:21,520

The map in Hadley library showed a house called Rayview. The Andrews had missed it for two

200

00:19:21,520 --> 00:19:26,880

reasons. They had not been shown the full map of the Downs. Secondly they had not been

201

00:19:26,880 --> 00:19:29,840

told that the original report had come from children.

202

00:19:29,840 --> 00:19:32,840

They must have taken their friends to the wrong place.

203

00:19:32,840 --> 00:19:37,480

Yes they still went to the same road every time.

204

00:19:37,520 --> 00:19:42,600

Harris wants to show the Andrews Rayview and satisfy them that the story of the Phantom

205

00:19:42,600 --> 00:19:46,920

House grew from a series of simple misunderstandings.

206

00:19:46,920 --> 00:19:51,680

And you don't associate it from the railway track it just looks like a house stuck on

207

00:19:51,680 --> 00:19:56,680

the edge but the children were adamant that there was no house in the forest anywhere.

208

00:19:56,680 --> 00:19:57,680

Yes yes.

209

00:19:57,680 --> 00:20:01,080

And this is the point they didn't say apart from Rayview which is this house.

210

00:20:01,080 --> 00:20:03,480

And yet I always knew this house was here.

211

00:20:03,480 --> 00:20:06,480

That's right but people who know this house can't find it at time.

212

00:20:06,480 --> 00:20:11,280

You know they will come here they will come for a visit they will try to make a second

213

00:20:11,280 --> 00:20:16,280

visit and they'll get lost. It's still a very mysterious place for a lot of people.

214

00:20:22,480 --> 00:20:28,400

Sometimes travellers claim they've seen not just one Phantom building but whole cities.

215

00:20:28,400 --> 00:20:35,840

For example in 1915 Frank Worsley was captain of Sir Ernest Shacklein's polar exploration

216

00:20:35,840 --> 00:20:38,400

ship Endurance.

217

00:20:38,400 --> 00:20:43,120

As he sailed along the Antarctic coast he made this note in his log.

218

00:20:43,120 --> 00:20:49,800

In shore appears a beautiful dazzling city of cathedral spires domes and minarets.

219

00:20:49,800 --> 00:20:55,240

Well as Worsley knew the only buildings in the Antarctic at that time were a few wooden

220

00:20:55,240 --> 00:20:57,120

expedition huts.

221

00:20:57,120 --> 00:21:01,320

So what was is fabulous but a illusory city.

222

00:21:01,320 --> 00:21:07,560

I'm glad to say that sightings of this kind can be explained by science.

223

00:21:07,560 --> 00:21:13,360

The Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge houses mementos from polar exploration over

224

00:21:13,360 --> 00:21:14,840

centuries.

225

00:21:14,840 --> 00:21:21,240

Besides artifacts of icy adventures it preserves travellers tales of distant lands reported

226

00:21:21,240 --> 00:21:23,160

by explorers.

227

00:21:23,200 --> 00:21:29,920

Dr Gareth Reese has discovered that not all of the stories have stood the test of time.

228

00:21:29,920 --> 00:21:34,640

I think we can say that if all of these reports were true which we now disbelieve the maps

229

00:21:34,640 --> 00:21:39,360

of the polar regions would be a great deal more cluttered than they are now.

230

00:21:39,360 --> 00:21:45,600

Arctic explorer Commander Robert Peary claimed to be the first to reach the North Pole.

231

00:21:45,600 --> 00:21:50,840

On his journey there in 1906 he thought he sighted an undiscovered island in the Arctic

232

00:21:50,880 --> 00:21:51,880

ocean.

233

00:21:51,880 --> 00:21:56,640

He named it Crockerland and marked it on his map.

234

00:21:56,640 --> 00:22:03,480

Now that sighting was subsequently investigated by another American explorer called Macmillan

235

00:22:03,480 --> 00:22:05,320

who went to look for it in 1914.

236

00:22:05,320 --> 00:22:11,520

He did not find it although he could see it when he began his journey and this book which

237

00:22:11,520 --> 00:22:18,520

is essentially the reminiscences of Macmillan shows Crockerland a big question mark on

238

00:22:18,520 --> 00:22:19,520

it.

239

00:22:19,520 --> 00:22:25,440

It is found and indeed what we can say now from what we know about the geography of the

240

00:22:25,440 --> 00:22:31,320

Arctic is that the nearest land in the direction in which these chaps were looking is in Siberia

241

00:22:31,320 --> 00:22:33,520

2,000 kilometres away.

242

00:22:33,520 --> 00:22:38,520

At the other end of the earth the Antarctic has its own illusive lands.

243

00:22:38,520 --> 00:22:43,840

One of the earliest recorded was Peeps Island which was originally recorded in the late

244

00:22:43,840 --> 00:22:47,760

17th century down here somewhere between the Falkland Islands and the coast of South America.

245

00:22:48,120 --> 00:22:53,000

It's not there at all it's another of these fictitious islands and Sedosive Banks who

246

00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:58,080

sailed with Captain Cook in the Endeavour gives a description in his journal of their

247

00:22:58,080 --> 00:22:59,080

attempts to find it.

248

00:22:59,080 --> 00:23:04,720

They saw it all right but when they sailed for it and tried to locate it properly it

249

00:23:04,720 --> 00:23:06,200

disappeared.

250

00:23:06,200 --> 00:23:08,960

But Sedosive Banks had not been mistaken.

251

00:23:08,960 --> 00:23:13,960

The lands he, Peary and Macmillan reported had a scientific explanation.

252

00:23:13,960 --> 00:23:17,120

They were mirages.

253

00:23:17,120 --> 00:23:23,880

This land behind a lighthouse in Finland is not really there.

254

00:23:23,880 --> 00:23:28,440

It's a complicated mirage called a Fatta Morgana.

255

00:23:28,440 --> 00:23:37,960

A Fatta Morgana is a special kind of mirage as well as lifting the image up and magnifying

256

00:23:37,960 --> 00:23:38,960

it.

257

00:23:38,960 --> 00:23:41,960

It also involves a lot of stretching so there's a lot of distortion.

258

00:23:41,960 --> 00:23:46,520

It becomes an unrecognisable shape for example the edge of an ice flow will become stretched

259

00:23:46,520 --> 00:23:51,960

out and look like very tall thin columns of ice like a crystal cage.

260

00:23:51,960 --> 00:23:57,120

These don't look like anything every day they look like something from fairy tales.

261

00:23:57,120 --> 00:24:02,160

So what the explorers reported was real but distorted and out of position.

262

00:24:02,160 --> 00:24:05,440

The lands did not exist where they were seen.

263

00:24:05,440 --> 00:24:10,760

We might imagine that as soon as somebody has sailed over the site of a fictitious island

264

00:24:10,760 --> 00:24:13,640

and proved that it isn't there it comes off the chart.

265

00:24:13,640 --> 00:24:19,320

This isn't always true and I can show you one example of this in the case of Swain's

266

00:24:19,320 --> 00:24:24,480

Island which is here near Antarctica.

267

00:24:24,480 --> 00:24:30,680

This has been known for decades to be a bogus island of fictitious or illusory island.

268

00:24:30,680 --> 00:24:34,800

It's still here on the map.

269

00:24:34,800 --> 00:24:38,720

Mirages obviously can't account for many of these reports.

270

00:24:38,720 --> 00:24:40,960

Buildings can't appear and disappear.

271

00:24:40,960 --> 00:24:43,200

So what's the explanation?

272

00:24:43,200 --> 00:24:47,360

I suspect the answer must lie in the observer's mind.

273

00:24:47,360 --> 00:24:52,680

It's easy to be fooled especially in unfamiliar surroundings and to misinterpret what you

274

00:24:52,680 --> 00:24:55,000

actually see.

275

00:24:55,000 --> 00:24:57,200

Something similar once happened to me.

276

00:24:57,200 --> 00:25:00,800

I used to commute by train to my home in North London.

277

00:25:00,800 --> 00:25:06,560

One evening when I thought I'd reached my destination I suddenly realized that my surroundings

278

00:25:06,560 --> 00:25:08,960

were totally unfamiliar.

279

00:25:08,960 --> 00:25:14,320

Some 50 years later I can still recall the shock of unrecognition.

280

00:25:14,320 --> 00:25:17,880

Of course in this case I quickly realized what had happened.

281

00:25:17,880 --> 00:25:20,720

I'd simply gotten onto the wrong train.

282

00:25:20,720 --> 00:25:26,120

How much more disorientating it must be to know you've seen a building but never to

283

00:25:26,120 --> 00:25:27,200

be able to find it.

284

00:25:38,960 --> 00:25:39,960

Thank you.

285

00:25:39,960 --> 00:25:40,960

Thank you.

286

00:25:40,960 --> 00:25:41,960

Thank you.

287

00:25:41,960 --> 00:25:42,960

Thank you.

288

00:25:42,960 --> 00:25:43,960

Thank you.

289

00:25:43,960 --> 00:25:44,960

Thank you.

290

00:25:44,960 --> 00:25:45,960

Thank you.

291

00:25:45,960 --> 00:25:46,960

Thank you.

292

00:25:46,960 --> 00:25:47,960

Thank you.

293

00:25:47,960 --> 00:25:48,960

Thank you.

294

00:25:48,960 --> 00:25:49,960

Thank you.

295

00:25:49,960 --> 00:25:50,960

Thank you.

296

00:25:50,960 --> 00:25:51,960

Thank you.

297

00:25:51,960 --> 00:25:52,960

Thank you.

298

00:25:52,960 --> 00:25:53,960

Thank you.

299

00:25:53,960 --> 00:25:54,960

Thank you.

300

00:25:54,960 --> 00:25:55,960

Thank you.

301

00:25:55,960 --> 00:25:56,960

Thank you.

302

00:25:56,960 --> 00:25:57,960

Thank you.

303

00:25:57,960 --> 00:25:58,960

Thank you.

304

00:25:58,960 --> 00:25:59,960

Thank you.